

Final Report on Student Racism Survey

At Luther Seminary

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A. Introduction

The idea of conducting a student survey on racism at Luther Seminary initially began as the Committee Against Racism (CAR) committee sought to hear from all sectors of the institution on matters related to the existence of racism on campus, and the operation of a narrative of white privilege. Each representative was charged with the responsibility to discuss this with their constituencies, these included: administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Originally, Brenda Froisland went directly to the Student Government to ask them for responses. She was unable to get any clear answer in large part because people did not know or understand the term ‘narrative of white privilege.’ After reporting this factor to CAR, it was then that we discussed the idea of surveying the whole of the student body in an attempt to get a response. The CAR committee agreed that this would be a good way to get a sense from students regarding the presence of racism on campus. Conducting a survey also provided the opportunity of obtaining more feedback given that the student body is the largest constituent group of the campus community.

The survey questions were developed in collaboration with Brenda Froisland, as she and I were the student government appointees to the CAR committee. The survey was conducted between April 10-April 27, 2001. A one-page survey was sent by email to all students, using their Luther Seminary email account. Students had the option to print the survey and turn it in anonymously to a box provided for that purpose, located in the student center or respond by email. The decision to email the survey versus using student campus boxes or some other alternative delivery, may not have been the best or most

scientific way to gather the information. At the time however, it appeared the most viable option.

There were a number of contributing factors in the choices made including: that the survey was conducted over dates, which included Spring Break when many students were not on campus. There was a very tight deadline, as the results needed to be provided by the next committee meeting. The difficulty, and perhaps in some sense the failure of this approach, is that many students have email accounts independent of Luther Seminary and do not access their student email account. I believe this contributed, but only in part, to the lower than expected percentage of responses.

There are two other potential reasons for the low response rate. Those who responded may already have had a heightened awareness regarding racism, that is, they felt comfortable, and I would add, safe enough to express their thoughts, whether their perspective was negative or positive. Secondly, is the matter of safety. As can be seen in the responses, only one non-white, and four international students responded. Dr. Charles Amjad Ali reported, when the raw data was initially presented to CAR, that these students had much to say (based on his discussions and interactions with many of these students), but they did not feel safe or were afraid to discuss their experiences. It was critical to hear from the students from this sector of the student body, therefore the director of international students and students of color convened meetings asking students to reconsider responding to the survey. Students were given the survey again, and encouraged to respond, which four of forty-two international students responded (9.5%) and one of twenty-four non-white students responded (4%). This continued pattern of not responding to the survey is noteworthy. While no clear conclusions can be drawn, it

would appear that these students did not feel the survey would be helpful to their situation at all. The committee intends to work on the questions raised here.

II. Summary of Student Survey on Racism at Luther Seminary

The largest group who responded to the survey was white female, ELCA, Masters of Divinity students who were in their first year of studies at the seminary. When asked about feelings of preparedness for their vocation in an increasingly diverse society, more than half felt they were prepared. These same students contributed the following to their preparedness: Both Seminary and non-seminary sponsored cross-cultural experiences; Anti-racism seminars; friendships with those from cultures different from their own; living in different places; and participating in programs such as Vista and/or Ameri-Corp.

Of those who said they did not feel prepared when asked what they felt would help, reported that courses on racism including discussions about different denominations would be helpful. In addition, they suggested having faculty and staff attend (participate in) cross-cultural experiences; increase diversity (defined as denomination, ethnicity and physical ability) in worship, and amongst faculty. Some felt that because they were new to Luther Seminary, that they were not equipped to answer the question.

One student felt that faculty show bias by speaking to all students as though they are all going into parish work in one form or another (M.Div. vs. M.A.). One student coming from a non-Christian tradition, felt prepared, but not from anything that Luther had done and described a negative experience in a course that was designed to address multicultural-perspectives.

Some responded both “Yes” and “No,” saying they felt prepared, but that there would be new things encountered, to which they added that no amount of training is able to address everything. In another case, a student felt that things being done at Luther were helpful, nevertheless, they were seeking other opportunities outside the seminary.

When asked if students had attended any additional training or experiences related to race relations since attending Luther, over half had. Those who responded, “Yes,” described those experiences saying they have deep discussions with international students with whom they share student housing; cross-cultural experiences; participated in SCUPE program; some course work; and the “Dismantling Racism” workshop. One student discussed the need for different faith communities to be in dialogue, and reported engaging in this kind of activity in one class.

Those who answered “No,” when asked what might be beneficial said: they did not feel it was necessary. Many suggested conducting more intentional and engaging activities or improving ones already provided, such as hosting diversity celebrations, which could be incorporated throughout the community including, festivals, food, worship, orientation, concord etc. One-time activities were described (interpreted) as being “inoculations” against diversity and insulting. One student expressed concern that more classes would be cut from the curriculum in order to make room and felt that it is not the seminary’s responsibility to prepare students in this area.

When asked if they were aware of discriminatory or racist incidents occurring at Luther, 37.5% responded, “Yes.” One student described an incident that occurred during Chapel, when an African American student read a psalm in Hebrew. This student overheard a senior faculty member refer to this student’s reading, as if he were an

“Ethiopian Jew” doing the reading. This student felt that this comment served to reveal the “cultural isolations in our midst.” Another student expressed concern about handing out the book “For Whites Only” during First Week wondering how it made non-white students feel. Some reported threatening or exclusionary messages from white students; and that racism is institutionalized because of the lack of people of color/ethnicity/cultural diversity amongst ELCA membership. One student reports frustration over pain experienced by friends who have suffered institutional racism, as well as frustration of their international friends and their experiences as having been treated poorly by students or staff. Students also reported a lack of integration as evidenced by the segregation in the dining room, also that few international students are in chapel or if they are, they are off to one side. Another student raises the distinction between racism and discrimination and feels that the latter is commonplace at some level at the seminary. Another reports that both students and faculty make bigoted statements and the speakers are not aware that they are making derogatory or pejorative statements/comments.

One student responding ‘No’, said that while they were not aware of any incidents first hand, they had heard others who have experienced discrimination and racism, one report of a case where a person felt more welcomed at Luther than previous places.

When asked about what Luther Seminary might do to increase awareness of “ a privileged white narrative” respondents suggested including trips to inner-city churches, open, guided dialogue and training, forums, and heartfelt discussions. Stating that there is not a strong community to reveal prejudice and then to let it (the prejudice) go; some felt there is a need for more faculty who are committed to addressing issues regarding racism.

Prayer was suggested as well as including the “Dismantling Racism” workshop during First Week. Some felt that the matter is “absolutely ridiculous to worry about,” racism and offending people of color and felt that racism is stupid. Others were confused by the question or upset by the single example offered as a way of depicting how ‘privileged white narratives can manifest themselves.

When asked if they thought privileged white narratives operate at Luther 47.5% felt that they do. When asked to describe what and how they said: That as whites they are part of the problem and therefore do not recognize it. One student said that because there are few people of color present as students, or faculty, that this is a sign that people do not have to think about their own white narrative privilege. One student felt defensive about the narrative being applied to them, feeling that regardless of how hospitable and friendly they are they are guilty, because of their color and social status. Another felt that it is a greater problem to the authors of the survey than to them, adding that if they wanted a narrative other than a white narrative, they would have gone elsewhere. Another student expressed concern about being from the Midwest, but not Lutheran or Scandinavian, or a divinity student, and seeing other students receiving preferential treatment because they fit the mold, also of the use of stereotypes of those from within and without the “Christian Church”.

When asked if students see other privileged narratives (Lutheran, American, orientation, cultural, etc.) functioning at Luther, 85% said, “Yes.” When asked to describe and/or offer solutions concerning how to address such privileges, respondents suggested: Encourage those from other cultures to share in class; there is a need for Lutherans to see their own stereotypes and find ways to learn about others and to move

away from stereotyping. Some see all the narratives (as indicated in question) as functioning, and believe that faculty have the power to shape attitudes. It was suggested that more students be recruited from other backgrounds and that all students need to work together on this issue. One student felt that nothing can be done to stop the privilege as one privilege or ideology or another will always be dominant. One respondent was extremely angry feeling that their heritage was not something to be solved, and was very offended by the survey, furthermore, they felt that as an individual they were not the problem. Another expressed that the “dilemma is not privilege,” but rather that it was “making Christ subject to culture.” Another felt that in some classes that if “you aren’t Lutheran (and truly Lutheran, not just nominally) you’re “wrong.”” Others saw privilege in rural vs. urban, sexual preference and gender preference. Another said that people are taught to assume everyone is treated the same and suggested forums, seminars, etc. to address such assumptions.

In one case, a student opted not to respond at all, because of their experience when trying to raise issues of discrimination in the past. This student felt “threatened and demeaned” by the experience and felt they could not respond to any part of the survey and felt that the problem is endemic and beyond the efforts behind the survey.

Part III: Survey Responses

A. Demographics

1. White: 34 - (85 %) Non-white: 1 - (2.5%) International - 4 (10%) 1 - No Response (2.5%)
2. Male: 11 - (27.5% of those who responded) Female: 27 - (67.5% of those who responded) 3 - No responses (5%)
3. Religious Affiliation:
 - a. 7 - Lutheran did not designate a synod (17.5% of those who responded)
 - b. 19 – ELCA (47.5% of those who responded)
 - c. 5 – “A”(15% of those who responded)¹
 - a. 1 – “B” (2.5% of those who responded)²
 - d. 7 - No Response (18%)
4. Program
 - a. MA – 9 (22.5% of those who responded)
 - b. MDiv - 26 (65% of those who responded)
 - c. MTh - 0
 - d. PhD – 1 (2.5% of those who responded)
 - e. 4 – No Response (10% of those who responded)
5. Year
 - a. JR – 13 (32.5% of those who responded)
 - b. Middler – 6 (15% of those who responded)
 - c. Intern – 3 (7.5% of those who responded)
 - d. Senior – 9 (22.5% of those who responded)
 - e. No Response – 9 (Of the respondents 22.5% did not respond to this question)

¹ Respondents whose Christian faith tradition is other than ELCA or Lutheran, and whose denominational representation on campus is small, I have used the letter “A” to protect identities.

² Respondents whose faith tradition is other than Christian and whose denominational representation on campus is small, I have used the letter “B” to protect identities.

Part III: Survey Responses

B. Questions and Full Written Responses³

1. *Given our increasingly more diverse society, do you feel prepared for your vocation upon graduation?*

- a. Yes - 23 (57.5% of those who responded)
- b. No – 13 (32.5% of those who responded)
- c. Other (answered both yes and no) - 3 (7.5% of those who responded)
- d. No Response – 1 (2.5% of those who responded)

If you answered, “No,” what ideas would you recommend to faculty, staff, and/or administration on ways that would be beneficial for you?

Those who responded “No” said:

- Racism, mutli-cultural class even to understand different mainline denomination, let alone religions of other cultures *Have faculty/staff attend cross-cultural experience. (21)
- Need to have dialogue with person(s) of other racial and religious background. Precept groups and study groups can be very good connections on finding commonalties. (23)
- I’m in my first year, how would I be ready yet? (24)
- Have mandatory workshops for which the students get credit dealing with some of the belief systems of some other groups in the area/world. (25)
- There is little diversity represented in worship, on faculty, by diversity I mean denomination, ethnicity, physical ability. The cross-cultural experience is not enough, learning (?) about integrity and celebrating diversity is a natural tension of the body of Christ – it is not a “foreign body.” There is little opportunity to share our journey, our gifts, and our testimonies – as if we all have the same. Our community suffers in silence. (26)
- No, but then I am a long way from graduation. It will be helpful to me if I can learn how to incorporate other perspectives in worship planning. (27)

³ All narrative responses are verbatim unless response was unclear. In such cases, punctuation was added or when word(s) were unclear a “(??)” has been added to indicate uncertainty.

- I don't think anything can fully prepare us for ministry in a diverse society. We all need plenty of thoughtful reflection, prayer, and experience to ask the difficult questions that arise amidst diversity. Recommends: Some classes have been helpful in this process. Church Music with Westermeyer raised some good challenging questions about the realities of ministry in a diverse society. "Reading the Audiences" has also done this. (28)
- I think "on-the-job" training is probably the best way to prepare – so students finding contextual sites, etc., where there is diversity is a good way. I plan on learning a lot during my summer of CPE and my year of residency for chaplaincy in a Metro Hospital. But because of our busy schedules, getting our "education" in diversity should be abundantly available in course work whether blended with existing courses or totally revamping the seminaries vision of academics. Seems(?) graduates used to go out into a population made up of people like themselves – no longer!! (29)
- Link the Luther Seminary community with the urban areas of St. Paul and Mpls., so that students get more interaction with urban life and diverse ethnic groups. Aren't there events that could happen where students could do projects in urban parts of the cities?
- Recommend: The cross-cultural requirement is a good start toward getting people exposed to diversity but more needs to be done. (30)
- I feel prepared but, not because of anything LS had done. I come from a different religious tradition than 'Christianity'. My personal experience in the required "Reading the Audiences" was terrible. I was treated disrespectfully; one example was after the professor was aware of my faith tradition, proceeded to say to the entire class, that he had had a friend from the same tradition who told him there was no such thing. That is equivalent to a white person saying I know about African Americans because I have a friend who is.
- Beneficial to me would be getting the message to faculty (the ones student deal the most closely with), staff and administration, that not all students wear the same stripes. Given LS strategic plan to increase the number of MA students, then it needs to be better prepared in how to interact with those who are the "other". I have a faith tradition, yet there are those who ignore this, and feel it is their duty to proselytize me. I chose Luther because of its academic credentials and programs – not because of its faith tradition. Some have treated me well others demand to know why I am here. I have no plans to work in a church community – professors should not assume that every one in their class is. If LS wishes to increase the ecumenical diversity, then it must prepare for those outside the Christian tradition. Having an ecumenical liaison is a start, but there needs to be long term and well thought out planning. I am here for an academic education – not to be. (31)

- Perhaps more time spent on learning about various cultures and the process of entering into them – in Reading the Audiences. (40)

If you answered, “Yes”, briefly describe what was done to prepare you for your vocation.

Those who responded “Yes” said:

- Cross-cultural experience in St. Paul, anti-racism seminar (such as it was), lifelong cross-cultural friendships. (2)
- Preaching class, Bible Classes, con-ed work (3)
- Much multi-cultural awareness, embracing of the “other”, strong emphasis on diversity (4)
- I took an Urban ministries cross-cultural course offered the summer of 2000. I also did my internship in Oakland, CA. a very diverse city with a very diverse congregation. Luther equipped me with the language of the Gospel, which I now struggle to bring whose background is different than my own, (i.e. *very* German). (5)
- My prior life experiences have been extremely helpful for my vocational preparation (7)
- Cross Cultural class requirement (8)
- I have lived in many US locations: NYC, Philadelphia, Northern Indiana, Chicago, Ft. Lauderdale, St. Louis, Twin Cities, N. Wisconsin, eastern S. Dakota. Did an AmeriCorp VISTA internship with Mpls. Public Housing and studied rural issues at Luther, Shalom Hill Farm and did internship in S. Dakota (9)
- It is an on-going process. Having international and other non-white classmates gave me needed information about other cultures /religions. Mission classes have been helpful. My field experiences have been in multicultural settings. I also chose to participate in 2 cross-cultural interim classes. (11)
- Off-campus: CPE Co Ed internship.
- On-campus: precepts, group projects, Mission I, II, living in the dorm, eating in the cafeteria, getting to know the international students, working on campus. (12)
- There is plenty of diversity at Luther. (13)
- 16 years as counselor and 12 years as lay person. (15)

- Most importantly, I've had the chance during my first two years at Luther to do Con. Ed. in a downtown setting, with a fairly diverse population. But I think the important thing to note is that you can't really be taught how to minister in a diverse setting. One simply has to put oneself into diverse settings and go from there. (16)
- Cross-cultural elective, relationships with international students and gay students. I have a lot of experience with diversity (outside of Luther), but can never get too much. (18)
- The loneliness of being minority. (32)
- The intensive and thorough curriculum. (33)
- I was trained by different professors on different topics. (34)
- Cross-cultural counseling. (34)
- Life! I am a 3rd career student (business, motherhood). (37)
- I was adequately trained within the boundaries of my vocation and field. The courses and faculty provided enough foundation to further build upon according to the way my future ministry dictates. The theoretical aspect of my training in Christian-Muslim relations was extremely helpful however, I believe practical methods perhaps should be considered. For instance, a Muslim speaker can be invited to one of the Islamic Studies classes to give the students first-hand encounters with *Muslims*. Actual engagement with Muslims might help prepare students for future vocations. (38)

Those who responded “Yes” and “No” said the following:

- Yes, I am prepared as well as I can be within my vocation and “No, because there will always be things in ministry that I won't be prepared for until I face them. No seminar can cover all the bases. Diversity is too large a word to answer this question only way or the other. Do you mean diversity in race, religion, lifestyle: All of us come to Christ with diverse beliefs and traditions. Race is just one of many. So yes, I am prepared to minister to the diverse people of God... and no, I will never be prepared for every single level of diversity I might find while in ministry. (1)
- I answered yes, but there is one main thing that could be addressed: Dealing with the practicalities of ministry. I would call these the “actuals”. It is great that we gain all of the head knowledge, but that is only going to go so far in a congregation or particular ministry area.

- I feel that by the time I will graduate, I will be as ready as I could be. Part of the reason for this feeling of being prepared has to do with the Cross Cultural Studies class that I am part of this year. There are definitely materials and issues that we cover that all seminary student should address. Also, my own, I am seeking out other ways to gain knowledge and experience for a future in ministry. An example of this is attending an antiracism retreat (intense) and finding out ways in which the church can be involved in social justice issues. (6)
- It is difficult to respond to this question because I don't believe that the Seminary or any other academic institution is really set up to teach lessons that can only be learned by living through life experiences. We are able to gains some of this through CPE or Internship, under the right circumstances, but I don't think we will ever be able to create a uniform experience that will ever be able to create a uniform experience that will teach everyone how not to be a bigot, we are after all human and sinners.
- Simply put, life. I have had to live my life as a survivor, fortunately or unfortunately as the case may be. As one who comes from violence and poverty, and who was not raised in the shelter of the church, I have had to deal with the realities of oppression and the cruelty we humans inflict upon on another. I have lived in a variety of places, from the bush country to Yukon, Canada, with no amenities to the inner cities of Chicago and LA. God has used these things to teach me, so that I might be able know the Grace of Christ, and proclaim it in his growing diverse society that we do live in. (20)
- Address doing ministry in an unchurched or traditionally non-Lutheran setting. Ask some of the hard question about why the Lutheran church is so predominantly white and particularly in the clergy fold. Engage thoughts about the possible benefits and risks of targeting particular people groups with mission projects.
- "Reading the Audiences" offered insight into being deliberate about to whom one ministers. Most professors demonstrated tolerance and respect to differing positions and perspectives. Many things were presented as options to be fleshed out in a particular context rather than unchanging lockstep solutions. (22)

2. ***Since attending Luther Seminary, have you been involved in any training, experience and/or activity regarding race relations?***

- a. Yes – 22 (55% of those who responded)
- b. No – 17 (42.5% of those who responded)
- c. No Response – 1 (2.5% of those who responded)

If yes, briefly describe.

- I consider the deep discussions with my International dorm mates and fellow students to be my best training. I think the seminary should sponsor and encourage, if not even design with the help of the Global Miss. Inst., dialogue, either as coursework, or as scheduled activity with multicultural guests as well as students and faculty. Many, I'd say most, of us white Lutherans in the Midwest and elsewhere have yet to worship work or live on a regular basis with people of their cultures. We simply must experience more of it here at seminary. (30)
- Minimally. (23)
- Cross-cultural at Pine Ridge, current class with great mix of international students (theology of the cross and mission). (18)
- AmericCorp VISTA experiences 1996-97 (school year). (9)
- It has not been advertised as such, but noon time forums on "community" as experienced at Luther have included relevant discussion. The annual Martin Luther King service in February is both instructive and a needed reminder for me. (11)
- I took a trip to Chicago, and participated in a two week cultural experience through the SCUPE program. (20)
- Internship I was involved in civil rights report in the city I was assigned to. (10)
- Took a class called "Evangelism in America" that touched on African American churches and some general information on church means in that culture. We also were privileged to hear a wonderful African American preacher in our preaching class I admit that more could be done in this area. (1)
- One-day anti-racism seminar and book read for cross-cultural experience(1)
- Training for cross-cultural with Mr. Terry(?). (3)
- Dismantling racism workshop, and another racism workshop. (4)
- I do not see it as Luther's responsibility to "train" me to function effectively in a diverse world. The training expected from a seminary is to be concentrated on the theological. Students should come into seminary with the diversity background those who don't have it should seek it out through their Con. Ed Site, internship, or other various places. (5)
- I attended an intense retreat concerning anti racism after getting just a taste of it in my cross Cultural studies class. (6)
- Cross-cultural class – J term 2001. (8)

- For the cross-cultural experience, we had a short orientation about race/prejudice, etc. (14)
- I have not been in any organized activity, but I do talk about my faith tradition as it relates to Christianity and the need for our communities to begin dialogue, this has occurred in class room discussion and one-on-one or small group discussions. (31)
- My cross-cultural experience was in inner city Milwaukee. (17)
- Cultural diversity at the U of M. (15)
- Cross cultural trip to Milwaukee. (21)
- I went on the Israel/Palestine cross-cultural experience. One of the main emphases of this trip was examining the on-going difficulties between Palestinians and Israeli peoples. “Reading the Audiences” was designed to help us consider to whom we are doing ministry. Part of this involved looking at racial composition of the congregation and the neighboring area. (22)
- Dismantling Racism Workshop. (33)

If no, briefly describe what might be beneficial.

- Nothing. I don’t think it is necessary. (13)
- Again, to be successful and truly genuine, diversity celebrations must be incorporated throughout the community – festivals, food, worship, orientation, concord, classes – Please don’t put time/energy into one shot programs here and there – that is insulting as if we need to be vaccinated for diversity!
- I have had diversity training with my Air Guard unit. (24)
- Participating in small group discussions in a predominately African composition; Attending worship lead by international students. Although I was unable to attend, I thought the Seder service opportunity was a great idea. (23)
- Would this necessitate cutting even more Bible/theology/history classes from the curriculum? If so leave it alone! I do not believe it is the seminary’s job to prepare us for such things. I know that I’ve gotten experience on my own, outside of the classroom. (16)

- I am not sure what training might be helpful. Cross cultural experiences are a good beginning point. (7)
- The international talent gathering on Friday of break was poor planning/most whites people were gone or coordinate it with coffee house/bringing together groups instead of separating. (21)
- More social opportunities on-going throughout the school year; Mission classes where diversity of international student body is utilized more small group project/papers ; Contextual Ed loosening attendance requirements to allow more church worshipping and small groups formed to visit churches and neighborhoods. (12)
- I think it could be helpful (if well done) to engage the community in discussions about issues and try to work towards consensus on position statements. Some of these could be theological in nature. Some could be cultural in nature. Some could pertain statements. For instance, we might address the issue of racial quotas in academic institutions such as Luther. We might allow people with differing perspectives at Luther to present their perspectives. The point being to engage in loving and truthful (Ephesians 4:15) dialogue and hopefully work towards understanding and resolution. (22)
- I think anything would be helpful that would open students eyes to the persisting realities of racism, and then discuss how the church can speak to and try to heal some of these divisions. (28)
- I answer “no” because I am not aware of any instances – However, those who are not white will tell me that we whites don’t even recognize our discriminatory or racist attitudes and behaviors. I believe much of the society has dealt with this (or begun to) sooner than the church. What better place to get it out in the open than among brothers and sisters in this seminal setting? Where else than in the nursery or seat? Bed of learning? (29)
- Mark 11:17. (32)
- I did not find this kind of activity so far!! (34)
- Despite the fact that I do not think I was trained directly in race relations, I do believe that as an Islamic studies student. I had the advantage of being well prepared in inter-religious relations rather than race relations. This type of training is as essential as race relations I believe. (38)
- Before starting at Luther, I attended an intensive workshop on “Dismantling Racism.” I think its been offered here – an excellent course. (40)

3. ***Are you aware of discriminatory or racist incidents that have occurred at Luther Seminary?***

- a. Yes - 15 (37.5% of those who responded)
- b. No – 23 (57.5% of those who responded)
- c. No Response – 2 (5% of the respondents did not respond to this question)

If you answered, “Yes” briefly describe.

- When an African – American student read a Psalm in Hebrew during Chapel, I heard a senior faculty member said it was as if an Ethiopian Jew had been standing up there doing it. Would such a remark have been made about a white student? The faculty member meant no harm, but it revealed a cultural isolation in the community. We aren't used to people of diverse backgrounds with in our midst! A preaching professor showed a video tape of Jesse Jackson speaking publicly. The professor said, “He’s a good speaker, but I’ve never been able to figure out just what he does. “Some” in the class said, “He’s the leader of the Rainbow Coalition” and the professor said, “Yes, but what does that mean? (30)
- The racism that is institutionalized within the entire ELCA is most evident in the lack of people of color/ethnicity/cultural in our church memberships and this at the seminary. Those members are an indictment that we are not reaching out with the gospel. (26)
- Black students of any denomination are allowed to attend Luther at no or minimal cost. However, this does not apply to Lutheran Native American students. Sounds racist to me! (9)
- Minimally as to detail, but I recall a few instances of non-white students receiving threatening or at the least exclusionary, verbal/non-verbal messages from white students, which they told about later. (11)
- Although the whole First week business of handing out books entitled “For Whites Only” couldn’t have given a very nice image to non-white folk. (24)
- I have been discriminated against primarily, religious discrimination, some has been openly blatant by one faculty member (in front of the entire class), and some has been more subversive. In one class a professor decided to sing the American Anthem, which perhaps would not have been so terrible, except there were at least 6 international students, who were extremely uncomfortable. The class: Reading the Audiences. The professor in this same class, ridiculed my faith and nationality – knowing full well I was present, as did the class. (31)
- I spent a great deal of time, listening to the frustrations and pain that two of my friends suffered due to the institutional racism that exists at this institution. It is a very subtle thing, and is difficult to describe in detail in this format. I have also

- heard the frustrations of many of the International Students who have been treated poorly by either other students or by staff. (20)
- I was told that I was one of the few white students who was not prejudiced. I am one of the few who took time to talk to and get to know the same folks who are emigrating to our neighborhoods. If we cannot get past the struggling English and strange accent when with strangers? (19)
 - There is very little integration w/students of different races/cultures. This is seen in the cafeteria, I see few international students at chapel and if they are there, they sit off to the side. (21)
 - Yes, discriminatory but not racist. I know that there is talk and diversity opinion among professors at the seminary in regard to many issues, including whether women should be ordained. I am a woman therefore, this is a discriminatory issue for me. It is hard to be taught the Gospel message by someone who doesn't think I have a right to proclaim it from the pulpit. As we are all human, and our experiences differ so greatly, I am sure that discrimination at some level is commonplace at the seminary. (1)
 - All of us behave in accordance with our biases which discriminate against others. I have seen people belittled for particular understandings of charismatic gifts, for personal traits and mannerisms and for cultural differences. I have done the same. I have not experienced overt racism at Luther to the degree that I have elsewhere. (22)
 - Racism is a heart condition that is most often felt in this deceitful age of political correctness. Words aren't said but there is a blatant rejection of the other. (32)
 - I have lived with individual students who hate people because of their color, or because of their being here in the USA (34)
 - On more than one occasion I heard comments made in classes by students *and faculty* that indicated (I hope unintentional) bigotry—perhaps such comments were made out of ignorance. The disappointing factor is that some did not realize that they were making derogatory or pejorative remarks unfortunately. (38)
 - A lesbian woman was discouraged from attending Luther because she “wouldn't be allowed to be ordained anyway” (40).

One respondent explained their “no”:

- No, because I have not been aware of the first-hand. I have heard from other people who have experienced discriminatory or racist incidents . I have also heard of someone who feel more welcomed at Luther than in previous places. (6)

Often in discussions about racism, the phrase, “privileged narrative” is used. This phrase appears in many forms, one of which is “white privileged narrative.” This refers to the experiences and ways of functioning and/or not having to think in certain ways, because you are a member of the dominant culture. For example, in a dominantly white culture, whites may act freely in ways that non-whites cannot. A white person can walk into a store with a backpack without worrying about store employees watching their every move. Or in cases where descriptions are called for people will say, “A black male, 5’ 6””, however, when describing a white person, rarely is skin color mentioned.

4. Based on the above, what can Luther Seminary do to increase awareness of the “white privileged narrative”?

- Include field trips to some inner-city churches, read sections of the scripture in chapel from a black paraphrase (??) workers. (19)
- We need to have open, guided dialogue and training. It needs to be a required part of our education in training to serve God’s people. (30)
- Community forums, etc. (27)
- The most effective way to increase awareness is to create a strong community where discussions on the heartfelt level occur in the café, in worship. In the library, in class. We do not have a strong enough community to reveal our prejudice and have to let it go. (26)
- Lunch hour speakers, before/after chapel awareness fair (I did not even know there was a racism committee. (21)
- Possibly work it into a class: “Reading the Audiences” for example or another ministry class. (28)
- Committed faculty in the effort... Instructors have tremendous influence and can make a big impact on changing attitudes by how ?? academic material. Cross Cultural courses (I have not taken one) provide excellent opportunity to break barriers. (23)
- I think it is absolutely ridiculous to worry about that. Luther needs to stop worrying so much about offending people of color. The only people who are offended in my opinion are the people who are continually labeled as racists. Do you know how tired some people are of this politically correct garbage? Racism is stupid, period. I have made lots of friends here on campus who are people of color and I don’t even think of them as different until I get stupid surveys like this. Surveys like this say that people of color are different as much as anything. So my answer to your question is knock off this PC garbage please. (13)

- Terminology change. (15)
- Just from one case study in the theology of the cross and mission of the church class, I learned a lot about my own assumptions and ignorance. Being with the people who experience, sharing in a safe and open environment is the most helpful to me. It's hard for me to be tolerant from people who are oozing their presuppositions about me just because I'm white and American, but working a case study together kept me from getting defensive allowing me to listening whole heartedly to the perspectives of men from at least 5 different countries all with skin colors different from mine (I'm white Anglo) from countries where many kinds of oppression, poverty and other things I can't fully relate to, are the norm. It's also been very helpful to have classes with two Black American men, neither of which are Lutheran. I think that one of the best ways for Luther to beef up this area of our education is to have more diversity among students. Christ's' Church will benefit from Luther targeting people of color and other diversity. (18)
- First we need to be in constant prayer, asking God's wisdom and guidance. Asking for a willingness to look at our sin, and be willing to be changed by others. We need to put more efforts in providing opportunities, and making requirements that will educate the student body.
- We need to take a closer look at our policies and procedures in the all the processes of developing leaders for the ministry, from the candidacy process, to graduation, to the call process, and be willing to change those things that put up barriers to those being called from backgrounds other than white, middle to upper-middle to change those things that put up barriers to have had the opportunities to be highly educated. We need to stop worrying about being nice and polite, and start putting more energy into open, honest, and direct dialogue about the issues of racism and class-ism and every other "ism" we cling to. We as the white people need to be willing to be listen without being defensive. We need to keep an open mind, and be willing to be changed by others, for the sake of other. (20)
- Obviously, it is good to be aware of such things as part of the dominant culture, as most Luther students are. However, I would suggest you try to be a little less narrow minded. I have heard lots of stories from white kids who have been harassed by store clerks. My point is not that whites are not a dominant culture, but that the lines of discrimination are blurrier than you make them out to be. (16)
- Our having mentioned it is a consciousness raiser for me. To the extant that we are and become a safer welcoming community. I would appreciate hearing from students who are not of the dominant culture share their experience and perspectives. Blaming isn't the using (??) – understanding is. (11)

- I am a white female. I have been watched by more employees since I do carry a backpack most of the time. I worked in the financial corporate world for over 15 years prior to Luther. I have been discriminated against on more than one occasion regarding pay equity and promotion. I would like these narratives used to increase awareness of “male Privilege.” (9)
- I have not seen or experienced this while attending Luther Sem. (8)
- I have no idea; perhaps the 3-day anti-racism seminar is better than the 1-day, but the lack of respect for student’s honest questions lead many of us to write off the entire day. (2)
- As a student of language and how it is used, one of the most obvious ways of changing this behavior is to examine the words we use. I disagree with example written above. Perhaps this was true a few years ago, but I have seen enough news to know that when a suspect is white, the announcers will say “Caucasian male.” People balked at the use of inclusive language for women, yet I think it has done so much good for society to help women have a voice where once they had none, or to acknowledge their contributions where once it seemed as if only white males invented everything, thought up everything, and did every important thing in history. We have made strides to include minorities and women in our history books, etc. The seminary must do more of this. Classes would be quite full in my opinion, if they were on subjects such as those African Americans or women or Asians, or Latinos who have made significant contribution to the subject the seminary teaches. Not every great theologian was or is a white male yet you wouldn’t know that from the three church history classes I have taken so far at the seminary. I also think it would be a shame to offer these contributions from minorities and women as a separate class or an elective. Their contributions should be taught within the required subject material. (1)
- There have been glimpses that the growing with suburban church is the goal and not just one of many types of churches. (3)
- Allow students to speak freely about their experience with the gospel. The seminary should also seek out professors who have a diversity of voices. (5)
- Talk about it! Talking about it brings not only self-awareness, but also awareness as a collective community. Training may also be needed because many whites may possibly feel angry and defensive over this issue. This “white privileged narrative” can happen subconsciously. (6)
- Keep talking about it. (10)
- Panel discussion at orientation; before CPE; before internship; before first call introduce awareness-Caucasian, African-American, Native American, Hispanic, Asian, Gay-Lesbian representative – then re-visit with question answer. (12)

- Luke 18:24. (32)
- Include Dismantling Racism in First Week. (33)
- Not to accept the racists as students to the seminary because they do not have love. (34)
- Try not to refer to the only black person in the class as if they can speak for the African-American experience. (37)
- Better education and further encounters, and interactions with other races, religious groups, and other denominations would certainly increase the awareness and participate in eliminating ignorance. Perhaps increasing the number of student minorities, and faculty and increasing the representatives of other racial, religious and denominational groups by inviting them to participate in academic activities and events on campus might help the campus community in the learning process and in spreading awareness. (39)
- Engage one another in conversation about our perceptions and struggles. (40)

5. Do you see this narrative functioning at Luther Seminary?

- a. Yes - 19 (47.5% of those who responded)
- b. No – 13 (32.5% of those who responded)
- c. Unsure – 5 (12.5% of those who responded)
- d. No Response – 3 (7.5% of out of all respondents did not respond to this question)

If you answered, “Yes”, briefly describe what and how.

- We are unaware for the most part because we whites are part of the problem and don't recognize it. It is time for us to take off our masks and our defensive armor and listen to our brothers and sisters so that we can repent and change.
- Keep talking about it. (10)
- It has potential. (12)
- The fact there are virtually no African Americans as students or faculty is a sign that students never have to think about their own white privilege. It's easy at Luther for us to think that the way we are treated is the way everyone gets treated in this world. (28)

- I am defensive about “this narrative” being applied to me, because it seems that no matter how inclusive, helpful and hospitable I am, I’m still guilty because of my color and social status. I haven’t seen people treated with prejudice at Luther (not that I’m aware of), but I do see people of color and different cultural backgrounds struggling more in the system and being alone more, because of many differences... as though their “experience and ways of functioning” and thinking is other than experience, because of those differences. I know that I’d have the same problem if I were in a country where the language and customs (the ways of being and functioning) were different from what I know. (18)
- In reference to white Lutheran – a lot of assumptions about experience being in a white church. (21)
- I probably don’t think it is as big of a problem as you do. There is always a privileged narrative operating in a community, you chose to go to Luther to hear this one. If I wanted a Hispanic or Asian narrative I would have gone somewhere else. (5)
- I answered Yes because the majority of the population is white and the privileges we received do not always bring awareness. If you ask this question to many white students. They many say not. However, if many of the students of color answered this question they may see it very differently. (6)
- I grew up in the Midwest, but am not Lutheran, nor Scandinavian. And I am not an Mdiv student. I see students who receive preferential treatment from professors. While I don’t believe they are aware of what they are doing, they need to become aware of the affect it has on those of us who are outside the mold. The entire community needs to understand how much the language used is value laden and bandying about stereotypes of people from within and without the “Christian Church” is a sad testimony. My mother used to say “If you can’t say anything nice don’t say it at all. I am surprised that those who talk the loudest about the ‘Christian love’ are the ones who demonstrate it the least. (31)
- I don’t know I am not aware of it on campus, though likely we are not immune to what is operating in our Twin Cities areas. (11)
- I was surprised to see how many students live in their own world with little interaction with commuters, the Bachman bunch etc., This disregard is most discouraging. The seminary supports conventions and conferences, which take them away from studies. They are expected to live (??) (19)
- Of course there are intolerant, fearful people everywhere. We can also talk about African-American churches where a white person is given the back and the frown; cold suspicion. And the so-called marginal cultures within Lutheranism have to know their acceptance and authority in Christ. (32)

- I can't say that I see too many non-International black folks around. (33)
- The racists show their hatred by ignoring the blacks, not greet them, do not talk to them. (34)
- But the majority rarely notices the privilege. (37)
- Less than in other places. (40)

6. Do you see other privileged narratives (Lutheran, American, orientation, cultural (Scandinavian, Midwestern, etc.) functioning within the Luther Seminary community?

- a. Yes - 34 (85% of those who responded)
- b. No – 5 (12.5% of those who responded)
- c. No Response – 1 (2.5% of those who responded)

If you answered, “Yes”, describe the kind of privilege functioning, and any solutions you have on how this may be addressed.

- Is there a way to encourage those from other cultures to share their experiences in class? (21)
- I think that the best way of addressing white privilege is to expose people to it. We're taught to assume that everyone is treated the same, but there are factors that suggest otherwise. Some on-campus dialogues/forums might be helpful, or maybe even required racism awareness seminars. (28)
- I think it's hard for non-Lutherans to feel welcome at the seminary. They can easily feel excluded in classroom discussion, especially if they are Baptist. Lutherans have many stereotypes of their own more conservative denominations. How can the LS community learn more about other denominational groups in an effort move away from stereotypes? (30)
- All of the above – I think its essential we realize our cultural impact on others and are prepared to lead others to that knowledge is our ministries. (30)
- Lutheran, American, Scandinavian, Midwestern – Professors have power and can shape attitudes...start there. Perhaps need to actively recruit students from other backgrounds. All students need to work at this together as a conscious, concerted effort. (23)
- Definitely Midwestern and some Scandinavian ... Make other cultures and heritages more prominent. Even within the US...Eastern cultures, Western cultures, Southern cultures – introduce styles and characteristics of these as well. (24)

- One place I have seen a privileged narrative operation is in terms of the presumption of being brought up in the church and having been baptized as an infant. For a church that desperately needs to reach a largely unchurched or poorly churched world, we ought not marginalize those who have entered the fold later in life. Valuable perspectives are being squelched. Giving other opportunities to speak and engage questions could be quite helpful. (22)
- I understand from students who come here from other places, that Scandinavian Midwestern Lutheran is often viewed as privileged status – not officially, but historically and in the culture at Luther. I appreciate that and would welcome more frequent emphasis on our oneness as children of God. I also wonder if instead of having the international students home country displays all on the same day, which is a festival but carnival -like event - to my eyes could the International Festival idea be spread out, with geographic regions or more similar cultural backgrounds be featured on separate days? Perhaps Africa, MidEast, Far East, India, Europe Central / South America and Native American would be possible cultures that would encourage less “showing” and more “show and tell” with emphasis toward sharing not just hard facts, but way of life. (11)
- Mdiv Privilege - Assumptions of majority groups – Solutions: panel discussion strategically offered social events; hospitality activities create impact of Mission classes. (12)
- I think that there is somewhat of a privileged narrative for Midwestern Scandinavian. Sometimes it is just assumed that everyone who is here is from the Midwest, a Lutheran and of Scandinavian background. Again this is not always intentionally done, but that still does not make it right. This is not always intentionally. (6)
- Midwestern Norwegians, Lutherans as opposed to anyone else, men or women, etc. (10)
- All of the above in varying forms and subtleties. We have much we can learn from one another. The “how” of addressing these issues is more difficult than identifying them. Mandatory attendance creates resentment. Building it into curriculum is good, so long as it doesn’t exclude, that is, you have to remember that those of us who are the minority – live this stuff, every day of our lives. (31)
- ELCA – Lutheran bias expressed in classes. But I expect this, as this is the denomination of choice for me. (8)
- Raising the awareness levels seems like a good place to start. (7)
- As a non-Midwestern, non-Scandinavian, I would like to encourage the Luther community to not assume every Lutheran grew-up in and old ALC (I am formerly

LCMS and LCA) and attended Lutheran summer camp (not all of us know the sung table graces). I am of Polish and German descent and not all of the “beloved hymns of the Church” known in this area of the country are known to every Lutheran. Please understand that we do not all have prairie ancestors that came from the old countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. I am just as proud of my heritage as anyone else and would appreciate less negative comments concerning Germans and the LCMA. Because of comments made to me in the classroom by students AND professors my first year at Luther (1995-96), I left seminary for a year and worked as AmericCorp VIST in Mpls. This helped me to feel connected again to a community that I was more familiar with; not everyone was of Scandinavian descent or made it such an issue. I thank God that he directed me back to my studies through the encouragement of a fellow black-female student who shared with me her experience at Luther. (9)

- No matter what Luther “does” it cannot stop a “privileged narrative” from being dominant. There will always be one ideology that will be dominant within a seminar. I feel saddened if another in the name of diversity replaced the current “privileged narrative.” Very Western, North American – European examples (except for music) Worship class includes Eastern worship, but not much of anything else in history or theology. (3)
- The Lutheran narrative: perhaps not a bad thing in that it is a Lutheran seminar. Some privilege narratives are unavoidable. Perhaps our focus should be on guarding against the avoidable privileged narratives like race and gender. (4)
- I cannot answer that question from my perspective because I am one of the “privileged” ones. (13)
- Definitely there is a privilege narrative for Lutherans here. Often the ecumenical perspective is not take into account. Also, there is an Mdiv privileged narrative – in classes we are all assumed to be future pastors. (14)
- Okay, this is ridiculous. Are you asking people to get rid of their narrative traditions? I happen to be a Caucasian, heterosexual, ELCA Lutheran American of Scandinavian descent who grew up in Wisconsin. Maybe I fit the stereotype of Luther fairly well. I also happen to be offended by this survey. Do I recognize cultural disparity within our Church and our community? Certainly. But my heritage is not something that needs to be solved. My narrative is not “functioning” in a harmful manner. It is simply who I am. I would like to think that I can stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters in Christ, from whatever background, and still maintain the integrity of who I am and whence I came. The simple fact of the matter is that you cannot get rid of people’s narratives. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, faithfully learned, taught and administered through the sacraments will alleviate more problems than a race relations class/ seminar/experience/ whatever. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, etc. This doesn’t mean that a Jew ceases to be a Jew or a Greek ceases to be a Greek. It means that both remain who they are

while mixing freely in the body of Christ, in the Church or at the Seminary./ I fit into several privileged narratives. I accept that it is my responsibility to be aware that I exist in a privileged state that others are all too often shut out of. But I as an individual am not the problem. Individuals in general are not the problem. And the unfortunate thing about race relation efforts is that they tend to vilify and anger those who seek to live out the gospel in their daily lives, without plans and procedures and whatnot. You have once again reminded me that it is no longer safe to be a heterosexual white male in America. Funnily, I feel like I've walked in a store with my cultural backpack on, and the race-relations clerk is staring at me in an awfully distrustful manner... (16)

- The Lutheran narrative. I have heard from fellow classmates how hard it is to be non-Lutheran in this community. I do not know what can be done about this. After all, it is a Lutheran seminary. (17)
- Now that I have been here for awhile, I don't know how much of it was just my feeling like a fish out of water or how much of it really was a "privileged narrative". When I came here from the Pacific Northwest with little exposure to a Scandinavian Lutheran culture, with no Midwestern experience, I wanted to go back home to do ministry and live with people that were more like me. But I've gotten used to "these people" and want to live, serve and learn among them. It has been very helpful to have faculty respond to scenarios outside of the Midwest, for instance, Jim Nestingens' stories about his ministry in WA and OR, and his appreciation for the culture shock I experienced coming here. The students that are cradle Lutherans from the Midwest definitely need to hear about how things are in other parts of the country, and it needs to be told with love and respect for those places and people. I guess that's what gets left out sometimes, and if not "privileged narrative", then at least pompous arrogance rears its ugly head. (18)
- The solutions are the same. Since coming to Luther, I have experienced this kind of "privileged narrative" through those born "Lutheran", those who have lived in MN and those of Scandinavian heritage. As someone who is white, and attending Luther, it is often assumed by those first meeting me that I am all of the above. I often find myself explaining that I do not fit into these categories, for a number of reasons. There is the feel of being on the "in" or the "out" based on this information. At times I have felt judged based on my lack of cultural knowledge. I have also found that I have unintentionally insulted someone, as a result of my ineptness to the cultures. It has been difficult at times, because I have often felt a lack of tolerance toward me for my ignorance. I have also seen grace given me due that same ignorance. As time goes on, the lack of tolerance has increase, as it is expected for me to assimilate into the culture, rather than being accepted as I am. (20)
- "White-Norwegian-Lutheran" or "white-Scandinavian-Lutheran" seems to be thriving on this campus. This was first pointed out to me by two other people from different states. They couldn't believe how often people talk about their

- heritages. They said that they didn't feel that they were quite good enough. I think one thing that could be done is when Norwegian or other Scandinavian holidays are celebrated, they should be explained (i.e., Syttenede Mai) – I don't know how to spell it) What is the background? It would be nice to celebrate holidays of students from other countries other than Luther. Asking them for their input would also send a message that we do care about the non-American student and do acknowledge her/him as a fellow worker with us in the kingdom of God. (25)
- Lutheran boot camp – we may want to think that Luther is ecumenical but is very distressing for people from other religions – overtly and subvertly we are a Lutheran boot camp. Women – although women have been ordained in the ELCA for 30 years Luther is a very male dominated environment. We have (?? Word missing??) too comfortable welcome and alleviate the unique gifts of women. (26)
 - Of course, there is the Scandinavian leaning, but that is chauvinistic of many long time Lutherans. Again, a solution might be found in a community forum or seminar gathering. (27)
 - The dilemma is not privilege. There is a beauty in a shared history and strength in a communal identity. The problems come from making Christ subject to culture. Yes, materialism blinds the heart but so does ANY form of pride. Can systems interact? It would seem that those personalities who find it necessary to maintain boundaries are not comfortable with anything very different from themselves. Anything includes ideology, ethnicity, socio-economic background, education, gender and religious methodology. When I arrived at Luther I suffered from an extreme prejudice against boundary-keepers. As I prepare to leave I honestly thank God for Luther Seminary, a place where I learned to appreciate boundaries as expressions of human finitude. I thank God for those apparently intolerant Lutherans who protect Lutheranism from change. Lutherans have a certain understanding that is important for the fullness of the expression of God within His Body. In fact, there is nothing more distressing than seeing Lutherans try to annex some other expression of Christ as their own. Such annexations appear superficial and reveal a prideful refusal to authentically listen to, enjoy and respect others. Even more tragically, such annexations speak of nervous insecurity and self-doubt within Lutheranism. While I have learned to respect the limits of human systems, I have also experienced profound joy recognizing the possibilities of oneness in Christ's love (Jn 17:20-26). I thank God for those people who not only live faithfully within the boundaries of their calling but who also live beyond them. What a blessing to touch hearts with people who know human knowledge will pass away but love will abide forever. (32)
 - In some classes, at least, if you aren't Lutheran (and truly Lutheran, not just nominally), you're "wrong." (33)

- If you come to the dining room you can find an African table which the white students do not want to sit there and eat with the black students. Since the white students hate the blacks, they do not (blacks) want to sit with the white students because they consider them as enemy. This difference can be seen form all white students not only the Americans. As I think this kind of student should not be accepted to the seminary as a theology student because he/she doesn't have the love of God, so, when they go out of the seminary they cannot reflect the love of God and fellowmen. Therefore do not accept them as students unless and otherwise they improved their racism behavior. Thank you! (34)
- American, Lutheran, straight (?) – promote openness and discussions. (35)
- Suburban vs. Rural; Urban vs. rural; Most students are being prepared (by their own lives, by contextual ed. site, by classes) to serve in medium to large suburban/urban churches. But, most will serve rural churches (37)
- Occasionally students were unaware of differences in the types of denominations represented on campus. As much as I learnt about Lutherans, I hope that I was able to correct some of the misconceptions that others had concerning Middle Eastern Christians, their history and roots in the churches of the Near East. (38)
- The identity of Lutheran here is so strong, sometimes, other denominations are ignored in dialogue, even in class. Luther was not willing to ?? his name publicly. Our purpose of learning is to know and understand the relationship between God and humans, not a tradition and humans. (39)
- There is often an assumption that we're all Lutheran, but I'm not sure that's all wrong – It is a Lutheran Seminary.

OTHER

- To Committee Members: I chose not to respond to this survey. Over the past four years, I raised two question of concern for what appeared to be discrimination. In the first case a faculty member stopped me at lunch and rather openly questioned me. In the second case, a member of the administration suggested I take my concern – if I felt strongly to OSHA. Both the faculty member and staff person are no longer on campus. I felt threatened and demeaned by the responses. I received to what I felt were legitimate problems. I do not care to go through that again. The problem is endemic and perhaps beyond the scope of current efforts. Sorry – but I will not sign nor identify myself. (36)

Part IV: Conclusions and Reflections

The range of responses and in some cases the strong reactions to this survey should cause all of us to think closely about the ways in which racism still functions at Luther Seminary. The survey reveals that the Lutheran Seminary community is a reflection of the larger Twin City landscape and the American landscape. What the survey does not and cannot do is provide an accurate picture of the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of the problem(s).

It is within this religious community – an avowedly Christian community --that the existence, and continuing operation of racism is most disturbing. For it is a community whose doctrinal, confessional tradition, and canon teaches that one is to love one another; with the same love, (or degree of love) that one has for the self.

Yet, how does a community of faith begin to address such problems? One student suggested that minority⁴ students should express their point of view. This suggestion while well intentioned misses the reality for these students. First, a minority student, does not, cannot, nor typically desires to be the representative spokesperson for their community. Secondly, for a minority student to engage in this endeavor requires ignoring risk (real and/or imagined) in addition to their needing to overcome feelings of fear for their safety as well as feelings of vulnerability.

The question regarding other kinds of privileged narrative functioning on campus, while outside the charge of the CAR committee, was a question worth asking since as the

answers reveal it provides a sense of the systemic nature of the issue of preferential treatment of some and the exclusion of others. The survey strongly suggests that those who are privileged are not aware of the privilege they possess. Furthermore, they are not aware of the intrinsic connection between privilege and power.

In considering the possibilities and problems of overcoming racism, regardless of its context at Luther, each of us must acknowledge that we are viewing the world and this issue through our own specific lens. Those lenses have many facets, including: our cultural and religious identity, as well as our geo-social, political and economic locations. To the extent that any interpretation is internalized and an intrinsic part of who we are, we must engage it directly or risk alienation through ignorance. These interpretations affect how we think, act, and speak, whether one is a member of the 'dominant' culture or a member of the 'minority' culture, within a given community.

There are certain narratives that arguably ought to be privileged in a religious community: in ours, the gospel of Jesus Christ would be the most obvious. When instead we privilege narratives of dominance and destruction, racism being the most obvious in this context, we proclaim something quite the opposite of what we intend.

As previously stated, this community is part of a tradition that teaches that we are to love one another. A significant portion of the learning community is comprised of those who will eventually lead other faith communities. Additionally, they have the further responsibility and burden to promote a message of not just tolerance but a message of love. It is one thing to promote such a message, it is quite another to live it. Yet, it must be lived, and in order for it to be truly lived, demands that one is empathetic of the other. Consider the Asian theologian Choan-Seng Song's 3rd – Eye Theology,

⁴ I am using the term 'minority' here, to refer to any student who is not an ELCA student.

which says that Christians need *to train themselves* to see Jesus (I would add God) through the “eyes” of persons from countries other than Europe and America. Song’s perspective places the responsibility on the Christian, “not the other.” When we speak of narrative privilege, it is readily apparent that this is one place where ‘privilege’ could be used for right action and understanding, rather than defensiveness or blaming the minority undeservedly or ignoring them altogether (and/or their concerns). One must use the power given through freedom and privilege and begin to look through the other’s eyes.

At Luther Seminary, there is a belief which is often overtly expressed by quoting the Pauline – “neither Jew, Greek nor Gentile...”, Unfortunately it is oftendone as a defense, making an implicit claim that racism does not exist. It is as if Paul’s words are used to negate the reality of the other and her/his experiences: a reality some do not wish to accept.

This year’s national APRRE conference was titled: “Religious Education in an Age of Globalization” where two presentations were given relevant to this work. The first, involved a group of students who studied in Africa. There was only one white student in this group. About half way through the experience, the student became very emotional and asked to speak with the teacher in private. The teacher was familiar with this kind of reaction to this trip. Most often whites become overwhelmed because they are so far removed from their own context. In this case, however, this student had suddenly become aware of her own whiteness.

Here, a white college-aged student first became aware that she “had” a race. This is consistent with those who may not see racism being a problem. This kind of response

required the student to be removed from her own context for an extended and unbroken period. It was crisis that produced recognition, which then led to change.

The second discussion involved an African community after it had been exposed to Christian missionaries. When missionaries first arrived, they described the community as a thriving healthy community. They described the lack of poverty, discrimination, divorce, and unwanted children. As members of this community became Christians, the missionaries' instructed them to abandon the practice of polygamy, and for the men to divorce all but their first spouse. They were told that this was an un-Christian practice. The missionaries feeling they had succeeded in their work, moved on only returning to the village many years later. Upon their return, they were shocked to find a completely devastated community. The women, who had once been a part of a family because of men marrying more than one woman, since being divorced had been forced into prostitution, starvation, disease, unwanted children and broken families abounded. The missionaries did not see or understand that the practice of not having any unmarried women was the backbone to the communities' survival. The missionaries did not understand this specific element of the community's meaning-making.

Here, a church teaching was forced upon a culture. A culture whose rules for life were not understood so that with the command to abandon a practice that took care of everyone in the community, ultimately and permanently destroyed a healthy and viable community. This example is not intended to defend the practice of polygamy. Rather, it is pointing out the necessity that it is not enough to understand the 'other' based on what one believes, but rather the affect of one's interactions with the other, and the need to be responsible.

Paulo Freire calls this type of example a ‘cultural invasion’ and falls under what he would consider the ‘theory of oppressive action.’ The missionaries believed they knew what was right and best for this village tribe. The reality is that they did not, as was evidenced by the village tribe’s irreparable state. It is unclear whether the missionaries recognized their culpability in the destruction.

There are other examples as well. One that stands out is when Bonhoeffer defended Jews during the rule of the Third Reich. He asked, “Who will speak up for those who have no voice?”⁵ This is an appropriate question and relevant to the work at hand. Bonhoeffer’s question is based on Proverbs 31:8 which says, “Speak up for the dumb, for the rights of all the unfortunate.” This is supported further by verse 9, which says, “Speak up, judge righteously, Champion the poor and the needy.” It is incumbent upon this community and each of its members to ask, ‘who are the poor and the needy’, just as we ask who is our neighbor. The appropriate response is: They are who *they say they are* more than who we might determine they are. There are those in our midst who feel disenfranchised – we have no right to question the validity of their experience or deny it. They know what it is they have need of, it is our challenge to listen, honor and respect what we hear. Perhaps then and only then will there be a shift to more understanding and welcoming community.

If we paraphrase Freire’s discussion on the banking of education in the context of libertarian education, we can say that the reason for learning and being educated in matters concerning racism is that through such education, we will be driven toward reconciliation – and therein lies our hope. Such education must begin with the solution of

⁵ Floyd and Marsh, pg. 86.

the oppressor and the oppressed reconciling their poles of contradiction.⁶ In this same vein, Cornel West argues: “[T]hat every individual regardless of class, country, caste, race, or sex should have the opportunity to fulfill his or her potentialities.”⁷ Those potentialities are restricted by racism and prejudice.

Overt and covert racism, the structures, and powers that enable them to continue must be addressed. Ultimately, the responsibility falls on each person not to harden her/his heart against another. Abraham Heschel says that there are many examples describing the hard heart, but that specifically callousness [of heart] is the root of sin.”⁸ Perhaps this is what racism is ultimately about, the hardening of one’s heart against another.

There is clear evidence in the survey responses that we are all in different places in our understanding of racism. Some people might plead innocence, that is they are not aware, and when they realize their error, have little difficulty changing, - their hearts are soft. There are those who say they are innocent, but the truth is they do not want to consider the real possibility that they are prejudiced, - their hearts are more callused, and so on. Perhaps this is where we need to begin, by making an examination our hearts in light of the Bible and the theology claimed as one’s own: A theology that does not tolerate intolerance, but rather abhors intolerance.

This summary is not nor can it be prescriptive. Minimally, each individual who professes belief in God and who confesses a love for God must sincerely examine her/his self. Then action must come in the form of individuals changing and finding ways to

⁶ Freire, pg. 53.

⁷ West, pg. 16.

⁸ Heschel, pg. 85-86.

make a difference for the good. Those individuals combined, form a sub-group within the community who can act in chorus for greater change.

As to “how” or “what” CAR can or should do, its members must look carefully at what students are saying along with testimonies of the minorities⁹ in our midst and consider at least the following critical questions as raised by Mary Hess after previewing this work.

- o How do we identify which of many competing motives we would like to engage for constructive change?
- o Given that there are clearly many different kinds of “authority” or “authorizing” involved in the various privileging of narratives, how do we help students as well as all members of the community, to embrace a form of Judeo-Christian authority that puts scriptural teachings first, even if it appears to contradict institutional authority of some kind?
- o What is the hermeneutic we use, that is, how can we be clear about our own hermeneutics and model an interpretive stance that is both humble and yet courageously rooted in the scriptures/gospel?

If CAR can work to develop preliminary answers to these questions and or others, which may stem from this work, it will provide and serve to finding ways to improve the current experience and culture as partially identified in this work.

⁹ “Minorities” here includes race, religion, gender, and social, economic, and cultural minorities and includes students whose program is not the majority.

Appendix A – Survey and Cover Letter

Student Survey on Racism

Brenda Froisland and I, Dennice Gooley, were appointed by Student Council to serve as student representatives on the *Committee Against Racism*. This committee is a standing committee of Luther Seminary, with representatives from students, staff, faculty divisions and administrators. This committee is researching the realities of racism, multi-culturalism, white privilege, discrimination and diversity within the Luther Seminary community.

Each representative is charged with the task of gathering information from their respective constituencies about their experience at Luther Seminary.

We are asking each student to respond to the attached survey and to respond by noon Monday, April 23, 2001.

Ways to respond:

1. Open the attached survey, type in your answers and email the survey to either: dgooley@luthersem.edu or bfroisla@luthersem.edu

To Respond Anonymously:

2. Open the attached survey, type in your answers and print. Put the completed survey into the box marked “Student Survey” at the Information Desk in NW Center.
3. Copies of the blank survey are available at the Information Desk, complete and put into the designated box.

We look forward to providing you with the results via email and public forum. Be watching for details.

If you have any questions please contact, Brenda or Dennice at the above email addresses.

Thank you for your help!

Survey

Complete each section completely.

1. White _____ Non-white _____ International _____
2. Gender _____ 3. Religious Affiliation _____
3. MA _____ Mdiv _____ MTh _____ Phd _____
4. Year _____
5. Given our increasingly more diverse society, do you feel prepared for your vocation upon graduation? Yes _____ No _____
 - a. If you answered, "No", what ideas would you recommend to faculty, staff and/or administration on ways that would be beneficial for you?

 - b. If you answered, "Yes", briefly describe what was done to prepare you for your vocation.
6. Since attending Luther Seminary, have you been involved in any training, experience and/or activity regarding race relations?
Yes _____ No _____
 - a. If yes, briefly describe.

 - b. If no, briefly describe what might be beneficial.
7. Are you aware of discriminatory or racist incidents that have occurred at Luther Seminary? Yes _____ No _____

If you answered, "Yes" briefly describe.

Often in discussions about racism, the phrase, "privileged narrative" is used. This phrase appears in many forms, one of which is "white privileged narrative." This refers to the experience and ways of functioning and/or not having to think in certain ways, because you are a member of the dominant culture. For example, in a dominantly white culture, whites may act freely in ways that non-whites cannot. A white person can walk into a store with a backpack without worrying about store employees watching their every move. Or in cases where descriptions are called for people will say, "A black male, 5' 6""", however, when describing a white person, rarely is skin color mentioned.

8. Based on the above, what can Luther Seminary do to increase awareness of the "white privileged narrative"?
9. Do you see **this** narrative functioning at Luther Seminary? Yes _____ No _____

If you answered, "Yes", briefly describe what and how.

10. Do you see other privileged narratives (Lutheran, American, orientation, cultural (Scandinavian, Midwestern, etc.) etc.) functioning within the Luther Seminary community? Yes _____ No _____
If you answered, "Yes", describe the kind of privilege functioning, and any solutions you have on how this may be addressed.

Appendix B

Student Demographics¹⁰

Figures based on enrollment during Spring 2001 Term when survey was conducted.

Break out by Program:

- MDIV Students - 383
- MA Students - 140
- Non-Degree - 35 Non-Degree
- Graduate Special Program – (includes visiting scholars)
- MTH Students – 52
- PHD Students – 45
- DMIN – 105

Total student body 765 with 602 on campus all statistical figures are based on total number of enrolled students. About 160 are not on campus but doing thesis or independent work are not on campus but doing thesis or independent work.

There are 24 students of color and 42 resident international students

There are 147 “ecumenical” students (non-ELCA) = 19% of total student body. Of these, there are 31 MDIV; 40 MA/MSM; 42 PhD/MTh; GRSP; 25 DMin; 9 Non-Degree

Denominational representation:

- 24 Luth Int'l
- 14 Lutheran - Missouri Synod
- 13 Presby Int'l
- 13 Presbyterian (USA)
- 10 United Methodist
- 9 Baptist, General Conf
- 6 Baptist, American Conf
- 5 Baptist, National Conf
- 5 Roman Catholic
- 4 Pentecostal, Assemblies of God
- 4 United Church of Christ
- 3 Christian & Missionary Alliance
- 3 Greek Orthodox
- 3 Nondenominational
- 2 Episcopal
- 1 each: Baptist, Southern Baptist, Baptist International, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Independent, Christian Reformed, Church of

¹⁰ Jean Justice, Coordinator of Ecumenical Student Enrollment at Luther Seminary, provided demographical information.

God, Church of God in Christ, Evangelical Congregational, Evangelical Free, Evangelical Methodist, Evangelical Presbyterian, Full Gospel Korean International, Jewish, Lutheran Brethren, Lutheran-Wisconsin Synod, Mennonite, Muslim, Pentecostal, Presbyterian Church of America, Protestant International, Reorganized Latter Day Saints, Roman Catholic International, UCC International, Unitarian

Appendix C

Survey	White	Non	Intl	Male	Female	MA	Mdiv	MTh	PhD	Year	Denom.
1	X				X		X			I	ELCA
2	X				X		X			M	ELCA
3	X				X		X			M	ELCA
4		X		X			X			S	ELCA
5	X			X			X			NR	ELCA
6	X				X		X			J	ELCA
7	X				X		X			J	ELCA
8	X			X			X			J	ELCA
9	X			X			X			J	ELCA
10	X			NR	NR		X			NR	L
11	X				X		X			I	A
12	X				X		X			NR	L
13	X			X			X			J	L
14	X				X	X				NR	L
15	X			X			X			M	0
16	X			X			X			I	0
17	X				X		X			NR	0
18	X				X		X			S	0
19	X				X	X				S	ELCA
20	X				X		X			NR	NR
21	X				X		X			NR	L
22	X			X			X			S	L
23	X				X	X				J	ELCA
24	X				X		X			J	ELCA
25	X				X		X			J	ELCA
26	X				X		X			NR	ELCA
27	X				X	X				J	ELCA
28	X			X			X			J	ELCA
29	X				X	X				J	ELCA
30	X				X		X			M	ELCA
31	X				X	X				J	B
32	X				X	X				S	A
33	X			X			X			J	A
34			X	X		X				S	L
35	X		X		X				X	S	L
36**	NR ->										
37	X				X		X			M	A
38			X			X				S	A
39			X		X		X			S	NR
40	X				X		X			M	A
TOTAL	34	1	4	11	27	9	26	0	1		

3 NR

1 NR

J - 13	ELCA - 19
M - 6	LUTH - 5
I - 3	A - 6
S - 9	B - 1
NR - 9	

KEY = NR = No Response
 J - Junior I - Intern
 M - Middler S - Senior

** Respondent did not complete any demographic information
 A = Respondents whose faith tradition is Christian and not ELCA or Lutheran.
 B= Respondents whose faith tradition is other than Christian.

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