

On Being a Welcoming, Hospitable, and Diverse Community

Luther Seminary seeks to be a community of welcome, hospitality, and diversity. This commitment arises out of the witness of the Scriptures, theological considerations, and community and pedagogical values that are appropriate for the times in which we live.

The Witness of the Scriptures

In his Letter to the Romans the apostle Paul wrote to the community of believers there: “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (15:7). The Roman community consisted of persons of differing ethnic, gender, class, and economic backgrounds. Paul sought to fashion a community that would embrace the differences, modeling a world-wide reconciled community. The good news of what God had done in the death and resurrection of Christ was for him a message of reconciliation between God and humanity and the basis for realizing reconciliation among persons of every nation.

In addition to the exhortation to the church to be a welcoming community, there is a common theme in Scripture that urges the people of God to envision and strive for the creation of communities of justice, peace, and mutual respect for all.

Corollaries and Challenges:

-The biblical writers do not seek to obliterate distinctions of gender and ethnicity in some grand vision of homogeneity, but urge unity within diversity and diversity within unity.

-When major New Testament writers allude to or discuss diversity, their attitude is to embrace it and accommodate it, not simply to tolerate it.

-Other(s):

Theological Considerations

Christian theology reflects upon God, the living Subject of the Scriptures, as Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer. As creatures of the Creator, all human beings share the common bond of the *imago Dei* as well as the burden of living in a fallen world. Justified while yet sinners, all human beings share one common flesh, which God in Christ took upon God’s being. God suffered through it and created it anew. Through the Holy Spirit, all variations of humanity receive God’s promise.

Corollaries and Challenges:

-We are called to live in a community not determined by race, ethnicity, or geographical location.

-God has not simply revealed God’s being to a particular race or culture. Rather, God has spoken throughout the centuries to a myriad of people from a range of cultures and races.

-Other(s):

Community and Pedagogical Values

Graduates of Luther Seminary are being called, and will continue to be called, to communities that are ethnically and ecumenically diverse—and increasingly so. The seminary itself has experienced a demographic trajectory over recent years that has made it a more diverse place in the composition of its faculty, student body, and staff. That trajectory in the church, society, and the seminary is expected to continue. It is incumbent upon the seminary to place values upon internal relationships and upon opportunities for learning that prepare its graduates for their ministries in the world of increasing diversity.

Corollaries and Challenges:

-Theological education requires fluency in a wide range of cultural, social, and personal contexts, including fluency across gender, racial, and ethnic divides.

-One of the tasks of educating leaders to serve in God's mission is to expose students to scholarship generated by a broad range of thinkers among cultures, denominations, and sectors.

-Luther Seminary must model what it means to live in an academic community made up of a variety of viewpoints, languages, cultures, and races, and in particular those from outside of European-North American roots.

-Racial and ethnic differences in a classroom affect the curriculum, the syllabus, the readings, the presentations, and the conversations in particular and desirable ways.

-Daily life at Luther Seminary can be enriched by a community of intentional diversity in our classrooms, worship, and community life.

-Other(s):