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The Emperor Has No Clothes!: Exposing Whiteness as Explicit, Implicit, and Null Curricula

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the term “whiteness,” providing a historical review for context. It uncovers whiteness using educational theory that identifies three aspects of curriculum—explicit, implicit, and null. A particularly unexamined biblical interpretation itself illustrates the explicit curriculum. Visual images that permeate the culture provide examples of implicit indicators of whiteness. Episodes in our history that are not taught create a null curriculum that reveals whiteness. Finally, it suggests three educational steps with examples to expose and dismantle whiteness.

Examining whiteness

Whiteness as a hegemony, a structure of power, is most effective when those who benefit from it believe and behave as if it does not exist. White identity exists by virtue of the fact that it is not known. Whiteness “is a discourse, a language, marked more by its invisibility to white people than its presence” (Hess 1998, 124). White people gain power by the lack of awareness of whiteness. This is something that children pick up at an early age. By the sixth grade, for example, white students often have difficulty identifying their racial identity as “white” (Harvey 2007, 1–2). When the mask of whiteness is unveiled, however, it is often met with denial, discomfort, resistance, and anger. In order to dismantle structures of racism white people must find opportunity and understand the urgency of self-exposure, interrogating their own historical and everyday account of cultural norms and economic dominance (Beaudoin and Turpin 2014, 251).

The discourse on whiteness emerged from within North American contexts. Whiteness is a category rooted in North American colonial history. That is why it may be difficult to understand the term “whiteness” outside North America.¹ It does not mean, however, that the white hegemonic apparatus does not exist in other places. In fact, a growing body of scholarship is showing how “whiteness circulates as an axis of power and identity around the world” (Brander et al. 2001, 3). People everywhere have experienced whiteness, although the nature of this reality may vary from place to place. In Korea, for example, “whiteness” is commercialized through cosmetics such as

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¹When the board of the Religious Education Association pondered upon the theme for the annual meeting scheduled on November 2–4, 2018, members from Europe had a difficulty understanding the meaning of whiteness and raised a concern for its translation. Therefore, the term “whiteness” was modified to “white normativity.”

“whitening” products that encourage nonwhite consumers to believe that white skin is more beautiful (Kim-Cragg 2018b). There are more examples of nonwhites who “believe they are white,” participating in economic and cultural hegemony over other less-privileged groups regarded as “dark skinned” (López 2005, 17). Whiteness is not only a concept and an ideological sociohistorical construct, but also a material reality, permeating such economic spheres as the cosmetics industry.

In Canada, whiteness as a concept promoted a British model of civility and was naturalized as the norm for English Canadian cultural identity. Whiteness originated as a colonial settler construct and contributed to the process of nation building. This whiteness-linked notion of Christian civilization and naturalization has been apparent not just in literature and politics but in education from public school to higher education. It has also been present in Christian outreach. For example, such sporting and social clubs as the Rugby School and Boy Scouts in the late 1800s were used to serve the mission of “the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, and Self-Respect *and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness*” (Coleman, 2006, 135). Here the desirable and naturalized norm of being Christian is associated with that of Canadian male civility. Even today, it occupies a position of normalcy, as long as whiteness is conflated with civility. This civility as a national norm is ambivalent because, on one hand, it professes to accord equality to all and to promote care for the less advantaged, upholding high and noble moral codes. On the other hand, however, it requires the existence of outsiders (e.g., nonwhite females) who are seen as morally weak, thus needing “the muscular Christian’s help” (Coleman, 2006, 136).

In the U.S. context, whiteness was created to grant a special status to people of European descent as a way of distinguishing them from Africans and American Indians. This status was put into legal code in Virginia in the late 1600s (Thandeka 2003, 42–55). Whiteness as a legal status grew to encompass other privileges, including economic rights to own property and freely move to other locations in the early 1900s (Beaudoin and Turpin 2014, 253). Cultural imperialism was strong at this time and helped colonizers to cope with the anxiety and fear of encountering those immigrants from non-European countries who looked different. Many church school materials reflect these anxieties by expressing their desire to assimilate immigrants into the white Anglo Saxon Protestant norm. For example, resources published in 1923 portray that the immigrant child is a “*desirable guest*” to the new land because she is “*clean, happy, and ready to work.*” ... As guests they are to be “*quiet, well-mannered, and ready to be helpful*” (Foster 1991, 152).

In both Canadian and U.S. contexts, whiteness was connected to the process of settler colonialism. It was a product of the civilizing mission, as well as that of the development of the immigration policy based on racial hierarchy, justifying white supremacy and white privilege. Whiteness, in short, is an overarching hegemonic marker of political, economic, cultural, educational, and religious power.

Note on curriculum

Curriculum in this article is understood as the entirety of the teaching and learning process. In the area of religious education Maria Harris (1989, 63) defined curriculum as

“the entire course of the church’s life.” However, the curriculum on whiteness should be examined beyond the scope of the church. It involves every aspect of our social life, which encompasses a whole range of public spaces, including churches, schools, and work places.

All educational institutions, argues Elliot Eisner (1985, 87–108), deploy not one curriculum only but three curricula: explicit, implicit and null. The explicit curriculum refers to what is actually presented. It involves deliberate, conscious, and intentional efforts to teach something. Often the explicit curriculum is associated with content and concrete teaching methods. The implicit curriculum, on the other hand, refers to the things that impact and influence teaching and learning. It is not intentional. It is not obvious. That is why this curriculum is called a hidden curriculum. Implicit teaching (through habitual practices and attitudes) happens but often goes unnoticed. The null curriculum is perhaps even harder to identify. It refers not to what we teach but to what we do not teach. It is what is not presented. It is teaching that is left out. The null curriculum takes place in the form of erasure of memory or language. It is done through omitting and excluding certain contents, certain people, and certain events.

Explicit curriculum of whiteness: The power of biblical interpretation and teaching

In the context of colonial conquest, teaching the Bible was often associated with an explicit curriculum. The Bible as a teaching tool of Christian mission was already power-laden in the colonial process. A popular story in Africa vividly reveals how teaching the Bible was used in the form of civilizing mission and colonization: “when the white man came to various places to colonize, he said, ‘let us pray.’ After the prayer, the white man had the land and the colonized had the Bible” (Dube 2000, 3). The Bible as the book of the colonizers, despite its translation into vernacular languages, was used to support the colonization of Africa, Asia, and Americas. The imposition of Christianity is forced to suppress the oral cultures of the colonized with the explicit claim that the Bible as the written Word of God is superior; the notion of the literary knowledge as superior to the oral knowledge was taught to reinforce Christian supremacy, which is also connected to whiteness and the colonial project.

The explicit curriculum of whiteness contained in the teaching of the Bible is most effectively operative through the overt interpretations that justified racial hierarchy and stigmatization of the racialized people. When the Bible has been taught literally, taken out of context, it may have generated “a scriptural violence” (Tran 2017, 63). An explicit teaching of biblical genealogy based on the names of Noah’s sons is one such example of scriptural violence that was used to justify slavery. The interpretation identifies Ham as the progenitor of those with black skin because Noah had cursed him, thus he is said to be the ancestor of Africans; this curse was used to justify slavery (Goldenberg 2005). This kind of biased interpretation fails to read the Bible on its own terms because the Bible actually does not say what these interpreters claim it says (Beavis and Kim-Cragg 2017).

Evelyn Parker (2009, 34–43) suggests three explicit pedagogical strategies of biblical interpretation to dismantle white supremacy. The first strategy is learning to question. Those who are used to a banking education approach where it is imagined that students

are empty vessels in which knowledge from outside must be deposited may feel uncomfortable questioning preexisting knowledge about the Bible, knowledge they take to be authoritative even if oppressive. The second is to mirror hard realities of the Bible into the present context so that students can contextualize the Bible. The third strategy of resistance to whiteness (in terms of the purity of whiteness) includes teaching about miscegenation through interethnic and interracial marriage in the Bible, which contests the essentialization of skin color and the hierarchization of the tone of the skin.

Just as it is important to challenge unexamined and biased interpretations of the Bible in the explicit curriculum of Sunday School or Bible study, it is also important to challenge the metaphorical language in much of Christian liturgy. The explicit curriculum operative in worship makes use of metaphors. Here a metaphor is understood as “a way of speaking that gives insight by juxtaposing two realities that are both like and unlike one another” (Duck 2013, 99). When the words “Black” and “dark” are explicitly used in worship to speak of evil and sin, what is being communicated metaphorically in these cases must be examined, questioning whether the metaphor “black” unintentionally points to black people, and “dark” refers to nonwhite people. Identification of skin color with social hierarchies happens. Thus, teaching by using the language as metaphor must expose its implied meanings and prejudices explicitly. Metaphorical language used in Scripture and hymnals that is used to stigmatize some while privileging others must be replaced with expansive and emancipatory languages that offer alternative metaphors (Procter-Smith 1990, 63).

Implicit curriculum of whiteness: The power of the visual image

Visual images can be subtle but powerful conveyors of information, values, and attitudes. Culture, which is often reflected in visual images, shapes our thinking and our actions as well as our knowing (Foster 1991, 146). Highly sensitized and stimulating visual images provide environments as places of an influential implicit curriculum at work in the world we inhabit. What we see has the power to inform, misinform, and transform our perceptions. Seeing is particularly critical to implicit teachings of whiteness. Whiteness portrayed in visual images on social media or in advertising product, for example, becomes a normalized space of habitual seeing. Images that uncritically convey whiteness can create a racially toxic environment that is hard to escape.

The implicit curriculum of whiteness is operative through visible images in schools where white people become normalized. The following story is telling: One day a daughter showed a picture of her family that she drew at school. The mother was shocked to see the picture and said to her daughter, “Listen. This is not your family. ... I don’t have a blond wig ... do you have a white skin, a button nose with freckles, blue eyes, and blond hair tied into a pony tail?” The daughter replied, ‘I drew it from a book ... all our books have this same picture of the family. ... And everyone else drew it too’” (Bannerji 1990, 141–45). This ubiquitous, albeit innocent, curriculum of teaching whiteness meant the daughter learned not to see her own family (a family of Asian descent) as they were. The story shows the degree to which whiteness can be normalized and how white innocence can be universalized in contemporary public school curricula.

Researching the church school curricula of the United States in the early twentieth century, Charles Foster examines a picture presented in *Picture Story Paper* written for elementary school age children of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1914). It portrays “a small Euro-American boy dressed in a sailor suit and holding a large copy of the Bible ... he is seated on a small rug surrounded by four children dressed in costumes identifiably Japanese, Arabian, Eskimo, and Native American” (1987, 454). The visual image centering the white boy, holding the Bible, implicitly teaches white Christian centrism. The curriculum embedded in the picture also exposes how children in the United States locally were implicitly and uncritically supporting the global Christian mission, sailing out to share the Bible with the nonbiblical world in the era of colonial expansion.

Visual representations of whiteness are widespread in academic institutions today, even in an age of multiculturalism. Michele Elam (2011, 32) has researched the visual content of educational materials and examined the way mixed-race people are portrayed. Her work includes a study of covers on education textbooks that are used for courses at colleges and universities. While they have “real” people on the book cover, she notes, they “conceal as well as reveal” the reality of mixed-face people and their family. Privileged racialized groups (i.e., successful professionals) are chosen to be seen. The images omit the marginalized and hide racialized people with disability, in poverty, or who are queer. There seems to be some connection between success and uniformity that participates in whiteness, namely, being white means success, being part of a dominant norm. A visual representation is double-edged “when only a certain kind of mixed-face family is being seen (explicitly) in the public arena and social media, other kinds of the family are viewed as insignificant or undesirable by implication and by their absence” (Kim-Cragg 2018a, 52).

An obvious example of whiteness as an implicit curriculum through the visual image in churches is the paintings of the blond-haired, blue-eyed, white-skinned, and able-bodied Jesus (Kim-Cragg 2012, 18). This unhistorical and inaccurate image of Jesus is presented “under the guise of scientific and rational objectivity,” as this ubiquitous image can unintentionally promote self-hatred or low-self-esteem for nonwhite non-white Christians (Bailey 1998, 74). Some studies have made links between some of the most popular images of the white Jesus and systematic racism and discrimination. They examine how modern European scientists, philosophers, theologians, and American biblical scholars were involved in creating the white Jesus in the making of a racial construct of hierarchy (Kelly 2002).

Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey have examined paintings of the white Jesus from the 1600s—when Christ in paintings crossed the Atlantic with the Puritans to North America—all the way up to the civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States. Their research shows how Americans imagined and depicted the white Jesus through his skin tone, eye color, brow shape, and hairstyle. It also explores how the image of the white Jesus rose to become a contested icon of white supremacy. The most well-known painting of Jesus today is the “Head of Christ,” created in 1941 by Warner Salman (Blum and Harvey 2012, 7). The original sketch was done in the 1920s, congruent with the period in which the U.S. government decided to restrict nonwhite immigrants from entering the country. Salman was asked during the Cold War to take on this artwork by Fundamentalist Christians who were against Communism.

His painting was consumed by millions and through the reproduction of Salman's painting the image of the white Jesus was greatly strengthened in the cultural imagery of North American Christians and around the world. By 1944, it had sold more than 14 million prints and has become the most recognizable face of Jesus in the world to date (208–10).

Seeing is powerful because “the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe. ... We are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (Berger 1972, 8–9). Many Christians in the United States carried this painting in their pocket-size wallet because of the familiarity of its image, and the identification of Jesus with themselves through this art. “I thank Mr. Salman for giving me this image to hang onto,” as one person expressed (Blum and Harvey 2012). The intimate attachment people felt to this painting may have functioned as a security blanket, something to help with the anxieties of the early and the middle part of the twentieth century. It was indeed an unsettling time when the Great Depression and two World Wars devastated communities and communist countries were on the rise. People sensed a threat to American capitalism and democracy. The painting of Salman is an example of an implicit curriculum of whiteness created by the material culture of North American Christianity, forming a highly individualized faith aligned itself with anticommunist consumeristic capitalism.

Null curriculum of whiteness: The violence of forgetting of history

Harris (1989) calls null curriculum a paradox: it exists because it does not exist (69). It teaches by not teaching. The null curriculum of whiteness is particularly integral to this discussion given that whiteness becomes so powerful by virtue of its invisibility. The construction of a racial hierarchy during the period of colonialization has not been sufficiently taught. Willful neglect of history is a form of “strategic forgetting” (Sharp 2013, 86). Or using James Baldwin's (1972, 149) famous phrase, “ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.” Henry Giroux (2014) coined the phrase “organized forgetting” to describe a form of weaponized refusal to acknowledge the violence of the past. An interrogation of this forgetting and this willful ignorance addresses how null curriculum can be a convenient or even deliberate erasure of memory. Strategic and organized forgetting can be shown to sustain the colonial domination of white supremacy.

A prime example of null curriculum in this regard in both Canada and the United States is not teaching the violence at residential or boarding schools for Indigenous children. The residential schools in Canada ran for more than a century and over 150,000 children were educated by Catholic, Anglican, Mennonite, United, and Presbyterian Christian educators. Yet the existence of these schools and what they did there were not taught. Most non-Indigenous people were not aware of these schools for decades. That is how the null curriculum is at work for the schools, and the churches have willfully neglected the history of residential schools. While some were willingly sent to these schools by their parents and others were able to attend while living at home, the goal of this education was pronounced by some of its principal bureaucrats as a means “to kill the Indian in the child” (Rogers et al. 2012, 235). The education that took place in residential schools was violent and contributed to the erasure of indigenous identity by

assimilating indigenous children into the white world. Similarly, the U.S. Congress, in collaboration with churches, established boarding schools for Native American children in order to make it easier to eliminate their “Indian identity” by not teaching anything related to their cultural heritage. Attending this school was not an option but in some cases militarily enforced (Foster 1991, 146). Such institutionalized teaching was supported by the earlier eugenics movements that spread the notion of the cultural, racial, and linguistic superiority of white people. An 1895 *American Anthropologist* article bluntly stated: “Possibly Anglo-Saxon blood is more potent than that of other races; it is to be remembered that the Anglo-Saxon language is the simplest, the most perfectly and simply symbolic that the world has ever seen” (Heller and McElhinny 2017, 78). In their apology the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate make the white supremacy ideology clear: “implicitly and explicitly, these schools operated out of the premise that European languages, traditions, and religious practices were superior to Native languages, traditions, and religious practices. The residential schools were an attempt to assimilate aboriginal Peoples and we played an important role in the unfolding of this design” (Rogers et al. 2012, 240).

Steps to expose and dismantle whiteness

“The Emperor’s New Clothes,” a story created by Hans Christian Andersen, is not just an entertaining tale but a powerful story depicting the subversive wisdom of the lower classes who mock the emperor. It is a seemingly powerless child from among the people who exposes the stupidity of the exulted and mighty emperor and reveals the complicity of his servants and the unjust system. The story points to the systematic power with which many of us are complicit and from which some benefit far more than others. Ultimately, this story is about all of us. We are all encouraged to empathize with the disenfranchized and to speak with the boldness of a child.

What are steps that religious educators can take to expose and dismantle whiteness? Three nonlinear steps are suggested. The first step is to name that whiteness exists. White privilege must be owned by white people, those who benefit the most from it (Kujawa-Holbrook 2002, 141–48). Nonwhite people must examine their own internalized whiteness and complicity in sustaining white privilege. “Coercive mimeticism” is something that can be practiced by nonwhite people who “replicate the very banal preconceptions that have been appended to them, a process in which they are expected to objectify themselves in accordance with the already seen” (Goto 2016, 114).

To name the existence of whiteness requires that we know its history. “History does not repeat but it does instruct” (Snyder 2017, 9). When we as educators diligently teach our history, especially our alarming, violent, and un-sanitized history, we are empowered to diagnose and respond to what happened before that is reoccurring again. With a fuller knowledge of history we are equipped to bring about positive change. But when we do not know history, says another historian, Jennifer Welsh (2016, 36), “it returns, with a twist.” Historians offer a helpful analysis of the recent resurgence of right-wing populist movements and make compelling cases for the role of teaching history. Teaching history as a way of naming that whiteness existed and still exists is not just about learning about the past but also about shaping the present in order to ignite the

promise for the future. For “there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise” (Arendt 1968, 479).

Willie James Jennings (2010, 1–64) offers a great model of explicit curriculum for confronting notions of whiteness by teaching how they are inseparably connected to the history of Christian supremacy. His work traces Spain’s expulsion of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. At that same moment Columbus set eyes on the Americas and Christian nations were unleashed to subjugate and colonialize different people around the world. In short, European Christian imperialism went hand and hand with a divinely sanctioned notion of white supremacy that endorsed both the African slave trade and the conquest of the indigenous people in South America (Andrews 2012, 405–06). That is why it is futile to teach by separating Christianity from racism and colonialism. A more robust pedagogical effort is warranted when religious educators successfully probe how gender, religion, race, and colonialism are intricately enmeshed with one another (Kwok 2005, 6).

In addition to teaching this history of Christian complicity, it is important to acknowledge whiteness as a structural oppression that operates beyond the individual level. Whiteness is not a choice of any one individual. While it affects individuals personally, and each individual has a personal responsibility, whiteness is a systematic power that produces assimilation, discrimination, liberal guilt, white innocence, and willful ignorance. To focus on the structural nature of whiteness is also critical because it helps us not to get stuck at an emotional level. Often people have a hard time moving out of their anger, guilt, blame, hurt, denial, shame, and powerlessness when engaging with antiracism and race-conscious education. So-called white fragility is a related phenomenon “in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (DiAngelo 2011, 1). White fragility can be confronted by a theological practice of *habitus*, which can be refused with the *habitus* of the Christian life centered on the Incarnation. When we refuse whiteness as the *habitus* of the Christian life, “dismantling racism becomes the heart of Christian religious education for White people” (M. Hess 2017, 53). To change the *habitus* and center it on Incarnation is to recognize human brokenness. It is natural to have emotional triggers. It is even sometimes necessary to share honest and visceral feelings. However, when white fragility is given too much space it may dismiss the emotional, physical, and psychological burden carried by racialized people. The key is neither to feel stuck nor to blame ourselves or others because such reactions may become a hindrance to collectively dismantling whiteness. Because whiteness is structural and historically systematized, we need a critical mass, which includes any of us who benefit and suffer from white supremacy, to learn and stand up together in opposition to it.

The third step is to ask questions. “Q and W,” standing for questioning and wrestling, as Carol Lakey Hess (2012) calls it, must be the heart of religious education. Biblical teaching can supply references of theological knowledge that evoke questions (Ps 13:1, Mic 6:8, John 9:2) (301). In this regard, “knowledge begins with asking questions” (Freire and Faundez 1985, 35). Exposing whiteness is an exhausting process. One may feel overwhelmed and be unsure where to start. It is simply not an easy task to teach what we have not been taught. Because we have not been taught at all or have

been taught improperly, we may not even know what we do not know about whiteness, let alone how to teach it. That is precisely why we need to ask and wrestle with questions. Asking questions fosters curiosity, which motivates genuine learning. Wrestling with questions assumes humility, acknowledging that we do not know everything. Humility ensures that mistakes we make will usher in positive learning. Humility also evokes wonder and ignites imagination. To cultivate wonder and imagination is imperative if whiteness is to be dismantled. We have neither seen nor touched that reality in a full sense, even if we may have glimpsed or even grasped a world without whiteness. The work of relearning and unlearning history requires wonder and imagination. Finally, asking questions invites us to take risks and trust the Spirit, the wisdom for guidance and transformation.

These three steps engaging three aspects of curriculum for dismantling whiteness are oriented toward fundamental questions of life: “Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?” (Rogers et al. 2012, 5). These are ontological questions. These are relational questions. These are eschatological questions. And these are religious and theological questions.

Concrete examples instead of a conclusion

There are multiple ways to make whiteness as a central subject matter of religious education. The Bible is foundational for religious education and so the Holy Scriptures must be used to engage this topic. Even if the Bible and sacred texts explicitly teach certain values that are problematic and oppressive, religious educators are called to discern conflicting voices within the text and within the interpretive community. Thus, an explicit curriculum of antiwhiteness engaging the Bible study must include a “multiaxial frame of reference” (Donaldson 1996, 8). It is critical to recognize “a multiplicity of meanings” (Sugirthajah 1996, 24), exposing threads of racial hierarchy and colonial domination embedded in the biblical texts themselves and in subsequent interpretations of those texts, exemplified in the story of Noah’s sons (Travis 2014, 113). The Bible also offers supple references of nonhierarchical community and relationship that could be used to engage the subject of whiteness to dismantle it.

Metaphorical language used in worship is a good example of the implicit curriculum of whiteness at work. This language issue as a concern was raised by The United Church of Christ (UCC) in the United States. The committee in charge of creating a new hymnal for the denomination, *New Century Hymnal* (1994), studied the older *Pilgrim Hymnal* (1954) and found 131 uses of “dark” in the hymns, which were almost exclusively used negatively (Duck, 2013). The story of the UCC’s discovery can serve as an example of the implicit legacy of whiteness. New metaphorical imagery such as that in hymn writer Brian Wren’s “Joyful is the Dark” can provide counterexamples of whiteness, furnishing religious educators with the positive biblical symbolism of darkness: the darkness of mystery and creation, the darkness of womb and tomb. Feminist writer Audre Lorde (1984, 37) also provides alternative symbolism of darkness: “The woman’s place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep.”

In a similar way, our use of visual images in Sunday School classes can be examined as powerful evidence of an implicit curriculum of whiteness. We know that visual media are powerful for sustaining memory and evoking perceptions. The work of interrogating visual traditions is important, as is presenting new ones that are “still in the making” (Hess 2012, 300). Through introducing concrete examples of innovative, intriguing, and cutting-edge images, beyond whiteness, our teaching serves to proclaim the message of the Reign of God.

As far as we are clear about whiteness as structural, the evidence of the implicit curricula that are operative are not difficult to find. Whiteness is pervasive, “from the rates of disease and infant mortality, to wealth, to financing and housing patterns, to the differences in frequency and method of discipline used with white schoolkids and those of color, to patterns of incarceration, to the way we embody faith practices” (Fulkerson and Mount Shoop 2015, 7). While they refer to U.S. realities, this interlocking aspect of whiteness can be found in most places beyond the United States. There is a deep connection between race and space, race and poverty, and race and prison. The key is to lift up these connections as matters of religious education.

An example addressing the null curriculum is to find some ways to teach about ignored histories. We need to dig up the untold stories from our past that expose the injustices that have been perpetuated because of racist systems of power and privilege and thereby challenge the null curriculum. *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report in Canada* along with resulting *Calls to Action* (2015) are a concrete example and important resource, respectively, to include when teaching explicitly about residential/Indian boarding schools as a remedy to null curriculum. Teaching substantial, not tokenistic, black religious education that includes black history and black experiences full of “struggle, resistance, spiritual determination, and hope” is another example of dismantling whiteness (Wimberly 2018, 185). The challenge before us as religious educators is to humbly acknowledge how little we know of our own history and how much hidden history is buried that needs to be unearthed. Without thoroughly interrogating structural and systematic whiteness by way of widely and deeply learning our history, transformative teaching may be impossible.

Finally, it is imperative that we look at our own course syllabi or our religious community and school curricula to ask how many, if any, materials are written by nonwhite scholars and whether they are assigned as core readings. Despite the growing numbers of racialized scholars, we have not paid sufficient attention to their work. When the academy as a space of whiteness functions as a status quo, it is easy to cite white authors exclusively without consciously and explicitly recognizing them as white (Beaudoin and Turpin, 258). Sometimes scholarly publications seek legitimacy by “parceling out chapters to scholars of color” without addressing “the racialized intellectual hierarchy of the academy” (Goto 2014, 31). What is needed is to properly recognize nonwhite scholars’ presence and contributions while making whiteness in the academy visible.

To do this, we do not necessarily need to reinvent the wheel but can draw insights from our elder scholars of religious education who did ground breaking work more than 30 years ago. Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng (2018, 169) recalls an event in the mid-1980s where Charles Foster explicitly attached a note on the ethnic identities on the

name signs of those participating in a panel discussion: African American, Anglo American, Asian American, and Native American. This act, she said, exposed whiteness and made it visible in that space while also recognizing nonwhite scholars' presence. The torch is passed. Dismantling whiteness will take a long time. Whiteness is a product of modern colonialism, which operated for over 500 years and that has not yet ended. Old patterns do not change easily (Foster 1987, 464). Thus, resilience and perseverance are in order. After all, we as educators are committed to our curriculum, "a course to run." While deeply "breathing in a moving world" (Moore 2018, 156), let us set a steady pace to run the course together.

Notes on contributor

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