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## Reviewing *Diversity Matters: Race, Ethnicity, & the Future of Christian Higher Education*

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***Diversity Matters: Race, Ethnicity, & the Future of Christian Higher Education.*** By Karen A. Longman, et al. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2017. 336pp. ISBN 978-0-89112-454-2 (PAPERBACK) \$30.

*Diversity Matters* is a timely, multifaceted, and indispensable resource and roadmap for navigating discourse relative to race, ethnicity, social justice, and diversity. Whilst the intended audience is Christian Higher Education (CHE) institutions, the work also has utility for religious, civic, and political leaders. Although the title *Diversity Matters* may appear ambiguous, it is befitting for a work that is a literary guide on matters of diversity and simultaneously an unequivocal impetus for the urgency of the diversity conversation. The areas of focus covered and their place in the work imply a sequence of essential considerations for CHE institutions in the transformation process toward greater diversity.

Cumulatively, the cases in section one highlight the roles of institutional identity, vision, mission, core values, and strategic alliances in providing strategic directions for diversity and inclusion in response to transmuting demographics.

Section two documents the rationales of five seasoned professionals who remained at predominantly white campuses (PWCs) despite multiple challenges and hurdles. Their narratives underscore the value of resilience among people of color desirous of permanent change; participation in leadership; and the impact of their commitments to campus diversity efforts that ensure that every person contributes and feels safe, valued, and nurtured—irrespective of culture, ethnicity/race, or background.

The narratives in section three highlight the benefits derived from alliances with white allies who cross racial chasms to engage in diversity advocacy efforts, discourses on critical consciousness of culture, and uncomfortable topics such as white privilege, white fragility, white normality, and border identities.

In section four, the authors promote the need to integrate matters of diversity and inclusion in curricular and co/curricular activities as a means of affording students multiple opportunities to grapple with diversity issues. Additionally, the authors emphasize collaboration among multiple

stakeholders in multiple units on and off campus, as an indication of their support of diversity. They consider these foci as foundational to CHE institutions' desires for lasting systemic diversity changes.

The auto-ethnographies in section five corroborate with the testimonials in earlier sections, reiterating the loneliness people of color experience as they journey along their paths to professional advancement on PWCs.

The strengths of the work reside in the following:

- The balanced representations of engagements in diversity addressed in the five sections,
- The transparency and authenticity of the authors,
- The courage of white allies to tackle potentially fractious subjects, and
- The end-of-chapter discussion questions that facilitate self-coaching and self-reflection.

While the work constitutes a framework for engagement, it falls short of prescribing imperatives for novices to consider in their individualized contexts.

After reviewing this work, we recommend that CHE institutions become proactive advocates of diversity and inclusion - qualities characteristic of God's Kingdom (Revelation 5:9) prepared for people reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

## REFERENCES

Karen A. Longman, ed. (2017). *Diversity matters: Race, ethnicity, and the future of Christian higher education*. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press.

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