

Spirituality, Community, and Race Consciousness in Adult Higher Education: Breaking the Cycle of Racialization

Timothy Paul Westbrook

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Evidence of Timothy Paul Westbrook's dependence on insights from critical race studies gives him three starting points that influence the trajectory of the book. First, he agrees that much of liberalism does not have a mechanism for ushering in the changes that anti-racism measures necessitate (17). This allows Westbrook to realistically approach the topic of racism. Second, describing his own social location as being informed by an experience of "whiteness from a majority position" (xii), he sets a model for white academics, educators, and administrators interested in the "what can

I do?" question. This model, driven by research and data, is important for white-majority decision makers at predominantly white institutions. Third, Westbrook's book, by focusing on faith-based schools, allows the work to speak to themes of spirituality and community in conversation with race.

Observing that "higher education is not immune to the effects of racialization" (1), Westbrook cautions readers about the reality of "resegregation" and "the lack of interracial learning" (4). In making these observations, Westbrook highlights what bell hooks (110) and other commentators have argued regarding racism: racialized thinking and action are permanent and anti-racism efforts, therefore, need to be permanent as well.

Using critical race theory thus enables Westbrook to bring an almost ethical force to the discussion. In doing so, Westbrook weds this ethical force with theological principles. In particular, Westbrook compares theological principles of *Imago Dei* with Critical Race Theory tenets to note points of alignment. Making these connections is helpful for educators in Christian institutions of higher learning.

Students who choose faith-based schools over others do so because their faith commitments matter to them. Generating discussion on the "image of God" theme, the book allows readers to see readily available connections between their faith commitments and the necessary interventions highlighted by critical race theory.

After establishing points of connection between normative theological content and critical race theory, the book meanders through five themes in five chapters, addressing goals for education, adult learning conditions, support systems, faith, and race. Each chapter offers many examples to illustrate the theme in question followed by a critical analysis. In chapter six, analyzing adult learning conditions, for instance, Westbrook notes how his data reveal that students in the study have "responsibilities outside of school" (87). He builds on this to emphasize that the solution, then, is not merely creative scheduling but rather having the will to create sympathetic conditions and support systems to enable such adult learning (94).

Westbrook's book brings an ethical force to the discussion on racism in institutions of higher learning. Educators working within majority-white contexts interested in addressing and redressing the consequences of racialization will do well to engage with this text.