

Biblical Lens for Understanding Fuller's Use of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Here is a brief statement to offer a Biblical lens for understanding Fuller Theological Seminary's use of diversity, equity, and inclusion language:

The Bible begins and ends with God's loving creation and recreation of human beings who bear the image of God (*imago dei*). The whole narrative of Scripture involves the story of God's efforts, having made us "good" and "very good." The breakdown of human identity from the Garden of Eden onward is the unraveling of human dignity, value, and honor because of internal and external abuses of social, gender, racial, political, and religious powers.

The story of God's promises to Abraham, the narrative of Israel, the Exodus, the Exile, the prophets, the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are evidences of God's commitment to stem the human spiral down, and to use Israel and the Church to be primary evidence of the "new humanity" God is creating.

God has created a highly diverse array of human beings, each of equal value and deserving equal dignity, and inclusive of "every tribe, and tongue, and nation." We see a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as values that name fundamental values in the Kingdom of God, and are minimums, not maximums, of a vision of the Church and world God loves. For example, Kingdom values call us far beyond these minimums into the full re-ordering of power under the reign of the One "who did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." When we call Jesus Lord, we live under that reign, and are called to "take up our cross" and lay down our power out of love and in imitation of Jesus Christ.

Fuller is aware, of course, that "D.E.I." can be language that is assumed to be secular, and driven by a certain political/ideological lens that some believe is not biblical. That can certainly be true, and is true of many other words or phrases, whatever one's viewpoint. When Fuller uses these words, we work hard to use them in ways that are reflective of the Bible's values, even as we hold forth a more expansive Kingdom transformation that will make such words anemic compared to God's consummate vision and reality.

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