The Biblical-Theological Vision of Humankind: An Overview
Dr. Elizabeth Sung (2018)

I. Preliminary Conceptual Clarification (drawn principally from sociological and historical scholarship)

  A. Life-chances: "the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions and personal life experiences." (Weber)

  B. Power

    i. "In general, we understand by **'power'** the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the same action." (Weber)

    ii. "All **intergroup relations** can be described in terms of **... the differential ability of groups to influence the decisions and relations that have consequences for their lives**. That ability is the product of both environmental and group factors: the opportunities and constraints groups face and the resources they carry with them." (Cornell & Hartmann)

  C. "Races": social constructs, not the traditional, commonsense view of distinct sub-species

  D. Institutional or Systemic Racism: "Racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates, excludes, or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it believes are hereditary and unalterable." (Fredrickson)

  E. Racialization: a context "wherein race matters profoundly for differences in **life experiences, life opportunities and social relationships**. … Due to the origins of the idea of race, the placement of people in racial groups always means some form of hierarchy. … A racialized **society 'allocates differential economic, political, social and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines**: lines that are socially constructed. … '" (Emerson and Smith)

  F. Ethnic Group: "a collectivity … having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood" (e.g., kinship patterns, geography, religious affiliation, language, diet, dress, observance of special days or rituals, physical differences, etc.) (Schermerhorn)

II. The Canonical Framework of Redemptive History: *Creation – Fall – Redemption – Consummation*

III. Humanity in Holy Scripture: *Locus classicus* and Other Pertinent Texts

  Creation

  Genesis 1:26-31

  Genesis 2:4-25 (esp. vv. 7-9, 15-16)

  The Fall and Post-Fall Developments

  Genesis 3

  Genesis 4 (esp. vv. 19-24)

  Genesis 5

  Genesis 6 (esp. vv. 5-13)

  Genesis 8 (esp. vv. 13-17, 20-22)

  Genesis 9 (esp. vv. 1-7)

  Genesis 11:1-9

  Genesis 10

  Redemption Begun

  Genesis 11:10-32; 12:1-9

  Redemption Instantiated in Israel

  Election

  Composition

  Land

  Redemption via Union with Christ

  Acts 2

  Acts 11; 15

  2 Corinthians 5

  Galatians 3:26-28

  Ephesians 2:11-22

  Colossians 3

  Redemption Consummated in the Eschaton

  Revelation 21-22

IV. Refuting Racializing Ideologies: "The Logic of Scriptural Discourse"

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Racialization: Further Explanation and Food for Critical Thought*
Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*
(New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

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Racialization: a situation in which "race" has been **institutionalized** (i.e., a principle operative in "the way we do things around here"), "wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities and social relationships" (7).

… [D]ue to the origins of the idea of race, the placement of people in racial groups always means some form of **hierarchy**. This is why we may define a racialized society, in part, as one that allocates differential rewards by race." (8)

… A **racialized society** "**allocates differential economic, political, social and even psychological rewards** to groups along racial lines: lines that are socially constructed." (Woodberry and Smith, "Fundamentalism et al.," in Emerson & Smith, 8)

… "The racialized society of **the United States** … is characterized by low intermarriage rates, de facto segregation, socioeconomic inequality, and personal identities and social networks that are racially distinctive." (154)

… The *[racialization] framework* we use here … reflects adaptation [to the post-Civil Rights era]. It understands that <u>racial practices that reproduce racial division in the contemporary U.S.</u> '(1) are increasingly covert, (2) are embedded in normal operations of institutions, (3) avoid direct racial terminology, and (4) are invisible to most Whites.' [Bonilla-Silva, 476]. It understands that *racism* is not mere individual, overt prejudice or the free-floating irrational driver of race problems, but <u>the collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups</u>. Racism is a **changing ideology** with the constant and rational purpose of perpetuating and justifying a social system that is racialized. The justification may include individual, overt prejudice and discrimination, but these are not necessary. <u>Because racialization is **embedded within the normal, everyday operation of institutions**, this framework understands that **people** need not intend their actions to contribute to racial division and inequality for their actions to do so.</u> (9)

… <u>Institutions and some of America's nonrace-based values reproduce racialization **without any need for people to be prejudiced**</u>, as defined in the Jim Crow era. In fact, often the leaders in reproducing racialization in the post-Civil Rights era are those who are least prejudiced, as traditionally measured. (10)

… In fact, **the racialized society is reproduced in everyday actions and decisions**. These are seen, as in past eras, as normal and acceptable, at least by white Americans. As one example, although many Americans believe residential segregation by force of law is wrong (the Jim Crow method), they accept residential segregation by choice (the post-Civil Rights method). The methods differ, but the results—reproducing racialization—are the same. Choice and freedom are two of the dominant American values that today maintain the racialized society. Contemporaries may view these values as the realization of America's destiny, but these values are at the same time now essential tools in dividing people along socially constructed racial lines. (11)

… Much research points to **the race problem** as **rooted in intergroup conflict** over resources and ways of life, the **institutionalization** of race-based practices, inequality and stratification, and **defense of group position**." (74)

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Racialized Religion in a Historically Racialized Society

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"The racialized society is evident in **religious affiliation choices**. … Because about 90% of African Americans attend predominately black congregations, at least 95% of white Americans—probably higher—attend predominately white churches. (16)

… Within the very forces able to render **religion** a legitimator of the world are revolutionary impulses able to change the world. … Emboldened by the sacred, religion can be a powerful source for change. Indeed … religion has been a source for change in American race relations, from abolition to the Civil Rights movement. Thus, religion can provide the moral force for people to determine that something about their world so excessively violates their moral standards that they must act to correct it. It also can provide the moral force necessary for sustained, focused, collective action to achieve the desired goal.

Nevertheless, we argue that **religion, as structured in America**, is unable to make a great impact on the racialized society. In fact, far from knocking down racial barriers, religion generally serves to maintain these historical divides, and helps to develop new ones. …. The structure of religion in America is conducive to freeing groups from the direct control of other groups, but not to addressing the fundamental divisions that exist in our current racialized society. In short, religion in the US can serve as a moral force in freeing people, but not in bringing them together as equals across racial lines. American religion is thus one embodiment of larger American contradictions. (17-18)

… The processes that generate church growth, internal strength, and vitality in a religious marketplace also internally homogenize and externally divide people. Conversely, the processes intended to promote the inclusion of different peoples also tend to weaken the internal identity, strength, and vitality of volunteer organizations." (142)

* Emerson & Smith are highly respected sociologists of religion, and evangelicals. These excerpts from their nationwide study of white and black evangelicals is informative, and is intended to spur critical thought—not the last word. We'll discuss points of agreement and disagreement after we examine biblical teaching on justice and love in relation to God's kingdom and our discipleship.

ECONOMIC VIEW: **Racial Bias, Even When We Have Good Intentions**   *New York Times*
By Sendhil Mullainathan   Jan. 3, 2015

The deaths of African-Americans at the hands of the police in Ferguson, Mo., in Cleveland and on Staten Island have reignited a debate about race. Some argue that these events are isolated and that racism is a thing of the past. Others contend that they are merely the tip of the iceberg, highlighting that skin color still has a huge effect on how people are treated.

Arguments about race are often heated and anecdotal. As a social scientist, I naturally turn to empirical research for answers. As it turns out, an impressive body of research spanning decades addresses just these issues — and leads to some uncomfortable conclusions and makes us look at this debate from a different angle.

The central challenge of such research is isolating the effect of race from other factors. For example, we know African-Americans earn less income, on average, than whites. Maybe that is evidence that employers discriminate against them. But maybe not. We also know African-Americans tend to be stuck in neighborhoods with worse schools, and perhaps that — and not race directly — explains the wage gap. If so, perhaps policy should focus on place rather than race, as some argue.

But we can isolate the effect of race to some degree. A study I conducted in 2003 with Marianne Bertrand, an economist at the University of Chicago, illustrates how. We mailed thousands of résumés to employers with job openings and measured which ones were selected for callbacks for interviews. But before sending them, we randomly used stereotypically African-American names (such as "Jamal") on some and stereotypically white names (like "Brendan") on others.

The same résumé was roughly 50 percent more likely to result in callback for an interview if it had a "white" name. Because the résumés were statistically identical, any differences in outcomes could be attributed only to the factor we manipulated: the names.

Other studies have also examined race and employment. In a 2009 study, Devah Pager, Bruce Western and Bart Bonikowski, all now sociologists at Harvard, sent actual people to apply for low-wage jobs. They were given identical résumés and similar interview training. Their sobering finding was that African-American applicants with no criminal record were offered jobs at a rate as low as white applicants who had criminal records.

These kinds of methods have been used in a variety of research, especially in the last 20 years. Here are just some of the general findings:

■ When doctors were shown patient histories and asked to make judgments about heart disease, they were much less likely to recommend cardiac catheterization (a helpful procedure) to black patients — even when their medical files were statistically identical to those of white patients.

■ When whites and blacks were sent to bargain for a used car, blacks were offered initial prices roughly $700 higher, and they received far smaller concessions.

■ Several studies found that sending emails with stereotypically black names in response to apartment-rental ads on Craigslist elicited fewer responses than sending ones with white names. A regularly repeated study by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development sent African-Americans and whites to look at apartments and found that African-Americans were shown fewer apartments to rent and houses for sale.

Credit: Johanna Goodman

■ White state legislators were found to be less likely to respond to constituents with African-American names. This was true of legislators in both political parties.

■ Emails sent to faculty members at universities, asking to talk about research opportunities, were more likely to get a reply if a stereotypically white name was used.

■ Even eBay auctions were not immune. When iPods were auctioned on eBay, researchers randomly varied the skin color on the hand holding the iPod. A white hand holding the iPod received 21 percent more offers than a black hand.

The criminal justice system — the focus of current debates — is harder to examine this way. One study, though, found a clever method. The pools of people from which jurors are chosen are effectively random. Analyzing this natural experiment revealed that an all-white jury was 16 percentage points more likely to convict a black defendant than a white one, but when a jury had one black member, it convicted both at the same rate.

I could go on, but hopefully the sheer breadth of these findings impresses you, as it did me.

There are some counterexamples: Data show that some places, like elite colleges, most likely do favor minority applicants. But this evidence underlines that a helping hand in one area does not preclude harmful shoves in many other areas, including ignored résumés, unhelpful faculty members and reluctant landlords.

But this widespread discrimination is not necessarily a sign of widespread *conscious* prejudice.

When our own résumé study came out, many human-resources managers told us they were stunned. They prized creating diversity in their companies, yet here was evidence that they were doing anything but. How was that possible?

To use the language of the psychologist Daniel Kahneman, we think both fast and slow. When deciding what iPod to buy or which résumé to pursue, we weigh a few factors deliberately ("slow"). But for hundreds of other factors, we must rely on intuitive judgment — and we weigh these unconsciously ("fast").

Even if, in our slow thinking, we work to avoid discrimination, it can easily creep into our fast thinking. Our snap judgments rely on all the associations we have — from fictional television shows to news reports. They use stereotypes, both the accurate and the inaccurate, both those we would want to use and ones we find repulsive.

We can't articulate why one seller's iPod photograph looks better; dozens of factors shape this snap judgment — and we might often be distraught to realize some of them. If we could make a slower, deliberate judgment we would use some of these factors (such as the quality of the photo), but ignore others (such as the color of the hand holding the iPod). But many factors escape our consciousness.

This kind of discrimination — crisply articulated in a 1995 article by the psychologists Mahzarin Banaji of Harvard and Anthony Greenwald of the University of Washington — has been studied by dozens of researchers who have documented implicit bias outside of our awareness.

The key to "fast thinking" discrimination is that we all share it. Good intentions do not guarantee immunity. One study published in 2007 asked subjects in a video-game simulation to shoot at people who were holding a gun. (Some were criminals; some were innocent bystanders.) African-Americans were shot at a higher rate, even those who were not holding guns.

Ugly pockets of conscious bigotry remain in this country, but most discrimination is more insidious. The urge to find and call out the bigot is powerful, and doing so is satisfying. But it is also a way to let ourselves off the hook. Rather than point fingers outward, we should look inward — and examine how, despite best intentions, we discriminate in ways big and small.

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www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/upshot/the-measuring-sticks-of-racial-bias-.html

Harvard "Project Implicit": www.implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review*, **102(1), 4-27.**
Abstract
Social behavior is ordinarily treated as being under conscious (if not always thoughtful) control. However, considerable evidence now supports the view that social behavior often operates in an implicit or unconscious fashion. The identifying feature of implicit cognition is that past experience influences judgment in a fashion not introspectively known by the actor. The present conclusion— that attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes have important implicit modes of operation—extends both the construct validity and predictive usefulness of these major theoretical constructs of social psychology. Methodologically, this review calls for increased use of indirect measures—which are imperative in studies of implicit cognition. The theorized ordinariness of implicit stereotyping is consistent with recent findings of discrimination by people who explicitly disavow prejudice. The finding that implicit cognitive effects are often reduced by focusing judges' attention on their judgment task provides a basis for evaluating applications (such as affirmative action) aimed at reducing such unintended discrimination. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2016 APA, all rights reserved)
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