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Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As a cisgendered and heterosexual white male, I recognize that people who share these identities with me have historically, and in some cases have very recently, used their unearned and unjust advantages to marginalize Black people, the Indigenous, and other People of Color, the LGBTQIA+ community, women, disabled people, and the poor, among others. This marginalization has included, but is certainly not limited to, the denial of equal opportunity and legitimacy among the halls of academia, the institution of colonial systems, practices, and mindsets, and the silencing of important diverse voices and perspectives. This combined pattern of behavior has contributed to a status quo that should not be allowed to stand uncontested, but as my *alma mater's* own Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has noted, disassembling this basic historical inequity is a complex task with no simple solutions. Thus, while acknowledging that I have likely benefited from an unfair status quo in innumerable but often invisible ways, I wish to express my wholehearted commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Within the university ecosystem, we all have a role to play. Consequently, as an educator, I have always striven to accentuate the ways in which religion has been marshaled malevolently or discriminatorily. While these actions may not solve all issues of inequity or exclusivity, students should be exposed to the “warts and all” version of religious history. For example, I have:

- Lectured within courses on Christianity and the New Testament, where appropriate, on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and scriptural interpretations marshaled to support the institution of slavery and to fight against the “threat” of abolition
- Discussed biblical texts frequently used to condemn homosexuality, alternative ways these texts can be interpreted, and changing values in places like Western Europe where secularization has eroded both traditional religious adherence and prejudices against homosexuality and the LGBTQIA+ community
- Assigned reading selections by scholars from a variety of backgrounds and positionalities, including authors of color and feminist interpreters, particularly when discussing global Christianities to allow these non-Western forms of faith to speak for themselves
- Required students to discuss newsworthy current events each week, often which relate heavily to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusivity along religious movements

I believe that these conscious decisions not to sidestep hot topics reflect my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity initiatives, but I am always willing to learn from university colleagues and the associated university office(s) of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion how to implement new, improved, or more comprehensive methods to advance these objectives.

I additionally am committed to fostering a classroom environment that:

- Encourages **diversity** of ethnicity, experiences, and perspectives among classroom participants.
- Extends **equity** without discrimination to all who enter into the open marketplace of ideas.
- Treasures **inclusivity** irrespective of demographics, expertise, learning styles or demonstrated competence.