



Statement on Diversity

Introduction

By charter, Beeson Divinity School (BDS) is a doctrinally orthodox Protestant community, interdenominational and evangelical. We affirm the full trustworthiness of Scripture and adhere to historic confessions and creeds. Our faculty, staff, and students are committed to providing and receiving theological education through study, worship, and fellowship. As is fitting, given our home in Birmingham, Alabama, a significant city in the history of American Civil Rights, BDS has sought to embrace biblical diversity and practice biblical justice since our founding in 1988.

Scriptural Basis of Diversity, Unity, and Justice

The Bible opens with a breathtaking description of divinely instituted diversity in creation that includes persons of many races and lands (Genesis 1-11) and concludes with an equally stunning vision of a united multi-racial people of God living in a renewed creation (Revelation 20-22). This diversity includes gender, racial, geographical, communal, socio-economic, and, thus, cultural differences as part of being made in God's image in God's world (Genesis 1:26-31).

In light of these and other passages in Scripture, we recognize that our primary identity is as children created in God's image. Regardless of ability, disability, racial, ethnic, or socio-economic background, whether male or female, all people bear God's image. Thus, they possess inherent dignity and are worthy of respect. Furthermore, as a community of Christians, we humbly acknowledge that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ our Lord (John 1:12; Galatians 3:27-28). We seek to be his disciples.

Though deeply affected by individual and corporate sin (Genesis 3:1-24), God's people at their best display unity that crosses racial lines in marriage (Numbers 12:1), treatment of the poor and the stranger (Leviticus 25:23-55; Deuteronomy 10:18), the composition of faith communities (Ruth 4:7-22; Acts 10:1-48), and ministry partnerships (Colossians 4:7-18). They demonstrate unity in shared ministry (Eph 4:1-7, 11-16), conducted by both men and women (Luke 8:1-3; Acts 2:13-14; 18:1-26; Romans 16:1-3). This unity derives from the unified triune God, who "shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34). This unity is not optional, for Christ requires love for God and neighbor as defined in Scripture (Leviticus 19:17-19, 34-37; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Mark 12:28-32). To please God, the policies, ethos, and activities of BDS must reflect the breadth and particularity of this biblical mandate.



Community Members and Community Practices

Throughout Beeson’s history, our community has been enriched by male and female students, faculty, and staff representing many nations, racial backgrounds, socio-economic settings, and levels of ability. Beeson is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act and creating an environment in which faculty, staff, and students love and support their colleagues. We take a traditional, biblical approach to gender identity and sexual expression, teaching that one’s manhood or womanhood is bestowed by God at conception and that sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman is sinful. The school seeks unity within its diversity of conviction through conversations and actions anchored in the Bible, community worship, and personal and corporate spiritual formation. As we recite at the beginning of each semester in our Inaugural Covenant, “We confess that we are all learners together in the school of faith. We will be cautious in criticism and prompt in forgiveness.”

Future Steps

With gratitude to those who have come before and worked toward these same goals, the school will continue to use its resources and influence to help students who sense a God-given call to ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ. The school will also strive to call persons to the faculty, staff, and student body who strengthen or expand our denominational, racial, socio-economic and gender diversity. Finally, we will seek out programs and create opportunities to help us listen to and learn from one another more carefully as we serve a world in need.

We pray the Lord would grant us humility and grace to show Christlikeness to all people. In those areas where we have fallen short, we are grateful for God’s mercy and for giving us hearts of repentance and forgiveness. Moreover, we seek God’s wisdom for growth, increased resources, and reallocation of existing resources as needed for ongoing progress.