

**Report on
Christian
Response to
Evaluativism
in Wisconsin**

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Executive Summary

Early in 2015, various Christians (mostly clergy in Wisconsin) volunteered to develop a plan to hold an event to develop a Christian response to evidence of evaluativism, a form of discrimination supposedly perpetuated by churches. Five of these volunteers agreed to serve on a core team which would write a plan and organize the event. The others agreed to serve on an advisory committee which would review the plan.

The core team met on a monthly basis from May 2015 to April 2016. They made discoveries and produced work which merits review, but also came to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate for the core team to take responsibility for organizing a Christian response to evaluativism. Thus, this report presents the work of the core team, but does not come with a promise to implement it.

The core team found that the problem of evaluativism in the church deserves attention but is deeply complex and too challenging to be addressed by most Christians individually. Cancer is another example of a problem that deserves attention but is too complex to be addressed by individuals—in fact, most individuals do not work to address cancer, yet we do not feel humanity should ignore cancer. Some people may be surprised that a matter of discrimination can be similarly complex and important. In the event that some Christians do respond to evaluativism as a church, we hope they will find this report helpful.

Participants

Core Team

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Eric Taylor

Erin Kruger

Debi VanDenBoom

Chris Santos-Lang

Advisory Committee

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Vision (What is the ultimate resolution?)*Authentically me living as gracious community***Milestones** (How is the vision achieved?)

1. New concepts (e.g. "authentic being", "evaluative diversity", "evaluativism") are developed.
2. Multiple people become expert witnesses corroborating objective evidence that evaluative diversity can be mapped, measured and managed.
3. Driven by the responsibility of having special knowledge, the witnesses develop tools/practices to **measure** authenticity, evaluativism, and evaluative diversity.
4. Driven by the responsibility of having special knowledge, the witnesses develop tools/practices to **manage** authenticity, evaluativism, and evaluative diversity.
5. The management tools/practices are applied, and measurements objectively confirm their effectiveness.
6. Driven by the reasonable expectation of reproducing the effect, the tools/practices are implemented broadly.

Mission Statement (What is the next step and its motivation?)

We have been shocked to encounter evidence that

1. Disagreements between value-types (e.g. conservatives, liberals, etc.) reflect physiological differences,
2. Discrimination between these types (i.e. "evaluativism") has significant social impact comparable to racism, and
3. The church is a hotbed of evaluativism in the United States.

If faced with evidence that the church oppresses, we believe Christ directs us to make amends.

Therefore, our mission is to gather or produce expert witnesses who can testify objectively about if/how evaluativism by churches may be measured and managed.

Mission Assumptions (What research informed the mission statement?)**Trend #1: The Science of Social Interdependence**

Recent scientific evidence has revealed that certain common value sets, such as conservatism and liberalism, correlate with genetic and physiological differences. When we find ourselves on different sides of a disagreement, we are often no more to blame for that division than for being of different races or sexes. Currently, our best explanation for the origins of our evaluative diversity is that it increases rate of social adaptation—integrated teams win design competitions twice as often as teams which are allowed to self-segregate.

Measures of discrimination consistently find that "evaluativism" (i.e. discrimination on the basis of value differences) happens instinctively, and is now the most impactful form of discrimination in the U.S. For example, in awarding a college scholarship, 80% of us would

discriminate against applicants whose values oppose our own. Comparisons of diversity of different social groups indicate that evaluativism significantly determines who will be in which vocations, avocations, political parties, and churches.

Addressing evaluativism is expensive. Unlike race, evaluative diversity can be hidden “in the closet.” Thus, the typical person does not know how he/she differs from others, much less how he/she oppresses others. Mere education cannot fix this, since new types can arise and we instinctively innovate new oppression strategies. Much as it takes the ongoing work of professional ecologists to discover and balance biodiversity, companies and nations will have to hire organizational psychologists to keep their evaluative diversity balanced.

Trend #2: Church Action to Address Discrimination

Protestants hold to a doctrine of “universal priesthood” whereby all persons have spiritual equality. On the basis of this doctrine, in 1775 Quakers formed the Pennsylvania Abolition Society to address racism. That Society spread to England, where it expanded to include Anglicans William Wilberforce and Granville Sharpe. In 1787, Wilberforce and Sharpe joined with others to form what was nicknamed the “Clapham Sect” because of its Christian bent. They educated the public, founded Sierra Leone as a home for emancipated slaves, fought to provide missionaries to India and chaplains to East India employees, and eventually succeeded in bringing about the abolition of slavery in England (1807).

In the United States, the abolition of slavery likewise sprang from church action. On March 1, 1845, the Congregational Church of Ripon, Wisconsin, hosted a discussion about slavery. The attendees resolved to form a new political party if Congress threatened to expand slavery by passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The party called themselves “Republicans” after Jefferson’s party. It put Abraham Lincoln in the White House and ended slavery in the United States through the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment (1865). The Nineteenth Amendment (1920), which extended the vote to women, also grew from a movement founded in a protestant Christian event: the Seneca Falls Convention (1848).

Although Christian motives continue to support efforts to address discrimination, more recent movements have leaned less on the church. Attempts to build an LGBT movement around the doctrine of universal priesthood were thwarted through claims of biblical condemnation of homosexuality, so the LGBT movement grew around scientific institutions instead. Similarly, institutional support for the disability rights movement came from businesses which served the disabled (churches actually lobbied against handicap accessibility laws), and the scientists and doctors who would profit from the green and neurodiversity movements provided their institutional support.

Similarly, later stages of the movements against racism and sexism leaned less on the church/republicans. Earlier stages conceived racism and sexism as mere ignorance correctable through education and through the repeal of discriminatory policies. Later stages recognized that systematic racism and sexism also perpetuate through individual instincts (e.g. racist personal preferences), thus justifying ongoing monitoring and affirmative action. With the promise of income through affirmative action and monitoring professions, self-advocacy/minority lobbies rose to supplant church support.

Trend #3: The Organizational Psychology Profession

The people expected to profit most from efforts to address evaluativism are organizational psychologists. Their career is already one of the best-paying in psychology and fastest growing in the U.S. (53% over ten years). Much as ecologists apply science to study and manage ecosystems, organizational psychologists apply it to study organizations and recommend management shifts. Monitoring of individual differences and discrimination falls within their expertise, and they are hired to improve precisely what evaluativism degrades: performance, engagement, resilience, creativity, and well-being.

Mega-churches may be able to address evaluativism by adding such scientists to their staff (perhaps claiming to “balance spiritual gifts”), but smaller churches cannot afford extra staff. Instead, regular pastors may be trained in the methods of organizational psychology (several seminaries already offer such courses), but there is a limit to what a single pastor can do. Evaluativism can threaten individual families, and there will not be enough professionals to “treat” each family individually. If we are to maintain a bottom-up world built on families, the professionals will need to rely on parents to do most of the science themselves.

Ecologists facing a similar scaling issue have embraced a movement called “citizen science” in which volunteers (often allied with professionals) monitor changes in air/water quality or changes in the populations of certain species. Over one million volunteers have joined this movement so far, and the number of peer-reviewed articles it publishes has grown to over 250 per year. The water quality disaster in Flint, Michigan, is one example in which the scaling issue compromised professional science, but citizen science was required. Involvement of volunteer scientists may likewise be required to fully resolve evaluativism.

Trend #4: Church Attendance

The Barna Group reports that overall church attendance in the United States has fallen about 1% per year over the last decade. 40% of Americans claim to attend church regularly (by some estimates, half as many attend on a given Sunday). Some churches are growing—the portion of Christians attending a church with over 1000 attendees is up to 10%—but even such mega-churches are showing declines in regularity of attendance. The church has either hit a growth barrier or is in decline; either way, the fact that people who converted to Christianity are ten times as likely as those who converted away to be of certain evaluative types implies that evaluativism is at the center of this phenomenon.

Our top priority (even before acts of generosity), according to Christ, should be to resolve our own faults rather than wait for an authority to regulate us:

(Matthew 5) ²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

If congregations and families do not resolve their discrimination in a bottom-up fashion, balance will be imposed on them. That is a reason to hasten to embrace any legitimate movement against discrimination, but especial against evaluativism because no other form of discrimination correlates so well with the division between the church and the unchurched.

Religion has long focused less on God than on humans (e.g. on our relationship to God). The emerging science of social interdependence improves our understanding of moral disagreement and metaphysics of self, thus dramatically invading this domain. Scientific advance is a gift from God which we must ultimately accept. Yet, if all organizations merely consume top-down organizational psychology—reaching the same conclusions about how to organize ourselves, how to behave, and what to teach—all organizations will become so similar that there will be no reason to maintain churches separate from governments and businesses. Rather than merely consume the new science, churches would ideally become co-creators of it, but that would require churches to be early players in the movement to address evaluativism.

Event Name

Interdependence Day

Target Audience

- Delegations from a dozen churches who can take a program back to their church (at least three people per delegation, but ideally five to seven)
- Researchers who can apply for a grant to study evaluativism in churches
- Journalists/authors
- Leaders of sympathetic movements (e.g. neurodiversity, transpartisanship)
- Anyone interested

Benefits of Attending

- Follow Christ/contribute to progress (improve health for self/grandchildren/etc)
- Renew the leadership position of the church
- Learn something
- Get grant funding (for researchers)

Event Objectives

Objective	Potential Programs
Explain the new terms/concepts	Interdependent meal and video
Encourage those injured by evaluativism (i.e. people who feel like they don't fit in) by producing and publishing evidence that Christ-following includes developing and implementing a plan to address evaluativism	Sign a petition or resolution
Organize researchers/innovators/funders to study and develop solutions to evaluativism in churches	Apply for Templeton Foundation grant. Will require leadership by scientists
Inspire leaders to organize a movement	Will require leadership by established church leaders
Organize journalists/authors to bring the new terms/concepts into public discussion	Need input from thought-leaders/journalists/authors
Empower attendees to take the movement to their own congregations	Distribute curriculum which can be used to organize an Interdependence Day event at one's own church. The curriculum, "Ministering to individuals and families threatened by evaluativism," should be developed in conjunction with church leaders

What is an "Interdependent Meal"?

It is modern custom to balance the flavors in meals and dishes so that they taste good all by themselves; an interdependent meal flips that custom on its head such that one's food tastes better the more it is mixed with the food of others. For example, one person may be served food that is all sour, while another may be served food that is all crisp but bland. To eat alone would be unsatisfying.

An analogy is drawn between the meals we receive from cooks who love us and the lives we receive from God. Some people (e.g. Aspies, social gadflies, die-hard conservatives, highly sensitive persons, etc.) currently get depressed and isolated by a feeling that their lives are individually unsatisfying. The success of an interdependent meal is measured by how much it inspires hope that our lives can be enriched by mixing with people unlike ourselves, and how deeply it causes us to feel the love behind God's choice to create us interdependently diverse.

To develop an interdependent meal is an opportunity for a creative cook. In our first interdependent meal, the servings were:

- Serving #1: Two separate cups: sour cream and sliced avocado
- Serving #2: Two pounds drained browned ground beef seasoned with cumin and oregano (but no salt or pepper!)
- Serving #3: Three separate cups: feta cheese, chopped kalamata olives, and table salt
- Serving #4: Three separate cups: caramelized onions, roasted red peppers, re-hydrated sultanas
- Serving #5: Three separate cups: pickled red onions, pickled jalapeno peppers, salsa

- Serving #6: Three separate cups: shredded lettuce, red cabbage, and carrot
- Serving #7: Twenty flour tortillas

History of the Planning Process

This effort was prompted because Chris Santos-Lang conducted survey research in 2013 to understand the truth about morality (i.e. what to teach his children). The purpose of his research was to confirm and refine evidence of several specific approaches to morality that his children would be likely to encounter. This research confirmed that people of the United States divide into at least four distinct evaluative types which are likely to be interdependent, but also accidentally found that people who convert to Christianity are ten times as likely to be of certain types than others, and people who convert to "no religion" exhibit the opposite pattern (the vast majority of people in the United States are either Christian or "no religion"). Chris took this evidence of discrimination by the church to his pastor who directed Chris to his district superintendent who directed Chris to the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR).

The executive director of GCORR recommended that Chris attempt to organize a grassroots movement to address this discrimination because local congregations would be less likely to trust information about evaluativism coming from centralized leadership such as GCORR. Under the advice of his pastor, Chris returned to district leaders asking for a list of seminarians or recent graduates who might organize an event in Wisconsin to formulate a Christian response to evaluativism.

The list spanned the entire state of Wisconsin, and Chris reached-out to all thirty people on it. Four ultimately agreed to join Chris on a core team and another eight agreed to serve on an advisory committee. The core team first met via Google Hangout in May 2015, approved a meeting-planning template around which to build their plan, and created the Pray4Fit blog where we would share our progress and request prayers.

The second meeting took place in person at the 2015 Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin. The group discussed evaluativism at a graduate-course-level, watched a clip from *The Butler* showing evaluativism in action, and shared an "interdependent meal" (see "What is an interdependent meal?" above). At this first meeting, none of the other members of the group (aside from Chris) felt prepared to speak about evaluativism publicly, so the first focus of the group was for each member to research evaluativism and develop an "elevator speech."

The group invested several months trying to develop comfort as spokespersons for a movement to address evaluativism. This turned-out to be difficult for the same reasons it would be difficult to become spokespersons for a movement to fight a recently discovered disease—evaluativism is a complex topic. Most of the elevator speeches were posted to Pray4Fit. Meanwhile, Chris posted the 10-minute video "Overcoming Evaluativism" on YouTube to meet the needs of anyone else who felt unprepared to explain the topic him/herself.

In contrast to the video, the elevator speeches did not cite science—rather, they tended to make the topic personal by inviting the listener to recall times when he/she felt discriminated. They did not point to any objective process audiences might use to distinguish whether the discrimination they experienced was inappropriate—unlike racism and many other forms of discrimination, evaluativism divides into inappropriate discrimination (e.g. condemnation of interdependent

value systems) vs. appropriate discrimination (e.g. condemnation of truly inferior value systems)—thus, the personalizing elevator speeches ironically invited moral relativism (which is a form of evaluativism).

Why was there such a large difference between the ways Chris and the other members of the core team explained evaluativism? The other members of the core team came from various seminaries which feed Wisconsin. To address evaluativism may be difficult enough to require leadership which is apostolic in the sense of claiming unusual knowledge, but seminaries instead prepare students to serve congregations which do not want apostolic clergy (read as “stubborn clergy”). In our core team, clergy proved willing to support the search for truth, but relied on academia, industry, and government to provide apostolic leadership. In contrast, Chris becomes an expert witness by personally conducting reproducible experiments which shift our understanding of moral and organizational psychology, so he speaks less as a friend than as an expert.

For the first six months, group activities were structured around the goal of slowing Chris down so others could catch up. First drafts of planning documents were intentionally delegated to other members of the group, and meeting facilitation was delegated to his wife, a professional meeting planner and association executive. During this time, one member of the core team had to start two new jobs (simultaneously), another had a baby, another married, and a fourth transferred colleges. While new clergy may be the most appropriate people to design church reform, they are not given resources to support them in that process. Meetings did not always have full attendance, and the group was unable to commit to a regular meeting time.

In month six, one member of the core team resigned. The exit interview cited a feeling that the group was drifting away from relating evaluativism to the church, but there could have been other reasons. At this point, we had agreed upon the vision statement, but were struggling to find someone who felt they had the time and ability to draft a mission statement. The most important learning about the resignation may have been that clergy who care deeply about following Christ, who are committed to forgiveness, and who believe that evaluativism is one of Christ's concerns may nonetheless choose to simply drop the conversation. Chris' wife resigned in response, insisting that it is impractical to expect church reform to be accomplished internally.

With the approval of the rest of the team, Chris became the facilitator and took responsibility for writing all other first drafts. The team approved a set of milestones and a mission statement. The emphasis on the role of expert witnesses motivated by their special knowledge no doubt stemmed from the group's experience with trying to develop their own knowledge and motivation. Although the approved milestones comprise steps typically taken to address any form of discrimination, it is worth noting that the ease of concealing evaluative types makes these milestones science-intensive in the case of evaluativism. The group refined and approved the Mission Statement as a group, but did not take the time to refine the language of the Mission Assumptions.

After the group approved the mission statement, two more members of the team declared that they were not the right people to continue with this mission (though they did approve the mission). In support of the mission, one of them even agreed to continue attending meetings, with the understanding that other people would need to be recruited to carry-out the mission.

Once the remaining three team members had approved the event objectives, it was clear that the people who should lead the event would include established church leaders, and those leaders

should be involved in the remainder of the planning. At that point, responsibility to move forward was given entirely to Chris, who compiled this report for review by the advisory committee.

Afterward

In addition to compiling this report, Chris continued his commitment to the cause by organizing "Citizen Science Belleville." The bible-study group of his church has decided to devote every other meeting to citizen science in which they will conduct and publish replications of experiments which promise to improve health, relationships or well-being for future generations. The effort to plan Interdependence Day began because the executive director of GCORR warned that local congregations are likely to balk at top-down church reform. Incorporating replication studies into bible-study groups is a way to address that concern. If each local congregation develops a capacity to replicate scientific experiments, then central groups like GCORR would be able to publish experiments which local congregations could reproduce for themselves, much as central groups produce bible translations and guides.

Chris' bible study budgets its time between various books of the bible, and now includes science in that budget as well; local congregations, central leadership and seminaries can all engage in similar budgeting. Wherever we invest in a capacity to understand scripture, we can also invest in a capacity to understand science. To leave science to the professionals is like leaving the bible in Latin. Early Christians endorsed scripture which encouraged us to "test all things" and that supposedly includes science—the rift between science and the church, as exemplified by the imprisonment of Galileo, is not intrinsic to Christianity.

One central church leader with whom Chris shared the story of evaluativism responded that it doesn't really matter whether evaluativism can be measured and managed because the church cannot split its focus: "It must focus on developing personal relationships with Jesus Christ—all else follows from this." This reaction has been pondered. To engage in science is to follow *objective* evidence, whereas to develop personal relationship with Christ is to follow *subjective* evidence, and to study scripture is a mix because interpretation is not entirely subjective. To engage in all three activities really would split focus. The more churches split focus, the more difficult they are for leaders to control. The claim that the church should privilege subjective relationship with Christ over objective relationship with Christ (or vice-versa) sounds like evaluativism, but it might instead derive from mere practical constraints on leadership.

Our experience has failed to produce evidence that the church or its leaders are intentionally evaluativistic. The church is far from perfect, and its failure to address evaluativism could reflect mere failure to follow Christ. That may change in the future.