

Lesson Plan: Repair 1

By Emily Morrell

Concept or Focus: Repair, complicity, and how we read scripture

Setting: Setting is contextual; lesson is designed for ~one hour.

Goal: To explore the implications of ‘repair’ and examine how Columbia Seminary’s history of complicity via manipulated interpretations of scripture might point contemporary communities of faith to reflect on their own histories, theological compromises, and complicities.

Objectives: Participants will...

- Share their own definitions of repair
- Reflect on scriptural interpretations that have troubled them
- Briefly walk through Yoo’s essay on Columbia Seminary, James Henley Thornwell, and CTS’s ‘middle way’
- Discuss how Thornwell’s theology and Columbia’s complicity might inform their own approach to scripture and affect their definitions of compromise, complicity, and repair

Materials Needed and Preparation:

- Participants will have been strongly encouraged to read Dr. William Yoo’s essay “What, then, is the Church?;” if possible, have copies on hand during the lesson for reference; white board and markers (outline agenda); computer or notebook paper and pens for participants to use for reflection; if possible, projector to display discussion questions and Rachel Held Evans’ quote from page 296 of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012)—quote is listed at the end of the lesson plan; if projector is not available, print the quote and questions for distribution; Bibles for reference if participants would like to read along; a Bible or printed copy of Matthew 7:7-8; chairs in a circle or around a large table, arranged in such a way that all participants can see and engage with one another comfortably.

Lesson Step and Time Allotted	Teaching Activity	Resources Needed
Opening 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Greet participants if name tags are needed, invite people to wear them.- Once everyone has arrived, open with prayer and encourage participants to introduce themselves with their name, why they were interested in joining the class, and their own definition of “repair.”	Name tags, pen and paper, extra copies of Yoo’s “What, then, is the church”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the agenda for the class and make sure each participant has access to Yoo’s essay and pen and paper. 	
Reflecting 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind participants that much of Yoo’s essay involves unpacking troubling interpretations of scripture—especially by people with privilege in positions of power - Ask participants to reflect on scriptural interpretations and theologies that have troubled them. Ask participants to share some of those interpretations and why they were troubling. (e.g. contemporary white supremacist theologies, Westboro Baptist Church, patriarchal limitations on women in church leadership, etc.) - Encourage participants to reflect on how those interpretations might be both scripturally-based while simultaneously contradicting other scriptural themes and passages. 	Participants might want to jot down thoughts on paper during this time
Exploring 15 minutes	<p>Move to discussing Yoo’s essay by explaining that his argument focused on James Henley Thornwell and Columbia Seminary’s history of racism and complicity with slavery by relying on Thornwell’s powerful position and selective interpretation of Scripture. If the group is large, divide them into small groups and encourage participants to discuss their responses to the following guiding questions for ~7 minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to Yoo, what is a “middle way” position, how did Thornwell use it, and why was it problematic? - Why was Thornwell’s definition of the church as “a strictly spiritual entity” dangerous? (pg. 4) According to Yoo how did that definition prop up slavery and established systems of white supremacy? - What contemporary “middle ways” are we encouraged to choose instead of actively resisting injustice? What does Thornwell’s theology and position of power and privilege teach us about those choices? - What do you think it means to spiritualize Scripture today? What ethical choices would that spiritualization force us to ignore and/or confront? Who might be harmed? Who might benefit? <p>After ~7 minutes reconvene the group and ask each group to share insights or questions from their conversations.</p>	Questions projected or on handouts; pens (and paper if questions are projected); copies (either printed or digital) of Yoo’s essay
Responding 15 minutes	<p>Transition to acknowledging that Thornwell and his allies justified their “middle way” stance and complicity with scripture. Reflecting on the dangers of those interpretations in perpetuating harm and systems of</p>	Held Evans quote projected or handed out; pens (and paper if

	<p>power and privilege, project or distribute the Rachel Held Evans quote from <i>A Year of Biblical Womanhood</i>. (A book Held Evans wrote after challenging herself to follow every prescription for women’s behavior/dress/spirituality mentioned in the Bible.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite a participant to read it aloud, encouraging people to mark or make notes of what strikes them. Leave time for silence, then invite a different participant to read the passage again. - Once again dismiss participants into small groups and invite them to share what they noticed, what struck them, what they liked/disliked, etc. (~4 four minutes) - Some guiding questions might include: What might Thornwell have been looking to find in the text? What prejudice did he read with? What do you want to find in the text? What prejudice do you read with? How might Scripture be continually helping us find a balm? How might that balm begin to help us repair the harm done by past prejudices and their application to scripture? - Reconvene the group and again ask them to debrief their discussion with the larger group (~7 minutes) 	<p>quote is projected)</p>
<p>Closing 10 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite participants to wonder what the past fifty minutes of conversation and reflection might have to say about the class’s theme of ‘repair.’ - Guiding questions: What in the community/church/world remains broken? Why? How have scriptural interpretations and histories of oppression and racism maintained that brokenness? How do we read Scripture more creatively? What power and privilege might we each have to leverage and use in order to do the work of repair? - Invite any final thoughts, reflections, or questions. - Remind participants of the next week’s essay by John White—ensure each person has access. - Close by inviting prayer requests, reading Matthew 7:7-8, and offering a closing prayer. 	<p>Bible (or printed scripture)</p>

Rationale or Explanation:

This first lesson works to introduce a multitude of themes: the PC(USA)’s checkered history of racism and white supremacy and the scriptural and ethical compromises involved in that history; practices of selective reading of scripture; the harm done by irresponsible interpretations of scripture when practiced by people with significant privilege and power who

use scripture to maintain that power; reflection on contemporary ethical compromises made by people with power in order to keep that power—compromises that are often upheld by particular interpretations of scripture. It goes without saying that each one of those themes will not be thoroughly addressed in one hour (or even addressed at all). There is more than an hour's worth of material in this lesson—lean into the questions and exercises that work for your group and discard those that do not.

That said, in order to introduce to the theme of Repair to the class, it is important to understand Yoo's argument of what is broken and how the church has maintained that brokenness. It is also helpful to use this time to introduce the class to their own power and intelligence to interpret scripture for themselves while acknowledging the unique bias each person brings to the text. Holding in tension this contemporary conundrum of interpretation and ethical complicity/choice with historical examples of overtly harmful interpretations of the text will provide a framework within which the PC(USA)'s checkered past will be engaged as a present reality throughout subsequent classes.

For those who count the Bible as sacred, interpretation is not a matter of whether to pick and choose, but how to pick and choose. We are all selective. We all wrestle with how to interpret and apply the Bible to our lives. We all go to the text looking for something, and we all have a tendency to find it. So, the question we have to ask ourselves is this: Are we reading with a prejudice of love or are we reading with the prejudices of judgement and power, self-interest and greed?

If you are looking for Bible verses with which to support slavery, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to abolish slavery, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to oppress women, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to liberate and honor women, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to wage war, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to promote peace, you will find them. If you are looking for an outdated and irrelevant ancient text, you will find it. If you are looking for truth, believe me, you will find it.

This is why there are times when the most instructive question to bring to the text is not, what does it say? but what am I looking for? I suspect Jesus knew this when he said, "ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

If you want to do violence in this world, you will always find the weapons. If you want to heal, you will always find the balm.

- Rachel Held Evans. *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 296.

Lesson Plan: Repair 2

By Emily Morrell

Concept or Focus: Elaborating on contemporary efforts at repair through arguments for active repentance; seeking the “reign of God” in a broken world

Setting: Setting is contextual; lesson is designed for ~one hour.

Goal: To use White’s essay as a springboard for reflection on confession, repair, and reparations. The lesson will build on Repair 1’s work to establish contextual familiarity with the PC(USA)’s troubling past in order to move toward a discussion regarding how the denomination might be called to actively repent for the sins with which it remains complicit. Using White’s essay, participants will be encouraged to reflect on active repentance both structurally and individually.

Objectives: Participants will...

- Engage the theological imperative to confess (Repair 1) and repent
- Explore White’s essay with special attention paid to his connection between repentance and active efforts to repair
- Discuss other contemporary arguments for reparations in light of the theology of confession and active repentance
- Wonder together how their lives and communities might be affected by active commitments to repair the harm of white supremacy and the PC(USA)’s complicity with it

Materials Needed and Preparation:

- Participants will have been strongly encouraged to read John E. White’s essay on Princeton Theological Seminary’s historical audit—if possible, have copies on hand during the lesson for reference; white board and markers (outline agenda); computer or notebook paper and pens for participants to use for reflection; if possible, projector to display discussion questions and article citations; if projector is not available, print the citations and questions for distribution; chairs in a circle or around a large table, arranged in such a way that all participants can see and engage with one another comfortably.
 - o Before the session the instructor may choose to send out links or copies of the following articles detailing different aspects of and arguments involving reparations. These pieces are not required reading in order to have a fruitful session but may provide some contextual insight regarding the United States’ long conversation on race, wealth, and reparations:

- *The New York Times* “What Reparations for Slavery Might Look Like in 2019” by Patricia Cohen, May 23, 2019: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/23/business/economy/reparations-slavery.html>
- *MarketWatch* “Opinion: Here’s why black families have struggled for decades to gain wealth” by Darrick Hamilton and Trevon Logan, March 4, 2019: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/heres-why-black-families-have-struggled-for-decades-to-gain-wealth-2019-02-28>
- *The Atlantic* “The Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates, June 2014: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- S.1083 – H.R. 40 Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, 116th Congress (2019-2020), Sponsor, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1083/text>

Lesson Step and Time Allotted	Teaching Activity	Resources Needed
Opening 10 minutes	<p>Greet participants if name tags are needed, invite people to wear them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once everyone has arrived, open with prayer and encourage participants to share a highlight of their week and their own impressions/definitions of what it means to repent. - Review the agenda for the class and make sure each participant has access to White’s essay and pen and paper. 	Name tags, pen and paper, extra copies of White’s essay
Engaging 10 minutes	<p>Explain that the PC(USA)’s constitution emphasizes that confession and repentance are integral to worship and Christian life in community: “...we confess the reality of sin, captivity, and brokenness in personal and common life and ask for God’s saving grace” (Book of Order, W-3.0205). Use this grounding in the Reformed Tradition to transition to debriefing White’s essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind participants that White’s essay focuses on confession repentance, and forgiveness and ask for general reflections and reactions to the essay - Guiding questions to lead toward conversation on reparations (if it would be helpful for your group, you may wish to print or project these): How does White further Yoo’s critique of a “middle way” from last week? How did last week’s discussion involve confession/what did last week’s discussion encourage confession of? Why is it 	Participants might want to jot down thoughts on paper during this time; optional printed or projected guiding questions

	<p>important for White that repentance is active? How is repentance active in White’s context? How might repentance inform our theme of repair?</p>	
<p>Presenting 10 minutes</p>	<p>Move to a discussion of reparations as an act of the repentance to which members of the Reformed Tradition are called. Invite participants who engaged extra reading to share what they learned. Transition to a brief explanation of what reparations are and how their implementation is a topic of long and live debate in the United States. <i>This will require some extra preparatory work on the part of the instructor. It is highly recommended that they engage the extra reading for this session before the gathering.</i> Project and/or pass out the following excerpts from MarketWatch and Ta-Nehisi Coates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Based on data from the Federal Reserve’s Survey of Consumer Finance, the typical black family has only 10 cents for every dollar held by the typical white family.” (MarketWatch) - “In 1965, 100 years after Emancipation, blacks were more than 10% of the population, but held less than 2% of the wealth in the U.S., and less than 0.1% of the wealth in stocks. Wealth had remained fundamentally unchanged and structurally out of reach of the vast majority of blacks.” (MarketWatch) - <i>If the instructor has read the MarketWatch article, summarize the piece’s work to frame wealth inequality as an aspect of structural white supremacy and grounds for a “comprehensive reparations program.”</i> - “Liberals today mostly view racism not as an active, distinct evil but as a relative of white poverty and inequality. They ignore the long tradition of this country actively punishing black success—and the elevation of that punishment, in the mid-20th century, to federal policy. President Lyndon Johnson may have noted in his historic civil-rights speech at Howard University in 1965 that “Negro poverty is not white poverty.” But his advisers and their successors were, and still are, loath to craft any policy that recognizes the difference....” (Ta-Nehisi Coates) - “Black history does not flatter American democracy; it chastens it. The popular mocking of reparations as a harebrained scheme authored by wild-eyed lefties and intellectually unserious black nationalists is fear masquerading as laughter... White supremacy is 	<p>Quotes projected or on handouts; pens (and paper if quotes are projected)</p>

	<p>not merely the work of hotheaded demagogues, or a matter of false consciousness, but a force so fundamental to America that it is difficult to imagine the country without it. And so we must imagine a new country. Reparations—by which I mean the full acceptance of our collective biography and its consequences—is the price we must pay to see ourselves squarely....</p> <p>Reparations beckons us to reject the intoxication of hubris and see America as it is—the work of fallible humans... What I’m talking about is a national reckoning that would lead to spiritual renewal... Reparations would mean a revolution of the American consciousness, a reconciling of our self-image as the great democratizer with the facts of our history.” (Ta-Nehisi Coates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Coates’ argument is a complex piece of long-form journalism. These pulled quotes will help the instructor frame the thrust of his argument: Like Yoo, he asserts that white supremacy has resulted in centuries of social, economic, and political inequity based on race. Like White, he suggests that reparations are an effective way addressing this inequality both practically and as people committed to equality and justice for all.</i> 	
<p>Responding 15 minutes</p>	<p>In order to facilitate reflection on White’s essay and the brief overview of arguments for reparations listed above, divide the gathering into small groups of four-five for ~10 minutes. Project or distribute the following instructions for small group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share your initial responses to the projected (or distributed) quotes. What surprised you? What had you heard before? What was new? How did it feel? - Where is repentance at work in White’s essay? Where is/what is repentance called for in the two pieces from <i>MarketWatch</i> and <i>The Atlantic</i>? - How are contemporary efforts at reparations active repentance? - Reflecting on your own, unique context, where might active efforts at repentance be called for? How might White’s example at Princeton Theological Seminary inform your context’s call to repentance and the work of repair? <p>After ~10 minutes reconvene the group and invite them to share their reflections and/or further questions with the group.</p>	<p>Printed questions; pens</p>
<p>Closing 10 minutes</p>	<p>Invite participants to wonder where White’s essay in concert with contemporary reflections on reparations might be calling the Reformed Tradition.</p>	<p>Printed or projected prayer prompt: “What</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guiding questions include: As a tradition that emphasizes confession and repentance, how do we grapple with the PC(USA)'s history of complicity with white supremacy? How might our individual lives and communities be affected by active repentance? What would be gained? What would be sacrificed? - White concludes his essay with this question: “What changes are we willing to make for the sake of the reign of God?” In your last minutes together invite the group into a time of silent reflection and prayer by projecting or distributing the question. Invite participants to craft their own prayerful responses in writing, drawing, or silent prayer. Conclude this minute or two with, “Oh, Lord, hear our prayers. Give us courage to live as your people in this, your broken and beautiful world. Amen.” - Invite any final thoughts, reflections, or questions. - Remind participants of the next week’s essay by Hilary Green—ensure each person has access. 	<p>changes are we willing to make for the sake of the reign of God?”; pens and paper</p>
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Rationale or Explanation:

This section intends to shift the conversation from one of confession to active repentance by integrated outside sources that might provide context for White’s essay and Princeton Theological Seminary’s historical audit. The conversation this week may reveal differing views and interpretations among the group—if that is the case, ensure that the conversation remains oriented around the Reformed Tradition’s call to repentance and the previous week’s discussion of the systemic sins of racism and white supremacy in the PC(USA). These conversations may be challenging depending on the dynamics and demographics of each study group; it is my hope that the range of sources and guiding questions listed above will provide most people access to engage this material with thoughtful compassion and neighborly love.

Like lesson one, this outline provides more material than one hour allows. Entering this second gathering, as group dynamics become more apparent, take advantage of your group’s preexisting knowledge, curiosity, and willingness to engage as you see fit. Based on these dynamics, the instructor may choose to take longer with the presenting portion than the closing reflections—if the dynamics of the group are such that extended instruction will be appreciated, take advantage of the presentation section to delve into the arguments of the extra reading. If the group tends to value open time for reflection and discussion, encourage that engagement during the closing.

This lesson also leaves room for free form instruction and summary regarding extra reading—especially with regards to the *MarketWatch* and Ta-Nehisi Coates article. The instructor for the lesson is strongly encouraged to read both pieces before the gathering.

Lesson Plan: Repair 3

By Emily Morrell

Concept or Focus: Telling the truth about difficult histories (and presents); exploring “notable silences”; wondering how Yoo’s question, “What, then, is the Church?” informs that work

Setting: Setting is contextual; lesson is designed for ~one hour.

Goal: To use Green’s essay as a conduit to conduct conversation about truth telling, especially when experiences of what is true differ according to one’s race and the community’s history. The lesson will build on Repair 2’s deep dive into reparations in the context of slavery in the United States in order to look more closely at the communal effort at truth telling required by repair work. Green’s essay will encourage participants to reflect on the Church’s call to consider how to believe its members in order to avoid complicit silences and reform racist structures of power and privilege.

Objectives: Participants will...

- Reflect on their own experiences of truth telling—even and especially when those experiences were difficult
- Explore Green’s essay, noting her emphasis on the constructive power of truth telling, the avoidance of complicit silence, and the constructive work required by the telling and believing of hard truths
- Engage the contemporary example of restorative truth telling in the context of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Wonder together how the Church might commit itself to embracing hard truths about itself and, in so doing, speak truth to broader systems and structures of power

Materials Needed and Preparation:

- Participants will have been strongly encouraged to read Hilary N. Green’s essay, “What, then, is the Church?: A Path Forward for Columbia Seminary and Its Slave Past”—if possible, have copies on hand during the lesson for reference; white board and markers (outline agenda); computer or notebook paper and pens for participants to use for reflection; if possible, projector to display discussion questions and video clip(s); if projector is not available, print the citations and questions for distribution and facilitate video viewing on a laptop, tablet, or computer; Bibles for reference if participants would like to read along; a Bible or printed copy of Amos 5: 14-15; 24; chairs in a circle or around a large table, arranged in such a way that all participants can see and engage with one another comfortably.
 - o Before the session the instructor may choose to familiarize themselves with a brief history of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some resources include:

- Brown University’s Choices Program brief videos found here:
<https://www.choices.edu/video/what-was-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc/>
- South Africa’s official Truth and Reconciliation Commission Website:
<https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>
- *The Word’s* “South Africa’s imperfect progress, 20 years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” by Mary Kay Magistad, April 6, 2017 (includes option to listen as radio broadcast):
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-04-06/south-africas-imperfect-progress-20-years-after-truth-reconciliation-commission>
- *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Desmond Tutu (New York: Doubleday, 1999)

Lesson Step and Time Allotted	Teaching Activity	Resources Needed
Opening 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greet participants if name tags are needed, invite people to wear them. - Once everyone has arrived, open with prayer and encourage participants to share a highlight of their week and their own impressions/definitions of what it means tell the truth. - Review the agenda for the class and make sure each participant has access to Green’s essay and pen and paper. 	Name tags, pen and paper, extra copies of Green’s essay
Reflecting 10 minutes	<p>Remind participants that Green’s argument revolves around the assertion that “reconciliation efforts must begin by establishing a truthful account.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Either project or distribute handouts with the following questions and ask participants to silently reflect on the two separate instances in writing, drawing, etc. for ~four minutes: 1. Recall a time you told a hard truth—either to yourself, a peer, a family member, a coworker, etc. What was that experience like? Why was it difficult? 2. Recall a time a hard truth was told you. Had you wronged someone you loved or said/participated in something that offended a person whose opinion you value? What was it like to receive the telling of a hard truth about yourself? How did you respond? What did you do with that new information? - Invite participants to reflect on their answers (as they are comfortable) with a neighbor for ~two minutes then invite each pair to share insights with the larger group. 	Either project questions and supply scratch paper and pens or distribute questions on a preprinted handout

<p>Exploring 15 minutes</p>	<p>Having reflected on personal experiences of truth telling and receiving, move to a discussion of Green’s article in detail. Invite the group to split into groups of three-four and reflect on following distributed or projected questions for ~five minutes (ensure that each group has access to Green’s essay):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were your initial responses to Green’s argument? What struck you? If you had to summarize her essay in response to Yoo, what would you say? - How does Green argue that Thornwell and his “southern religious-leaning academics” contemporaries ignored truth? What gave Thornwell the ability to assert his inaccurate ‘truth’ as authoritative? - In what ways does Green reinforce the inadequacies of what Yoo called Thornwell’s ‘middle way?’ How does that middle way and the compromises it required avoid truth? - What role does silence play in avoiding hard truths? - How does Green suggest Thornwell’s question, “What, then, is the Church?” might reframe a conversation about truth in the Church and lead to a more just future? <p>After ~five minutes reconvene the group to continue to share and reflect on the above questions and Green’s argument broadly.</p>	<p>Printed or projected questions visible for each group; digital or hard copies of Green’s essay; pens and paper for participants to reflect if they wish to do so</p>
<p>Responding 15 minutes</p>	<p>Point participants toward Green’s over-arching theme of truth telling in order to achieve reconciliation: breaking harmful silences, speaking truth to power, taking constructive action toward justice as a response to hearing and believing hard truths, etc. Explain that a case study for how this type of repair has played out occurred (and is occurring) in South Africa following the end of Apartheid in 1994. As an introduction to South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission show one (or both) of the following videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “What was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?” by Newell Stultz through The Choices Program at Brown University: https://www.choices.edu/video/what-was-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc/ (This video is two minutes of lecture.) - “Facing the Truth” introduction from <i>Facing the Truth</i>, directed and produced and Gail Pellett by Public Affairs Television for PBS: https://www.choices.edu/video/what-was-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-trc/ (Stop the clip at 6:27. The clip contains graphic descriptions of violence and troubling images. If 	<p>Projector or laptop for video viewing; projected or distributed questions; pens and paper</p>

	<p>you choose to use it, offer a content warning for participants.)</p> <p>After viewing, ensure that participants have a baseline understanding of Apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, then split into groups of 3-4 and project or distribute the following discussion questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission help South Africa begin to process and heal after Apartheid? - What did reconciliation mean in the context of South Africa? Based on our conversations over the past few weeks, what might it mean in a post-slavery, post-Jim Crow United States? - How was repair dependent on telling hard truths in South Africa after the fall of Apartheid? - What might the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have to teach us about the work of honest repair? 	
<p>Closing 10 minutes</p>	<p>Reconvene the group and ask participants to share their insights and responses. Encourage conversation, continuing to reflect on the questions above about how truth telling (and truth hearing) might be part of the work of repair to which the church is called.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on the above conversation, you might pose a final question for reflection: What, then, is the Church? - Invite any final thoughts, reflections, or questions. <p>Close with a reading of selected verses from Amos 5: 14-15; 24 and a final prayer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind participants of the next week’s essay by Mitzi Smith—ensure each person has access. 	

Rationale or Explanation:

This section builds on the previous week’s discussion of reparations as an element of repair in order to highlight another aspect of communal efforts toward justice: truth telling. The session begins by encouraging participants to reflect on personal experiences of truth telling and hearing in order to establish the universality of both the rewarding and difficult elements of that process. Then, using Green’s essay as a jumping off point, participants will reflect on her continued commentary on Thornwell’s (and his contemporaries’) power and the ways that power provided him the unique ability to create and assert a very particular narrative. This effort to tie power to willfully ignoring and silencing difficult truths will encourage participants to consider what a church might look like that valued all voices—even those who the institution has (and continues to) harmed.

Based on the group’s dynamics and knowledge of Apartheid and the TRC, the instructor may choose how best to conduct the Responding section of the lesson. The instructor should use their discretion in determining which clip to show and how much contextual information should

be given to accompany it. It will be helpful if the instructor has explored the articles listed above in order to help productively guide the conversation. The TRC in South Africa is far from a perfect example of the reconciliatory power of truth telling; however, it is a helpful case study in order to facilitate conversation on how communities might attempt to work at repair and live together in love and justice.

As with previous weeks, this lesson plan contains more material than an hour allows. Again, it is left to the instructor to determine which sections the group will likely find more fruitful than others. Encourage conversation and reflection in the moments where it flourishes, and, if a section does not seem to engage the group, feel free to move on to material and questions that speak more to the class' unique experience and context.

Lesson Plan: Repair 4

By Emily Morrell

Concept or Focus: Exploring new ways of Biblical interpretation, neighbor-love, and how new ways of reading and loving might change the Church for the sake of repair

Setting: Setting is contextual; lesson is designed for ~one hour.

Goal: To use Smith’s essay as a blueprint for discussion and a conduit for commitment to new ways of reading scripture and responding in love. This final gathering will frame repair as an act of love, a commitment to anti-racism, and a call from a God of love on the lives of broken people and a flawed institution. Participants will be encouraged to reflect both personally and systemically on how to contribute to the work of repair as an act of neighbor-love.

Objectives: Participants will...

- Orient discussion around contextual/cultural frameworks for reading and reflect on the discussions of previous gatherings, considering how the group has been cultivating a hermeneutic of suspicion
- Explore Smith’s essay in three parts: scriptural reflection, neighbor-love, and a call to the Church
- Wonder together what it might mean to apply Smith’s three-part argument to the group’s unique context
- Share and reflect on new tools in each participant’s toolbox that the sessions have helped cultivate and hone

Materials Needed and Preparation:

- Participants will have been strongly encouraged to read Mitzi J. Smith’s essay, “What, then, is the Church?: A Womanist Biblical Scholar’s Response”—if possible, have copies on hand during the lesson for reference; white board and markers (outline agenda); computer or notebook paper and pens for participants to use for reflection; if possible, projector to display discussion questions; if projector is not available, print the questions for distribution; chairs in a circle or around a large table, arranged in such a way that all participants can see and engage with one another comfortably.

Lesson Step and Time Allotted	Teaching Activity	Resources Needed
Opening 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Greet participants if name tags are needed, invite people to wear them.- Once everyone has arrived, open with prayer and encourage participants to share a highlight of their week. Remind participants of the first week’s prompt to share their own definitions of repair.	Name tags, pen and paper, extra copies of Smith’s essay

	<p>Again, ask the group to share that definition, especially in regard to the life of the church, and reflect on how it might have shifted or changed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the agenda for the class and make sure each participant has access to Green’s essay and pen and paper. 	
<p>Reflecting 10 minutes</p>	<p>Remind participants that Smith’s essay is rooted in her commitment to reading scripture through her unique “cultural framework.” Point the group to the end of the first paragraph of Smith’s essay in order to facilitate a discussion of reading through a unique cultural framework and cultivating a hermeneutic of suspicion. Project or distribute the following questions to facilitate initial discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smith reads scripture with a womanist perspective—privileging “the experiences, artifacts, epistemologies, and wisdom of black women, the ancestors, and [their] communities.” This is her unique “cultural framework.” What is your cultural framework? What is this group’s cultural framework? - Whose experiences and wisdom inform your approach to scripture and faith? Why? How? - How does Smith’s womanist perspective lead her to embrace a “hermeneutic of suspicion?” - What, if anything, about your cultural framework leads you to approach scripture with an eye out for how particular people or events are addressed? (E.g. how women are talked about and treated, how class and geography might affect Biblical accounts, etc.) 	<p>Either project questions and supply scratch paper and pens or distribute questions on a preprinted handout</p>
<p>Exploring 15 minutes</p>	<p>Having reflected on cultural frameworks and hermeneutics, move to a discussion of Smith’s article in three parts. Invite the group to split into three groups and assign each group a section of Smith’s article: slavery, Biblical interpretation, and the church; neighbor-love; the Church as a human institution. Invite each group to take 5-7 minutes to reflect on their section and create a plan for presenting the major points of each section to the rest of the group. Some broad, guiding questions to distribute or project during this time are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Smith’s main point in your section? Is there more than one? - How does this point apply to our theme of repair? - Did anything surprise you about this section of the paper? What was it and why? - If you had to pick one sentence from this section that best describes Smith’s point, what would it be? <p>After 5-7 minutes reconvene and invite each group to share their summaries and responses. After each group</p>	<p>Printed or projected questions visible for each group; digital or hard copies of Green’s essay; pens and paper for participants to take notes if they wish to do so</p>

	presents ask for questions or comments from other participants.	
Responding 15 minutes	<p>Point participants toward Smith’s broader argument for neighbor-love as active, anti-racist work to repair harm within the Church and the world. Remind the group that Thornwell and his contemporaries’ destructive interpretations of scripture took hold due to the power they held. Invite participants to name aloud the types of power Thornwell held and how he exercised it. Project or distribute the following quote by Chanequa Walker-Barnes cited by Smith: “...womanists reject outright the notion that reconciliation can be reduced to interpersonal relationships because we are fully aware that <i>power</i> structures relationship... Womanists demand reconciliation [and reparations] that confront inequalities in power, privilege, and access. Its telos [end] is not simply the cessation of racial hostility; it is the establishment of justice and liberation for all [people]....” Again, invite participants to split into groups of three or four to discuss the following questions (it might be helpful to leave 1-2 minutes for silent reflection before initiating conversation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your initial reactions to the Barnes quote with which Smith concludes her essay? - Reflecting on our conversations about reparations and truth telling, what is the difference between “simply the cessation of racial hostility” and “liberation for all?” How might liberation push us toward more active repair work? - What power do you have? Personally? Socially? Structurally? (e.g. race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) How might you use that power to work toward repair and liberation? - What power do you lack? How might you partner with allies? - How is your power related to the way you can enact and support neighbor-love? 	Projected or distributed quote and questions
Closing 10 minutes	<p>Reconvene the group and ask participants to share their insights and responses. Encourage conversation, continuing to reflect on the questions above about individual and collective power in concert with efforts toward liberation and neighbor-love.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a closing exercise invite participants to reflect on the following excerpts from each essay (these may be printed or projected): - “In answering the question, ‘What, then, is the Church?’, Thornwell began by identifying what the church was not. The Church was not ‘a moral instituted of universal good’ and did not have a divine commission to ‘construct society afresh’ or ‘rearrange the distribution of its class.’ Rather, the 	Printed or projected questions and benediction; pens and paper

	<p>Church, as Thornwell saw it, was a strictly spiritual entity...” (Yoo, 4).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “How can we effectively address grave errors committed by persons throughout history... How can we possibly fix the legacy of slavery in the United States of America?...What changes are we willing to make for the sake of the reign of God?” (White, 1, 3). - “All reconciliation efforts must begin by establishing a truthful account... Thornwell’s question, ‘What, then, is the Church?’ is a necessary first step. If one considers the Church as the people and not a physical structure, Thornwell’s question opens up the possibility of a radical, inclusive, and community-based solution...the seeking of and listening to the various constituencies of descendant communities” (Green, 1, 4-5). - “I read the Bible for freedom, justice, and neighbor-love. A moderate response to evil discourages neighbor-love. Neighbor-love is a divine imperative... The church and seminary, as institutions, and their individual constituents and members must embody neighbor-love toward each other and all of God’s...creation, in very concrete and particular ways.” (Smith, 1) - Invite participants to reflect silently for ~1 minute then, as they are comfortable, to share their responses to the following questions (project or distribute): Based on our conversations about these essays and God’s call on our lives, what new tools, tactics, and ideas are you adding to your toolbox? What new hopes do you have for the Church after spending time with these authors and their ideas? How is God calling you to make those hopes a reality? - Invite any final thoughts, reflections, or questions. <p>Close with a prayer based on community concerns and this edited Franciscan benediction:</p> <p><i>May God bless you with a restless discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.</i></p> <p><i>May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed with people who suffer from pain, starvation, violence, and loss, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.</i></p> <p><i>May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference, so that you are able, with God’s grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.</i></p>	
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	<p><i>And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit go with you Today, tomorrow, and forevermore. Amen.</i></p>	
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Rationale or Explanation:

As the final gathering, this lesson works to reflect both on the nuances of Smith’s argument while also leaving space for broader conversation and reflection on the lesson series as a whole. As with previous weeks, this means that the instructor will need to choose, based on the dynamics of their group, which exercises and questions to include and which to leave behind. Embrace the discussions and prompts that will be most fruitful for your context.

Taking into account the length of Smith’s essay, this lesson encourages participants to present the material to one another in case some in the gathering did not have time to read the entire piece. Smith’s argument is nuanced, so the exercise of summarizing and presenting each section to other group members will encourage individual engagement and understanding with her claims.