

MPCS PHILOSOPHY OF DIVERSITY AND BELONGING

At Mount Paran Christian School, diversity and belonging are integral aspects of all we do as a Christian school and all we are as a community of Christian believers. Our philosophical position hinges upon the following four biblical foundations of diversity:

- 1. Diversity has been a part of God's plan for humanity since the beginning.**
- 2. We have been created in the image of God to glorify God.**
- 3. As Christians, we have been adopted into one family – the family of God.**
- 4. God's plan for diversity enables us to better recognize and worship him.**

1. Diversity has been a part of God's plan for humanity since the beginning.

- In creation, God created man and woman (Genesis 1:27-28) "Male and female he created them."
- Through the cultural mandate (Genesis 1:28), Adam and Eve are to be fruitful, fill the earth, and subdue it — a call to scatter the human race.
- When the people at Babel attempted to create their own monoculture and proclaim themselves greater than God, he scattered them to every corner of the world and created a multitude of languages and people groups (Genesis 11).
- Throughout the Old Testament, examples of interracial marriage abound — from Moses, to Joseph, Ruth, and Esther, we see the propagation of a diverse people called "God's own" — and the creation of a diverse bloodline that would one day usher in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- The book of Acts (Chapter 2) describes the beginnings of the Christian church, as the Apostles, during Pentecost, spoke in at least 15 differing languages to peoples of diverse races and cultures. Upon hearing, they believed, perpetuating the gospel of Jesus Christ and spreading his church throughout the world.
- The church of Antioch (Acts 11) was a diverse church that included both Gentiles and Jews worshipping together, developing a sense of unity within diversity as Christians. The leadership of this church was made up of Cypriots, Africans, and Greco-Romans.
- At the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), the Apostle Paul admonished the Apostle Peter for his inability to recognize the imperative of diversity within the body of Christ; it is here that Jewish believers were instructed to make changes in their understanding of Mosaic law, as it was not binding for Gentile believers. Diversity within Christian ideology was therefore introduced.
- In I Corinthians 12, the Christian church is described as a body, with different believers having differing functions and differing parts. Diversity is essential in the church and its ability to fully function as God intended.
- Galatians 3:28 describes the unity shared by brothers and sisters in Christ, stating, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- Love for all people is the foundation of our Christian witness. John 13:35 states, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- In Revelation 7, John describes the celebration at the Throne of God as a diverse gathering of his people, where every tribe, tongue, and nation are not only present, but also indelibly included. This was his master plan before the foundations of the world were formed. His kingdom was to be diverse from the start and will be diverse throughout eternity.



2. We have been created in the image of God, to glorify God.

The Bible is clear that humans were created in God's literal and figurative likeness (Genesis 1, 2, 5, 9; 1 Corinthians 11; Colossians 3; Romans 8). The imago Dei is the condition in which all humans live — believers or not. All were made in the image of God to reflect his likeness and being (James 3:9).

If all people — male and female — were created in God's image to reflect him, then it is apparent that diversity was a part of that inherent design, that all are equal in his sight, and that Christians were therefore called to live, to love, to administer grace, and to seek the good of all humanity accordingly. Likewise, it is clear that all human life is sacred and is to be protected and cared for as such. Diversity was demonstrated through the creation of man and woman in the image of the Creator and through the subsequent command to fill the earth (Genesis 1:28).

3. As Christians, we have been adopted into one family — the family of God.

One of the greatest implications of our adoption into the family of God "...is that any kind of racially or ethnically based exclusion will send the wrong message about the basis of our acceptance with God" (Piper, 2011, p.176). Our adoption as sons and daughters of the Most-High God unites us as one family, together here on earth, until the time of his return, when he consummates his kingdom.

Our adoption as one family does not create a uniform culture on earth, however. Instead, it affirms our differences and the fact that Jesus died for all. God, in his infinite wisdom, pursued us at an infinite cost — the price of his son's own life. Revelation 5:9 states, "You were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Piper, 2011, p.141).

4. God's plan for diversity enables us to better recognize and worship him.

At Mount Paran Christian School, we will not and cannot shy away from diversity. We know living within a diverse community is difficult and will invariably create certain hardships. Differing perspectives, cultures, and patterns of thinking are never easily shared. However, when we understand our clear biblical mandate to be a diverse community, we better understand that being made in the image of God, for his glory, is our purpose, and that we have been adopted into one family — the family of God; we then will learn to see God through the eyes of our fellow family members, not in spite of our diversity, but because of it.

Psalm 95:6 instructs us, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!" As such, when we begin to see others through the eyes of the Creator and, in turn, see God through the eyes of his creation, we begin to better understand his plan for his people and his plan for the world — all of which should bring us to our knees in humble adoration and awe-filled reverence.