

At Knox Theological Seminary, we want students to be educated in an environment that celebrates the rich diversity of people who have been called into kingdom ministry in the Gospel. We wish to sustain a community that reflects biblical unity and diversity, where we understand our community to be the students, staff, faculty, administration, board, and supporters of the school. As Paul states in Galatians 3:28, worldly divisions and inequalities resulting from racial differences, social and economic differences, and gender differences do not exist within the body of Christ. It is clear he does not mean that all difference is gone, however, but that in Christ there is a unity that is superior to Earthly differences.

### **Biblical Unity and Diversity**

This biblical diversity is to be celebrated, but it is also different than many definitions of diversity which are to be found in the common language of U.S. culture today. Biblical diversity recognizes the ultimate equality of every human being, throughout life from conception as God's created image bearers to the end of their earthly life, unified in future hope as people needing redemption that is found only in Jesus Christ. We believe the biblical image of the kingdom of God is a unity in covenantal relationship of people from every tribe and tongue, women, men, and children, called from every walk of life into a permanent relationship with God by the gracious work of the Spirit through the redeeming work of Christ.

Unlike many current definitions of diversity, though, this biblical unity and equality leaves intact both created differences such as race and gender as well as social differences such as cultural distinctives and economic inequities. God created a diverse humanity of multiple races. Male and female gender is affirmed in the very beginning as God's design for individuals (and for the institution of marriage). Therefore, we believe that racial and gender differences are to be celebrated as part of God's good and proper design for all humanity. We also affirm that cultural differences can be good, neutral, or negative, inasmuch as they are measured against God's moral law as given in the Scriptures and understood to apply universally to all of humanity. Finally we understand in the call to care for the poor and to be generous with wealth that while economic inequities will exist on Earth, all believers are called to be stewards of what God has provided, giving generously out of any excess, receiving humbly when in need, and demonstrating genuine, active care for the poor and oppressed regardless of whether they are themselves members of the body of Christ.

### **The Learning Community**

The Knox community that students will experience is a particular expression of this broader, universal Christian unity. Knox has a particular theological outlook and history, as expressed in its statement of faith and founding documents. As a specifically Reformed school committed to the authority of Scripture, students will have professors serving under the authority of the Scriptures as interpreted in the Westminster Standards. However, Knox students themselves come from widely varied backgrounds, denominations, traditions, cultural and linguistic

heritages, and native countries. Knox encourages this rich diversity in the student body by requiring affirmation only of the Apostle's Creed, one of the oldest and most widely used confessions in the church. All students should expect to be welcomed into a learning community where thoughtful disagreement and sympathetic treatment of differing Christian viewpoints is expected of faculty and students alike.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Knox is a welcoming community of learning for followers of Christ from diverse backgrounds, united by the Gospel as understood biblically. Students joining this community should expect Knox to affirm biblical definitions of heterosexual marriage and sexuality, and gender as God-given and established at birth. They should expect Knox to welcome them without regard to their race, gender, socio-economic status, theological background, culture, or country of origin, celebrating the ultimate Gospel unity of all believers in Christ. And ultimately, they should expect to be welcomed, affirmed in their Christian calling, and challenged to grow in knowledge and love of Christ in and through a community of learning spread around the globe.