Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D. is the ninth president of Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. This is her second book, following “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” This book talks about how much race is still a very large problem in the educational system. The book begins with an analysis of the desegregation of public schools. Though Brown v. Board of Education occurred in 1954, multiple stall tactics were used across the country until 1968, and “affirmative action” was instituted in 1965. This affirmative action also took place in colleges and universities. The racial mixing of schools helped to create spaces for interracial friendships that could extend into adulthood. Otherwise, races would probably remain segregated. Now, because schools tend to be geographically organized, those who live in segregated neighborhoods will probably attend segregated schools. This is how schools are being resegregated. The old concerns of segregated schools about access to resources, curriculum that doesn’t reflect diversity, high teacher turnover, and low test scores remain a concern. The social systems that determine where kids go to school or whose taxes pay for school result in a resegregation of schools.

Tatum is confident that race in the classrooms of the U.S. affects achievement. Educators and administrators have unexamined racial attitudes, and possibly lowered expectations from minority children. Intelligence is defined and assessed in a historically influenced manner, and there are biases against the cultural and ethnic intelligences of many of the students who attend public school. It would be hard to measure achievement correctly and fairly with standardized tests created for majority students.

Because schools provide an environment for children of various racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds to interact with each other in ways they might not otherwise do so, segregation of schools hurts us socially. Cross-
racial relationships need authenticity and honesty in order to challenge traditional divides.

There is a connection between what happens in elementary, middle, and high schools and what happens in colleges and universities. As public schools are resegregated, both White students and students of color will be less prepared academically and socially for the diversity of college. Students who have never had courses about or with students of color will matriculate with biases, and students whose schools had fewer resources will matriculate with weaknesses in their academic foundations. There are benefits to learning in a diverse community, and those that grow up in segregated environments tend to stay in them. (pg 110-111)

QUOTATIONS
“Why were we sitting together then? It was an affirmation---a time to relax---a creation of community based on a shared experience of being one of few in an environment unaccustomed to our presence. Did all Black students share in it? No. Were White students intentionally excluded from it? Not in any active way. They were not usually the focus of our attention. (8)
Certainly we know that motivation to learn is related to one’s sense of connection to both the content and the teacher (29)
Because of the persistence of elementary- and secondary-school segregation fifty years after the Brown decision, today’s American youth had had few opportunities to interact with those racially, ethnically, or religiously different from them before they go to college. (109)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION
1. Where does race fit into your life, ministry, programming?
2. Where have you seen the effects of segregation in your community and in the schools where the students of your ministry or program attend?
3. Does your curriculum/ministry reflect diversity?

IMPLICATIONS
Segregation plays a large part in how young people develop. Churches are mostly segregated along racial and cultural lines, so if schools are
segregated as well, young people have fewer places to learn about each other and develop social skills across cultures. This creates a hotbed for conflict on college campuses (and society) between young adults who feel oppressed or young adults who have not been exposed to multiple perspectives and life experiences. If all of the institutions that serve them are segregated, how can we expect them to interact with each other with wisdom and compassion?