

Racism and the Church Pt.5

In our Biblical Theology of Race Life Group we are learning what the biblical story tells us about race. It is through this understanding that we can better apply our lives to love mercy, do justly, and walk humbly with our God toward all peoples for the fruit of racial unity in our church and community.

There are five specifics regarding what we can do to pursue faith and repentance as a gospel centered church in regard to the fruit of racial unity - Learn, Pray, Acknowledge, Relate and Commit. Last week we looked at Relate.

You can read that article [here](#). Relating to people who are different from ourselves is not natural. Therefore, there is needed a supernatural work of God in our hearts to make us like his Son, Jesus Christ, who showed no partiality. The gospel is God's grace for the supernatural work of God in our hearts to be intentional about building relationships with people different from ourselves, people of different races. The gospel does not constrain us to either a racial superiority or a racial inferiority. The gospel constrains us to love, and to no longer regard anyone according to the flesh. The gospel fills us with all the fullness of a God, who does not show partiality, but gives himself in relationship with all people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. His life in us is to relate in interracial friendships that our church may reflect his glory. In order to Relate we must also Commit.

Commit

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" – Hebrews 10:24

Relating to people different from ourselves is a good work of God in our hearts that we as a church must stir one another up to. We must be committed to stirring one another up. Here are five ways we can commit to racial unity in our church.

1- We can commit to tearing down walls between us and other races and cultures. In the gospel of Jesus Christ the walls blood and turf are torn down, and God is making one new people of the many. Therefore, we must commit to following this pattern in our own lives in the church and community.

A wall is something that divides and keeps out. In relationships with other races these walls are bound up in the culture of our lives, our ideologies, our misunderstandings, ignorance, and false assumptions. We must acknowledge these walls of separation like distrust or superiority or lifestyle. We must walk through the walls to relate and pray and learn others lives, so that we can love others with a sacrificial life of understanding.

2- We can commit to growing in our understanding of the perspective of cultural minorities. You may have had an opportunity to sit with someone and listen to them tell you their story. At the end of their sharing about their life and what they have faced you may find yourself saying, "I had no idea." We need to acknowledge we don't know and understand, as a person of the majority culture, the perspectives of those who live around us and worship with us who belong to a cultural minority. Therefore, we need to commit to grow in that understanding. We can build relationships and learn to listen so that we may have a growing understanding of their perspective. We must commit to not assuming we know, and we must commit to expect their perspective to be our own.

3- We can commit to examining our church for barriers we may have unknowingly built that hinder our ability to minister to those of other races. Every family has their family's way of doing things. Some families have been doing it this way for generations, and some families are forming their ways as they go. Sometimes 'the way a family does something' hinders their ability to show hospitality and welcome "outsiders" into the fam. As a church family we need to be examining if the way we are doing things keeps those of other races out of our fellowship. The apostle Paul became all things to all people that he might win some. Therefore, we must commit to not put a hinderance or barrier before people of other races. We were not saved by grace to have it our way. We were saved by grace so that more grace might get to more people, all kinds of people, through our becoming servants of all. Servants don't erect barriers and expect others to climb over them to come in or come and hide behind them to fit in.

4- We must commit to holding each other accountable for the jokes we tell, attitudes we have, assumptions we make, and the way we discuss political and social issues involving race. We are citizens of God's kingdom, not the kingdom of this world. In God's kingdom we have every advantage of being his children. We want for nothing. In the kingdom of this world we look for every advantage to make more of ourselves by belittling others. We want for everything. Jokes, attitudes, assumptions, and political and social conversations are the places where we can try to attain everything we think we don't have. These are the places our hearts are revealed. We must commit to telling one another the gospel of a Shepherd who serves us so that in all we say, think, and do, we serve others, not ourselves.

5- We must commit to providing support, resources, and discipleship to minority pastors, church planters, missionaries, and leaders in our denomination and at CCC. Our denomination, mission agency, church planters, leaders, and churches represent a majority "white culture". We must commit to seeing this change in the generations to come. We can commit to disciplining and raising up those in our own church to serve in leadership roles, commit to calls to missionary service or church leadership, or becoming church planters from other non-white races. We can commit to giving financially so that those of minority cultures can receive education in preparation for ministry. We can commit to establishing an intern program at CCC to provide training opportunities for racial minorities pursuing a calling into the ministry. We must commit to this important and good work to see it change.

As a church pursuing the racial unity in our church and community that God desires we must learn, pray, acknowledge, relate, and commit ourselves personally and corporately to this good work that God has prepared us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). May the Lord himself grant us Gospel unity, racial reconciliation, and enable us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:8).

Growth Groups

At Christ Covenant church it is our desire to see a movement of the gospel that forms us in relationship with one another. We over use the word "community", but the meaning is crucial to the lives of God's children. He does not merely convert and renew individuals. His gospel is his power to form those individuals he's converting and renewing by his grace into the body of Christ. This is community. One of the ways we seek to grow community is through the organization Life Groups, Shepherding Groups, and Growth Groups. We are beginning Growth Groups in September. These groups meet twice a month September up until Thanksgiving, and January through May.

The goal of Growth Groups is to provide an opportunity for a movement of the gospel to develop community formation for worship, life, and ministry together. We believe these groups can provide greater opportunity for investment in the life of the body as well as in the life of the community.

Below are some bullet point descriptions of Growth Groups:

- ❖ Who - Growth Group facilitators will lead those in the congregation who live near them and commit to participate in Growth Groups .
- ❖ What - Growth Groups are committed to participation twice a month including a curriculum and a focused ministry objective.
- ❖ When - Growth Groups will meet twice monthly from September - November and January - May.
- ❖ Where - Each Growth Group will determine their host home(s).
- ❖ Why - Growth Groups provide opportunity for building authentic discipling relationships within the body of Christ Covenant Church. These times will be focused on applying the Gospel to the whole of life, including using the Gospel to motivate us towards serving the needs of others.
- ❖ How - Intentional, prioritized and committed participants will be flexible with planning for children and child care while being accountable with attendance. Participation is paramount.

If you are not already a part of a Growth Group and would like to sign up for one please call the church office or use the sign up sheets in the Lobby at Barnwell Street.

Facilitator Training

We need the few, the humble, the willing to be trained to facilitate. We will be having a facilitator training time on Saturday August 24th from 6-8 pm at the home of Jim & Noelle Wilkerson. Phase two of the training will be Saturday September 28th 6 - 8 pm at the home of Jim & Noelle Wilkerson.

These training times are aimed at assisting us in the process of learning what it looks like to facilitate small group gatherings toward our vision for seeing a movement of the gospel affecting a growing church community for worship, life, and ministry together.