

Racial Healing: Making a difference in a divided world

Introduction

- Exposing wounds for healing
- Bringing God into the picture
- Stories of progress
- Stories of problems

Why we should celebrate ethnicity

- Ethnicity is God given and part of God's redemptive purposes

²⁴ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us ... ³⁰ ... now [God] commands all people everywhere to repent. Acts 17:14-27, 30

Creation

- One race of image bearers (Gen 1:26-28)
- Diverse ethnicities (Acts 17:26; Deut 32:8)

Species	1	2	3	4	5
Americanus	Red, choleric and straight	Straight, black and thick hair; gaping nostrils; [freckled] face; beardless chin	Unyielding, cheerful , free	Paints himself in a maze of red lines	Governed by customary right
Europaeus	White, sanguine, muscular	Plenty of yellow hair; blue eyes	Light, wise , inventor	Protected by tight clothing	Governed by rites
Asiaticus	Sallow, melancholic, stiff	Blackish hair, dark eyes	Stern, haughty , greedy	Protected by loose garments	Governed by opinions
Africanus	Black, phlegmatic, lazy	Dark hair, with many twisting braids; silky skin; flat nose; swollen lips; Women [with] elongated labia; breasts lactating profusely.	Sly, sluggish , neglectful	Anoints himself with fat	Governed by choice [caprice]

The Race 'science' of Carl Linnaeus (1735)

Redemption

- God intends multi-ethnic worship (Revelation 7 cf. Genesis 12, Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 13:29)

“It is simply impossible, with any shred of Christian integrity, to go on proclaiming that Jesus by his cross has abolished the old divisions and created a single humanity of love, while at the same time we are contradicting our message by tolerating racial or social or other barriers within our church fellowship.”

John Stott

- Ethnicity is subordinate to repentance and a faith (Acts 17:30-31)

Why our critiques can go wrong

	Structural	Individual
Where is the problem?	Societal systems	Personal interactions
How big is the problem?	Big	Small
What is the solution to the problem?	Redistribution of power	Legislation and education
What action should we take?	Campaign for change	Expose the lies
Most attractive to?	Minority Culture	Majority Culture
Biblical evidence?	Acts 6:1-6	James 2:1-13
Weaknesses?	System is the only issue racism is a “system not event” Individuals bear no responsibility	Sceptical of blaming ‘systems’ Underestimate historical impact

The biblical corrects both! (Genesis 3)

- Think again about our hearts
- Think again about our history

How do we make a difference?

1. Cultivating our Character - Prayer, Lament, Humility

- Prayer (Matthew 17:14-21)
- Lament (Rom. 12:15)
- Humility (Psalm 131)

... All for the joy of growing like Christ (Phil 3:10)

2. Cultivating Intercultural Friendships

- Intentionality - “Jesus had to go through Samaria” (John 4:4)
- Humility - “Will you give me a drink?” (John 4:7)
- Honesty - “... the fact is, you have had five husbands” (John 4:18)

3. Cultivating Multi-ethnic churches

- I. A theology of diversity
- II. A spirit of inclusion
- III. Enabling diversity in leadership
- IV. Diversity in worship
- V. Sensitivity in teaching
- VI. Diversity in relationships

4. Addressing Injustice

¹⁷For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. ¹⁸He *defends the cause* of the fatherless and the widow, and *loves* the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.
(Deut 10:17-18)

- Public defence (cf. indifference) and
 - Will we call out injustice (particularly locally)?
- Personal relationships (cf. ignorance)
 - Who could you enable (particularly locally)?

What sort of model of church are you?

Cross cultural model	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Other factors
Assimilation model	Groups, are 'absorbed' into a generally larger community the majority group has to make room for those coming in, but most of the changing is done by the minority groups. In an assimilated church, diversity is managed rather than valued.	There is a common focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier to lead, as differences are less pronounced • There is strong ownership by the majority group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership roles are filled by one cultural group • Teaching/worship styles do not necessarily take account of diversity • Minority groups have to conform in order to integrate • Minority groups can often remain on the edge of church life 	Representation is important Leadership development may prove difficult One size fits all approach may exclude some
Pluralistic model	A pluralistic approach to church life involves making room for others coming in, but not necessarily requiring them to change. New groups are valued and allowed to express themselves alongside the majority culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It allows for diversity in leadership • It encourages a diverse congregation • It celebrates diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can celebrate diversity with little acknowledgement of the majority culture • Different cultural groups are not necessarily encouraged to mix • There are separate meetings for different groups • There is no clear overall identity but lots of individual group identities 	Language is important - can interpretation be offered? Esol may be particularly valuable
Integration model	A truly integrated church will not only manage and value diversity, but embrace it as well. Both the majority and minority groups will need to change in order to embrace diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong common identity – in Christ and in the local church • A diverse leadership team in which all leaders embrace and make room for diversity: for example, leaders show awareness of diversity in their preaching illustrations • People from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to pursue meaningful relationships across the divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not many good examples to follow • The majority culture may be unwilling not just to make room, but to change • It is dependent on the strength of the leader's internal conviction that this is the right way • There is more potential for conflict due to misunderstandings 	This appears to be the antioch model