

PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONS FOR PASTORS TO ANSWER

FALL 2021

Workshop Questions & Answers

- What are the two most pressing questions you have about *how to* achieve greater cross-racial unity among our network churches? (Please try to be specific as possible)
 - How to communicate the need to be involved (as a church) to those in the church who do not see the existence of the need.
 - Effectively communicating the difference between racism as social issue verses an individual issue. What I mean is that for many who have not overtly been involved in racism or experienced racism, the issue of racism pertains to the past, but not the present.
 - With all that is going on in people's lives now, how do we get people to see the importance of racial reconciliation as it relates to the church and its mission?
 - Can we get pastors/churches to see that racial reconciliation and church as one, and we'll connect with evangelism like never before?
 - How do we make this a Gospel Issue/Topic versus a Political or Social Justice issue?
 - What are some conservative goals that a church can set to get things started?
 - How do we engage/include more non-white pastors - specifically, pastors of predominately African American congregations?
 - How do we address the disparity between resources within white churches versus non-white churches?
 - What are some initial steps we can take towards achieving greater cross-racial unity among our network churches?
 - To what extent can we achieve meaningful cross-racial unity if we continue to pursue our own existing church ministry plans and remain within our particular ethno-racial majority groups?
 - How to understand/educate (or whatever) those who don't feel that racial reconciliation is an important work for the church.
 - What are other churches doing? Where have they seen success? Failure?
 - How can we (pastors and leaders of churches invested in RRN) improve our

ability to share the work of/investment in this ministry with our local churches?

- In other words, how do we move from pastors/leaders relating to each other and get better at including more people in our churches in this work?
 - This is huge.... So my question is very basic. What does cross-racial unity look like?
 - What disciplines must be in place to achieve unity?
 - Since it requires the pastoral leadership commitment, but can only be sustained if it includes more leadership from individual churches, how can we achieve that?
 - What are meaningful exchanges we can do that are not merely 'window dressing' or 'guilt relieving' but substantial networking for effectual change?
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- What are the two most encouraging things you've experienced by being a part of the network?
 - The fact that there are many pastors in the area seeking to address the issue in a Biblical manner.
 - The bonds of fellowship I see forming.
 - I'm just joining now
 - Like-Minded brothers that don't have to be "sold" on the idea of RR.
 - Representation across churches and races.
 - Becoming friends with some of the pastors - both white and non-white
 - Seeing how life-giving this has been for Pastor Larry Jones
 - Getting to know pastors of other racial backgrounds having the same heart for racial reconciliation and unity.
 - How our thoughts and conversations about race and church are deepening because of our relationships
 - It has been great getting to know leaders at different stages of ministry and on their journey of racial reconciliation.
 - Our discussions have been fruitful and hopeful of change in our churches & communities.
 - Pastor Kindred from Paradise and I have been friends for several years now,

and we've had some great moments together and some difficult conversations as well. When we shared with our cohort about a difficult situation relating to worship, it was a powerful moment for the entire group. Pastor Kindred's grace and the forgiveness of his church, as well as the ability to follow the Matthew 18 conflict model and admit wrongs, was already an encouraging part of our churches' shared journey. But expanding this story to include the RRN cohort made it that much richer and stronger, and our friendship as well.

- The shared time of fellowship/worship/prayer in Tacoma earlier this year was powerful. It was great to meet leaders across generations and traditions, as well as ethnicities/cultures.
 - Since I am new..... there seems to be a growing interest to address racial unity from a biblical worldview
 - The conversation is happening! And it is being sustained, thanks to your leadership, Lonnie.
 - The conversations spark imagination for the future.
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- What are some of the current status quo practices and/or activities that we should expect to have disrupted or changed?
 - Church isolationism
 - Doctrinal and political entrenchment.
 - We need to be comfortable being around people that are different from us.
 - We need to be willing to listen to people with different viewpoints.
 - Pray for RR, but don't engage.
 - Only go deep with discipleship, small groups, etc. with people of the same race.
 - In order to have true reconciliation, acknowledgement of wrongs/injustices and repentance/reparations need to take place. This must be Spirit-led in order to be genuine and lead to true reconciliation. On behalf of the white churches, there needs to be an acknowledgement that we've benefited from white privilege and historical/systemic racism, and there should be a sharing of their resources with those non-white churches. This is something that needs to be addressed by white pastors and to white pastors. On behalf of the non-white churches, there needs to be acknowledgement and

repentance from bitterness and victimization, and people need to be called to holiness and contentment, regardless of their circumstances. This is something that needs to be addressed by non-white pastors and to non-white pastors

- People we pursue for outreach and discipleship and eldership.
 - Ministry vision and goals.
 - How we worship.
 - Church planting or group multiplication paradigm
 - Our church has gone through A LOT of transition in the last 3 years (new name/identity, church split). Building new relationships and trusting others is something we want to do but will be a process as we are rebuilding lots of broken relationships.
 - In my context, I've been challenged to think about how our systems/practices reflect a predominately white viewpoint. What am I doing (or not doing) to subconsciously tell people of color that, in order to 'belong' in our community, they need to adopt a white mentality or a see our church through white lenses? How can I, as a white male, better include and honor the perspectives of people outside of my context?
 - I'll look forward to some wisdom here!
 - The habit of thinking of ourselves a homogenous church.
 - And the many assumptions that accompany that habit of thinking.
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- What challenges you personally in building cross-racial pastor-to-pastor relationships?
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- Communicating the pain of racism to those whose exposure to racism has been academic or intellectual.
 - Not a pastor but in relationships just that our experiences and viewpoints might be different and not mesh. Lack of opportunity
 - Fatigue
 - Lack of hope that others will want to participate
 - I've heard too many negative things about white people from African American Christians, and I carry insecurity with me into relationships with African American pastors. This prevents me from trying to forge new relationships.
 - Making the time to meet and being comfortable with where they may be in their racial reconciliation journey
 - Time is always going to be the greatest obstacle. Beyond that, getting those around us to see the need for racial reconciliation in this polarize world.

- I'm always challenged by how many ways I can try to be 'careful' and end up being unhelpful or distant. This work is hard, and it takes vulnerability and truthfulness to make progress. It's also challenging to me to truly listen to the stories of my peers and colleagues without jumping to conclusions or making assumptions.
 - Just the discipline of time..... relationships take time so rearranging schedules to do so.
 - Keeping at it...in the face of all the many demands in pastoral leadership and ministry. Sustainability.
 - To continue to initiate the conversation or persevere in the conversation at the local level.
 - Identifying and addressing the fears that are instantly present. Where the fears have greater authority than the Gospel vision of Jesus.
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- In what ways is your church already engaged in cross-racial fellowship with other churches?
 - Periodic events where our congregation and a Spanish speaking congregation join forces in a project.
 - Only on a minimal level... guest speakers, hosting events and dialogue.... But not on a consistent basis.
 - I think our church would be OK meeting together or fellowshiping together the challenges might come if we tried to do a ministry project together and had different ways of doing things or different ideas and who gives in and compromises.
 - Renting out building space. But that's it.
 - Our pastor has been in relationship with Gary and Solomon Wyatt, and sometimes did (pre-Covid) joint-worship nights together. This is something that has probably fallen on the backburner since Covid and needs to be prioritized again. He is also part of the race reconciliation network.
 - Not much lately but we've had discussion about bringing in other pastors and leaders to teach in the near future.
 - Before COVID, we met 2-3 times a year with Paradise Baptist for worship. We've also had several members of our church attend Paradise's weekly Bible study. We hope to join Paradise for their men's retreat in March 2022.

We have built up a friendship with House of Grace church, a congregation focused on witnessing to the Chinese community on the Eastside. We have shared a Zoom service with them, but we have not yet worshipped together in person.

- Already engaged with a Black church in our community. In mutual fellowship, and projects.
- What aspects of developing cross-racial fellowship with other churches will push you outside of your comfort zone?
 - Leaders and worship team represent all races but not in quota fashion but because you have intentionally gone after the best people to represent your congregation. The congregation must make everyone feel equally welcome and there must be a place for everyone there to serve.
 - Focused social events
 - Sharing resources and personnel
 - Some of the practical, but cultural, pieces: most African American church services last for a really long time. I like to bring my family with me to other churches, and it's really hard to keep my kids engaged at a church service that's over 2 1/2 hours.
 - Getting our people to appreciate, learn from, and mutually submit to people of other traditions and backgrounds
 - I honestly don't know. I am always outside my comfort zone when addressing children or youth. That may be the case in a cross-racial setting as well.
 - Regularly listening to and being taught by my peers and colleagues from communities of color always challenges me. It's always challenging to be 'pushed' into this work by how 'inconvenient' it may feel initially - long way to drive, time spent working on 'behind the scenes' stuff, wondering if it amounts to anything.
- Not sure on this one... 
- Being willing to enter into the relationship without any sense of controlling the outcomes. Will it go well? Will it divide the church? Will we be willing to give a sustained devotion to it? Will we be willing to face our biases?
- What growth would you like to see in your church to make the

leadership, worship, and fellowship less homogenous and more welcoming to other races of people who live near your church?

- People becoming inviters. We currently host Tahoma Church (Hispanic) but this congregation meets separately
- I don't think our church will struggle much. We've always been a pretty diverse church. Recently, we've gone through some hard days. As we stabilized, I think the next step for us isn't just to be a multi-ethnic/diverse church but to build cross-racial relationships.
- Speak openly about attracting, welcoming, and loving people of color.
- Actively recruit people of color to serve in different ways alongside the incumbent.
- Invite Pastors of color, Choirs of color, etc.
- Our small group, which includes our Pastor, had an encouraging conversation about this a few weeks ago, and this is something that our staff is really thinking through. That is the first step: acknowledging that there's a problem and identifying some of the problems. Part of the problem is representation. We have 2 staff who are Latino and fluent in Spanish, which is probably why we have a decent amount of Latino people in our congregation. However, we do not have very many African American people, and we cannot retain African American people for this reason. Also, even if we have a lot of Latino congregants, the culture of the church is still more conducive to white, middle-class people. This is the nut that we have to crack: more representation racially during our church services, and more culturally diverse in our worship, home groups, etc. How do we do this? I don't know!
- For existing leaders to ask why they do what they do to discern what is cultural from what is biblical; evaluate current nature of leadership, worship, and fellowship; and commit to changing the make-up of leadership, style of music, and fellowship activities that may resonate with those not in the majority group or culture
- To bring on another staff person of color in a teaching or worship leading role.
- We believe that we are called, ultimately, to better image the Kingdom of God by reflecting the diversity of the Eastside. In my six years as pastor, we've had a handful of families of color visit us, and I want to be able to

welcome them, but really, for the people of my church to be energized and enthusiastic about welcoming others in Christ.

- I would like to hire staff that is multi-racial, ethnically diverse.
- What regional community pain/brokenness do you think we should collectively focus on and coordinate a combined ministry effort? List the top three issues you think should be on our list.
 - Caring for the families of those affected by gang violence or ICE raids.
 - Addressing the issue of Christian nationalism.
 - Covid fatigue.
 - Economics
 - Division inside and outside the church. Unite around Jesus.
 - Mental Health awareness as it cross racial boundaries
 - Investing in Youth (living within the Gospel in this day and age)
 - Closing the wealth/resources gap. People tend to want to "take care of their own" (e.g. if my kids attend Lowell, I want to volunteer at Lowell), but this perpetuates the wealth/resources gap. Finding ways to bridge this gap...e.g. City Central adopting Jenny Reed Elementary. We have to address the resource gap between white and non-white churches, and how some of the white (middle class) churches can share their resources in a way that is edifying and not patronizing.
 - This is extremely delicate - but an elephant in the room (at least when working with youth) is addressing the ways that historical racism has contributed to sexual sin and fatherlessness, and how to combat that.
 - Developing systems to help people in poverty that are empowering, not toxic and disabling. Great reads: "When Helping Hurts" and "Toxic Charity." Socioeconomics and race are intertwined, and it is difficult to untangle the two. People in poverty are disproportionately non-white, therefore addressing poverty is very much related to racial reconciliation.
 - To help each other become more multiethnic in leadership, worship, and

fellowship - so that we can help other leaders and ministries within our own spheres of influence beyond the network become more multiethnic in their thinking and practice

- In my community of Lakewood/Steilacoom the three things I'm putting my effort into right now are:
 - Serving a Low-income apartment community with Apartment Life.
 - Mental Health/Suicide prevention for kids in Clover Park School District
 - Serving the low-income Arrowhead community in Steilacoom
 - Families in Need - ministry at and through our local schools
 - Mentoring and investing in kids on the margins or at-risk of dropping out of school
 - Restoring marriages and leading people into experiencing Jesus' grace in their marriages.
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 - Identifying and praying against the spiritual forces behind racism. Satan hates the image of God in humans of any race.
 - Becoming intentional about showing up on site at places where racism has been manifested as protest against it. (e.g. If a murder, or racial violence happens, we show up to pray over the land and reclaim it for righteousness.)
 - Agree on several key statements for going forward and in a united intentional effort, declare these truths in the context inside the church and outside the church. Several such statements are already formed for us in Derwin Gray's book!
- What injustice in our region is most visible to you?
 - Dehumanizing people who are here without legal immigration status.
 - Economics
 - Crime/policing
 - Education
 - Economic, employment equity, Profiling

- The way that past historical and systemic racism has affected the generational wealth patterns today. In other words, today in 2021, (in theory) people of color have the same opportunities as people who are white. However, because of things that happened in the past - blocked access to education, limited career paths, blocked access to home ownership, redlining, disproportionate incarceration rates, etc. - the middle and upper classes are predominately white. The middle and upper classes are accompanied by knowledge of navigating systems, social connections, and more opportunities, which creates a cycle of wealth, opportunities, and resources. Conversely, people in poverty are also stuck in a cycle of generational poverty.
- Residential segregation, economic disparities, and educational funding rooted in racial discrimination of the past
- In Lakewood, there is a lot of controversy and pressure AGAINST racial reconciliation. There is a group of people that believe its Marxists/CRT agenda that has invaded the church. It paralyzes the churches in my community, and it has affected the school district.
- Kids of color have a disproportionate level of disadvantages. Kids who look like my kids have a lot of advantages, simply by virtue of who they are and where they have been born. I see kids of color showing up to our school without coats, and I hardly ever see a white kid without a coat. Something is deeply broken to continue to perpetuate this and countless other inequalities.
- How people of color are often relegated to lower paying jobs. The injustices of economy.
- What injustices are impacting people of racial groups different than your own?
 - Profiling a racial group and predetermining their values, mentality, and behavioral traits.
 - We have to unite to some degree first, then we can have a voice in the conversation with our voices together
 - Asian Hate Crimes

- Native American Missing Girls
- What I just outlined: (generational) wealth gap
- Lack of quality education that leads to lower income job opportunities
- I am not sure.
- Our school has experienced an influx of families from Brazil, and they are unable to speak our language or navigate the complex systems at school. It's an injustice that they do not have the needed resources to fully enter into the community and find success.
- This I am wanting to learn
 - Economy; jobs and health care
 - Justice system.
 - Opportunities for recovery, counseling.
- How do we show sacrificial love toward different racial groups experiencing injustice?
 - By communicating our churches are a safe place. However, I don't think this qualifies as sacrificial love. The challenge is communicating love, and unity in the desire for justice without endorsing behavior that blemishes the image of Christ.
 - Economics, Crime/policing, Education, Drug treatment, Mental health/health care
 - Empathy. Humbling ourselves to put on their shoes and walk alongside them. Caring for them like a family member.
 - Compassion and empathy. Do not dismiss - listen and gain understanding. We can and should learn on our own - there are ample resources (YouTube videos, books, articles online, biographies, etc.)
 - Not repeating the racialized patterns of past Christians by living out Philippians 2:3-4 - and doing what we can to provide resources and support to bring about meaningful change
 - Practically serving each other. What is another church/group doing in their community that we can step into, right now!
 - I need to be more willing to go 'out of my way' and be 'inconvenienced' by the work of justice.

- Coming alongside people in specific situations.
 - Affirming their voice.
 - Making their issues our own by asking questions that clarify what can best help change the situation.
- What systems in our communities are known to unjustly harm vulnerable people and provide opportunity for us, the church, to do justice?
 - Education system chooses not to talk about the history of what happened to a group of people. This may help others understand a number of things.
 - There are many, but I think the one that the church is well-equipped for is developing charity systems for the poor that empower and bring dignity. So many of our national social services were originally created by the Church as a response to loving the poor as Jesus does. Somewhere along the way, we outsourced this to the government and secular organizations. Many of these programs do good, but often times, these secular social service programs become transactional and do damage - create entitlements, create dependency, create helplessness, etc. Local churches are uniquely positioned to to develop and carry out these programs - in the context of relationship, and in their local communities.
 - Because the church remains largely segregated - and thus maintains an institutional pattern of past racism and nurtures in its structure the same spirit of racial hate and segregation, I think we need to keep addressing and changing our homogenous ministry vision and practices. We will continue to lack credibility before the unbelieving world otherwise. This may be beyond the scope of this question, but the political system continues to polarize and divide Christians such that we are not obeying (or hindered from obeying) God's word on unity and reconciliation. We can
 - Recently I was approach by a school district Superintendent, and he said they want to look at helping kids with mental health and suicide prevention. As the conversation continued, we found out that the API community in Lakewood is especially struggling in this area.
 - There's a lot of injustice and inequality in our schools.
 - I need clarity and education on this.
 - ICE, in their endeavor to uphold the letter of the law, has torn families apart. Many of these families feel they have no place to turn for help. There is an emotional toll to daily expecting the other shoe to drop (being scooped up by ICE). If the church can remove itself from political platforms, we have an

opportunity to be a voice of hope and refuge.