

RACIAL RECONCILIATION WORKSHOP NOTES

Fall 2021

The Racial Reconciliation Network Workshop is an event where we bring all of our network cohorts together for prayer, discussion, fellowship, and worship. The notes below represent the combined thoughts of the entire group, summarized, and now shared for reflection.

Workshop Discussion – High Priority Issues or Questions

Below are the four things that the group identified that should be high priorities for us to discuss at this stage of our reconciliation journey.

- Where to start and next steps?
- To define & communicate in such a way as to drive practical implementation
- Lead by communicating reconciliation as a gospel issue.
- How do we communicate racial reconciliation as a gospel issue?

Brainstorm how to achieve the issues listed above...how to make these priorities happen

During the brainstorm session, each of the groups talked about how to make progress on the areas of priority listed above. We will continually use this brainstorm list to refer to as we determine which action steps are most needful for each phase of our journey. We will also expand and revise the list as we grow and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Group 1

- Clarity of using a common language, and getting on the same page about the gospel and racism being sin
- Using the Bible as our baseline
- Teaching and understanding our identity in Christ
- Kingdom mindset (Big, eternal perspective)
- Contextualize the application of our message
- Action: Love God & and love our neighbor as yourselves

Group 2

- Define – communicate the “why” of reconciliation
- Address – biblical truth intersects with culture (i.e. concerns about justice)
- Distress – invited people to conversations/places
- Align – guide to new practice and thought
- Progress – celebrate accomplishments
- Train others – who can we invite to join in?

Group 3

- Preaching series
- Town hall/ Q & A sessions
- Bring in speakers
- Modeling behaviors
- Evaluate current ministry structure & examine gaps
- Small group discussion series
- Highlight an action/need (visibility)
- Explore staff diversity and move toward it

Group 4

- Move from homogenous church staff to multiethnic leadership
- Gain clarity from God’s word/gospel
- Pursue cross-cultural/racial opportunities
- Understand the culture

Reconsidering How We Use Our Ministry Time

Statistically the vast majority of churches are not growing. One statistic indicates that only 6% of churches are growing. This means 94% of our churches are not growing. In addition to this, each following generation is showing less commitment to the Christian faith. In short, the American church is declining in its influence and fruitfulness.

We did an exercise, listing all the specific tasks that take up our time during a ministry work week. Next, we faced the reality that although we are busy, we are not bearing an abundance of fruit. In other words, the things we are doing are not producing

growth. Lonnie suggested that we consider tithing 10% of our ministry work week time to racial reconciliation efforts. Since Jesus indicated that it is our unity that will convince people that He's the Son of God, this should be seen as an essential part of bearing kingdom fruit and seeing the church grow. Pastors and churches have been operating in racial silos, political silos, and denominational silos. This voluntary segregation deprives each church from experiencing the riches of Christ only discovered in fellowship with others outside our tribes. This is a challenging shift for us as pastors, but we can't keep doing the same thing and expect to get new and better results. Devoting 10% of our ministry time to racial reconciliation allows pastors to focus on their local ministries, but also engages the broader Christian community in obedience to the Lord.

Reading

Our next book to read is "**Generous Justice**" by Timothy Keller. The intent behind selecting this book is to explore the subject of justice from a biblical perspective, to develop a common biblical language, and after reading the book, strategize on what justice actions we will take together.