

Race and Racism in the U.S.: A Resource for Individuals, Small Groups, and Congregations

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Session 1: An introduction

This is the first of a series of six video episodes that address issues of race and racism that society faces currently, but that have been part of our history as a nation since its founding. I began my sociology career as a graduate student at Penn State working with one of the nation's leading scholars of the Black church. Since that time, I have been teaching, writing, preaching and podcasting about the history of race and racism that is unique to the United States, and the racial injustice embedded in every social institution of our nation. I am aware that many white pastors find themselves at very different places than their members regarding social and racial justice issues, something that was also true during the Civil Rights era. I have received my share of criticism for my preaching and writing. At the same time I am sensitive to the fact that there is little awareness and understanding on the part of so many white folks--in our churches and outside our churches--of the story of oppression, violence and injustice experienced by Black Americans. Simply preaching one more sermon isn't likely to change many minds. As a result I am developing a six session study for congregations and small groups and individuals based upon what I've been learning over the last three decades. Each session is accompanied by a video teaching found on my YouTube channel (Conrad Kanagy) as well as a one-page study guide for discussion following the video. I will also be listing additional resources at the website www.achurchdismantled.com.

Scripture: Micah 6:8

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the Lord require of his people? What teachings of Jesus from the Gospels reflects this Old Testament teaching?
2. What information did Conrad share that was new to you and what difference might knowing this have upon how you think about issues of race and racism going forward?
3. How is racism and the historic treatment of Black Americans inconsistent with the Scripture? What in the Bible is relevant to our discussion of race and racism?
4. While the Bible does not talk about race per se, what does it say that should impact how we address racism as Christians?
5. How were your own beliefs about race and racism formed over time? Who had the greatest impact on your beliefs?
6. What questions remain for you regarding what you've heard or that we've discussed today?