

## Multiethnic Ministry 101

April 2015

### Objectives

- Gain a biblical theological understanding of human equality + the church
- Understand key historical realities that brought human inequality to Christianity
- Recognize factors that shaped the culture of racialization\* in the American church
- Explore organizational cultures + personal competencies necessary for an effective multiethnic ministry
- Apply the principles learned through a mini group project

*\*Racialization: The act of differentiating or evaluating people based on skin color. It often stems from the attitude of thinking less of others based on racial prejudice.*

## A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN EQUALITY

*The Bible explains that all people – regardless of race or ethnicity – are equally created in the very image of God. But human beings rebelled against God and began to mistreat one another. Through Christ, however, God reconciled sinful human beings to himself and united people who were hostile to each other into one new human race. God did this to display the glory of his grace among the nations.*

**Creation:** *All human beings are created equally in the image of God.*

*Solomon Kendagor: It took a special deliberation from heaven for mankind to be created. Every human being is created in the image of God. Regardless of what culture one represents, one bears this image of God and must be treated with awe and respect. The greatest commonality mankind have is that we are all bearers of God's image one way or another. Man was commanded to subdue the earth and rule over creation. But we are not to subdue and mistreat other human beings.*

Why is Genesis 1:26-28 important?

*Daniel Hayes: From Genesis 1 comes the basic foundational premise for a theology of race: all people are created in the image of God. This gives every individual of every race in the world a remarkable status before God. It demolishes every theory of racial superiority or racial inferiority.*

**Fall:** *Human inequality exists because of man's rebellion against God and His plan.*

*Carl Ellis: Before the fall Adam and Eve had significant power of dominion, yet there were no power struggles between them. Why? Because they were one ... After the fall their oneness was broken. This is where we begin to have our problems. We began to think individualistically, and this led to self-centeredness ... The man and the woman began to seek dominion and dominance over each other, and inequality was the result.*

*Carl Ellis: Because of the loss of oneness, power struggles infected the marriage relationship. Eventually it infected all human relationships. Thus, human inequality became universal, not only between individuals like Cain and Abel but also between people groups. It makes no difference how you define people groups, whether ethnically, culturally, linguistically, or generationally. There will be inequalities among them and power struggles between them.*

John Piper: *Racial tensions are rife with pride – the pride of white supremacy, the pride of black power, the pride of intellectual analysis, the pride of anti-intellectual scorn, the pride of loud verbal attacks, and the pride of despising silence, the pride that feels secure, and the pride that masks fear. Where pride holds sway, there is no hope for the kind of listening and patience and understanding and openness to correction that relationships require.*

What then is our hope for racial reconciliation?

Bruce Waltke: *God would form a new race of people in Jesus Christ to make a culture that would bring him glory.*

**Salvation:** *Christ restores human equality by creating one new human race for God.*

*The Bible explains that God, who created human beings in his own image and gave them equality, is able to recreate humanity and restore human equality. Those who lived to subdue and rule over one another in rebellion against God are able to submit to Christ and live for God's reign in all of life. This is the message of the gospel that writers of the New Testament proclaimed and taught concerning the work of Christ that restores humanity from the power of sin. The Apostle Paul made it his lifelong mission to proclaim this gospel message to the Gentiles – those who were treated as less, inferior, and unequal, as “dogs” by the Jews. Paul's message to the Ephesians, in particular, proclaims the gospel truth that all people have equally privileged standing before God and equal access to God because of his immeasurable grace in Christ.*

Ephesians 2:1-10: *Christ brought peace between God and fallen humankind.*

Ephesians 2:11-22: *Christ has also brought peace between people groups that are hostile and divided because of sin.*

What is God's solution to the problem of human inequality?

*Christ's aim was to create “a single new humanity,” one multiethnic people of God united by faith in Christ. Christ willingly died for the sins of racism and ethnocentrism, which separated people groups and led to ongoing mistreatment of each other. In doing so, Christ once and for all dealt with the “loss of oneness” that resulted in power struggles between people groups cause by sin.*

John Stott: *The new society God has brought into being is nothing short of a new creation, a new human race, whose characteristic is no longer alienation but reconciliation, no longer division and hostility but unity and peace. This new society God rules and loves and lives in.*

Daniel Hays: *Our primary identity as humans is to be based on our union with Christ, and no longer based on traditional human sociological connections.*

Glory: *God's promise of eternal human equality gives His people hope in the midst of inequality in the church.*

*Jesus died on the cross to end hostility and restore equality between ethnic groups on earth. However, this was not the only purpose for his death. The Bible reveals that Jesus died and rose again as the Lamb of God to forever unite all ethnic groups as the equally privileged people of God.*

Read Revelation 7:9-10.

Daniel Hays: *This multiethnic image, where people of all races and ethnic groups are shoulder to shoulder worshipping God, portrays exactly the same unity of believers that Paul calls for in his epistles ... It is a picture of the reality that will exist in the climactic kingdom of Christ, and, as such, provides a model for us to strive toward.*

ESVSB on Racial Discrimination: *If [Revelation 7:9-10] is God's great plan from the beginning of time until the end, then surely the Christian church of today should be a living example of racial harmony, characterized by full inclusion of people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds united in serving Christ and his universal kingdom on earth.*

Jerram Barrs: *Christ's desire is not Asian-Americans here and Latinos there, Afro-Americans here and Anglo-Americans somewhere else, but rather that we may be brought to complete unity.*

Carl Ellis: *May God give us the grace to disciple the nations by demonstrating the true meaning of ethnicity rather than imitating the world within ethnic power struggles, marginalization, and oppression.*

### Reflections

1. How are you using your ethnicity according to God's purpose?
2. In what ways do people still rule over and subdue one another?
3. Why is it important for the gospel to be the motivation for a multiethnic ministry?

## THE HISTORY OF HUMAN INEQUALITY IN CHRISTIANITY

*God's vision and eternal hope for human beings of every race and ethnicity is an equally privileged multiethnic people of God. They will worship the Lamb in perfect unity and racial harmony. However, on this side of heaven, inequality and mistreatment remain, even in the church of Christ. This reality is well-illustrated in the expansion of Christianity from Western Europe to the United States.*

### Expansion of Christianity from Western Europe

*Stephen Neill: Missionaries in the nineteenth century had to some extent yielded to the colonial complex. Only Western man was wise and good, and members of other races, in so far as they became westernized, might share in this wisdom and goodness. But Western man was the leader, and would remain so for a very long time, perhaps for ever. When voices were raised in criticism of this accepted position, they were liable to be shouted down by an almost unanimous chorus of disapproval.*

*Paul Hiebert: The Enlightenment deeply influenced Western Christian whites. Christians led the fight against slavery and human exploitation. They were also shaped by the world around them. Enlightenment attitudes were used to justify segregated churches, and even slavery. They supported the mission movement, and saw whites as uniquely called to propagate Christianity and civilization around the world. Missionaries sacrificed their lives to bring the gospel to people around the world, but many took for granted the racial superiority of whites.*

### Attitude of Racial Superiority in the American Church

*Douglas Sweeney: While evangelicals did not invent the sins of racism or ethnocentrism, the slave trade, segregation, discrimination, or racial hate groups, literally millions of white evangelicals have either participated in or sanctioned one or more of these things, distorting their common witness of the gospel.*

*Paul Hiebert: Many who argued against slavery in the United States did so not on the basis of the equality of all humans, but on the humanitarian argument that the inferior should be helped, not enslaved, by the superiors.*

*With the hope of the gospel, the church of Christ expanded from Europe to other continents. There were Christians who deeply cared about others of a different race or ethnicity. But there also were Christians who sought dominion over another race. And as a whole, the gospel witness of equal privilege of all peoples was undermined by racism and inequality.*

Reflections

1. What non-biblical principles or cultural values have undermined the spread of the gospel in America?
2. What has had a greater shaping influence in the American church – the history of slavery in America or the gospel of reconciliation in Christ?

## THE PROBLEM OF RACE IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

*Further complicating the issue of racial inequality and segregation, and crucial to understanding the challenges of pursuing multiethnic ministries in America today, is the development of a “racialized society” in the United States.*

### The Lingering Impact of Racial Segregation

*Emerson & Smith: The racialized society is reproduced in everyday actions and decisions ... As one example, although many Americans believe residential segregation by force of law is wrong (the Jim Crow method), they accept residential segregation by choice (the post-Civil Rights method). The methods differ, but the results – reproducing racialization – are the same. Choice and freedom are two of the dominant American values that today maintain the racialized society. Contemporaries may view these values as the realization of America’s destiny, but these values are at the same time now essential tools in dividing people along socially constructed racial lines.*

*In the post-Civil Rights era, Emerson and Smith argue that inequality and power struggles, as evident in racial division and racial hierarchy in the United States, are systemic problems, covertly “embedded in normal operations of institutions” and “invisible to most Whites.” In this “new era of race relations in the United States,” Emerson and Smith state, “racism is not merely individual, overt prejudice or the free-floating irrational driver of race problems, but the collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups.”*

*Emerson & Smith: We can find numerous positive examples of religious people and groups working to overcome racial division and inequality, but structural forces within the organization of religion undercut these positive actions. In fact, these structural forces often regenerate the very conditions the positive actions work to eliminate.*

### The Problem with the Church Growth Movement

*Emerson and Smith: These arrangements [racially homogenous ingroups and the segmented market] partially generate and reproduce the racial fragmentation of American society; they aid the formation and maintenance of group biases, direct altruistic religious impulses to express themselves primarily in racially separate groups, contribute to segregated social networks and identities, help perpetuate socioeconomic inequality by race, and generally fragment and drown out religious prophetic voices calling for an end to racialization.*

Robert Priest: *Evangelical Christians insist that the gospel is for everyone, irrespective of skin color, and live with the hope of a future in which people from 'every tribe and nation' will be fully united 'around the throne' (Rev 5). But 'on this side of heaven,' Christians live and act as members of fully human societies – sinful human societies. Such societies create powerful social structures, undergirded by strong political, legal, and cultural supports. These structures provide marked constraints on the kinds of action and interaction that are tolerated. In America, especially the American South, such structures organized society around a color line, a line that both separated blacks and whites and subordinated blacks while privileging whites.*

### The Solution to Racially Segregated Churches in America

Carl Ellis: *There is a lot of talk today about reconciliation. But, if we ignore the dominant/sub-dominant dynamics, we will never bridge the gap [of ethnic-based inequality]. We will wonder why racial reconciliation does not seem to work, and people will continue to suffer.*

John Stott: *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 new 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 ... We need to get the failures of the church on our conscience, to feel the offence to Christ ... to weep over the credibility gap between the church's talk and the church's walk, to repent of our readiness to excuse and even condone our failures, and to determine to do something about it.*

### Reflections

1. How is the problem of race made worse by the evangelical church in America?
2. Even when people are not personally prejudice, why are there still racial problems in America?
3. Why must churches intentionally pursue multiethnic ministries?

## A PATH TOWARD MULTIETHNIC MINISTRIES: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Emerson & Smith: *Addressing racialization must involve replacing structural barriers – such as segregation, inequality, and group competition – with structural supports – such as equality and cooperation and mutual dependence.*

### Organizational Culture

Edgar Schein: *I believe that cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group. If that group is successful and the assumptions come to be taken for granted, we then have a culture that will define for later generations of members what kinds of leadership are acceptable. The culture now defines leadership.*

Why does an organizational culture matter?

Harrington, Creech & Taylor: *To say that we are part of a living system is to say that there are forces at work among us that transcend a naïve focus on the cause of a problem (as though any one individual can be labeled as “the problem”). In a living system, whenever a problem is chronic, just about everyone has a part to play in keeping it going.*

### *Dynamics of Social Power*

Douglas Yates: *For most leaders in most organizations, the key to improving organizational effectiveness may lie less in improving long-range plans or rearranging organizational charts than in coming to understand the way political conflicts work in organizations and how they can be better managed.*

Robert Vecchio: *In the area of politics, everyone is a player. Subordinates, as well as their managers, can engage in the give-and-take of organizational politics.*

### *Attitudes Towards Multiculturalism*

*Monocultural Organizations.* Organizations at this level are primarily Eurocentric and ethnocentric. They operate from the following statements and assumptions: (a) There is an implicit or explicit exclusion of racial minorities, women, and other marginalized groups; (b) they are structured to the advantage of the Euro-American majority; (c) there is only one best way to manage, administrate, or lead; (d) culture is believed to have minimal impact on management, personality, or education; (e) employees should assimilate; (f) culture-

specific ways of doing things are not valued or recognized; (g) everyone should be treated exactly the same; (h) there is a strong belief in the concept of the melting pot.

*Nondiscriminatory Organizations.* Organizations enter nondiscriminatory stage as they become more culturally relevant and receptive. The following premises and practices represent these types of organizations: (a) there are inconsistent policies and practices regarding multicultural issues – though some departments and some leaders and workers are becoming sensitive to multicultural issues, it is not an organizational priority; (b) although leaders may recognize a need for some action, they lack a systemic program or policy that addresses the issue of prejudice and bias; (c) the changes that are made to address multicultural issues are often superficial and made for public relations purposes; (d) equal employment opportunities, affirmative action, and numerical symmetry of minorities and women are implemented grudgingly.

*Multicultural Organizations.* Organizations at this level value diversity and attempt to accommodate continuing cultural change. These organizations: (a) work with a vision that reflects multiculturalism; (b) reflect the contributions of diverse cultural groups in their mission, operations, products, and services; (c) value multiculturalism and view it as an asset; (d) actively engage in visioning, planning, and problem-solving activities that allow for equal access and opportunities; (e) realize that equal access and opportunities are not equal treatments; and (f) work to diversify the environment.

Derald Wing Sue: *[There is a need for people in organizations] to understand how organizational policies and practices may affect them and their clients, how organizational subsystems may impede multicultural development, what changes need to be made so all groups are allowed equal access and opportunity, and finally, that they need to play system intervention roles other than the traditional one that focuses solely on individual change.*

#### *Responses to Ethnic Diversity and Organizational Culture*

Multiculturalism:

Separation:

Assimilation:

Deculturation:

Types of Organizations	Responses to Ethnic Diversity and Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Monocultural Organizations</i>: primarily ethnocentric and culture-specific ways of doing things are not valued</li> <li>• <i>Non-discriminatory Organizations</i>: more culturally receptive but lack policy that address the issue of prejudice and bias</li> <li>• <i>Multicultural Organizations</i>: value diversity and actively engage in activities that allow for equal access and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Multiculturalism</i>: be open to positive aspects of all culture and find meaningful ways of interacting with others</li> <li>• <i>Separation</i>: reject all cultural values except its own</li> <li>• <i>Assimilation</i>: adopt the organization's culture and conform to the values of the dominant group</li> <li>• <i>Deculturation</i>: maintain separate group values without trying to influence anyone else</li> </ul>

*There is an undeniable dynamic between an organization's culture and its members. Organizations maintain a culture on the spectrum of multiculturalism, and their members adjust to the organizational culture based on their own culture and values. Thus, when minorities are asked to lead or participate in an organization, they not only respond to the organizational culture themselves, but they also must handle the forces between the organizational culture and the subordinates' responses.*

*Taylor Cox: Most employers have an organizational culture that is somewhere between toxic and deadly when it comes to handling diversity. The result is that the presence of real diversity is unsustainable as a characteristic of the organization.*

*Organizational culture is not neutral – especially to minorities in leadership. Organizational culture can be “toxic and deadly” for minority leaders and subordinates alike. Unless organizations intentionally address bias, prejudice, and systemic stereotypes to move toward multicultural organizational culture, a healthy multicultural environment may not be attainable or sustainable.*

### Multicultural Competencies

*Geert Hostede: Learning to become an effective leader is like learning to play music: Besides talent, it demands persistence and the opportunity to practice. Effective monocultural leaders have learned to play one instrument; they often have proven themselves by a strong drive and quick and firm opinions. Leading in a multicultural and diverse environment is like playing several instruments. It partly calls for different attitudes and skills: restraint in passing judgment and the ability to recognize that familiar tunes may have to be played differently. The very qualities that made someone an effective monocultural leader may make her or him less qualified for a multicultural environment.*

## *Cultural Intelligence*

Bob Burns: *Cultural intelligence (CQ) can be defined as the ability to understand, acknowledge, and appreciate current contextual forces as well as the culture background of oneself and others. It involves an awareness of regional, ethnic, and generational differences and the implications of these differences on one's worldview.*

Why is it important to develop CQ in a multiethnic ministry context?

## *Emotional Intelligence*

Bob Burns: *[EQ is] the ability to manage one's own emotions proactively and respond to the emotions of others appropriately.*

Why is EQ important in a multiethnic ministry context?

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee: *Great leaders work through the emotions.*

Connerley and Pedersen: *Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are thought to be happier and more committed to their organizations, perform better in their workplace, and maybe most important in a multicultural and diverse environment, utilize their emotions to improve their decision-making skills and to instill a sense of enthusiasm, trust, and cooperation in their employees by using interpersonal relationships.*

## Reflections

1. How would you describe the organizational culture of your ministry?
2. What role do you play in your organization's culture?
3. What three things can you describe about your own ethnic or racial culture?
4. How many minorities would describe you as their true friend?
5. Name minority leaders, pastors, or authors that have influenced your thinking and life.
6. Why is it important to have confidants in your life?

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: BUILDING A MULTIETHNIC MINISTRY

*God has called you and your team to build a multiethnic ministry in your city. With the wisdom and giftedness God has given your team, develop a multiethnic ministry that will be able to reach the diverse groups of people who live in your city. Be sure to consider the reasons behind the particular choices you make for your multiethnic ministry.*

*In what city is your ministry?*

*In percentages, what racial or ethnic groups live your city?*

*What is the name of your ministry?*

*What is the vision for your ministry?*

*What is the mission of your ministry?*

*What is the leadership structure of your ministry? Who will lead and why?*

*What are the core values of your ministry?*

*How will you reach the diverse people of your city?*

*What is your plan for discipleship in your ministry?*