

BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNITY

We are living in where all areas of society, families, schools, universities, communities, governments (local, state, federal), businesses and corporations (all industry sectors: media, manufacturing, financial, entertainment, shipping, technology, etc.) are all rising up and contending for a better way to treat each other.

This is the time for the Church to shine and be a thought leader in this space

We believe the work that we're engaged in is Holy Spirit inspired and we're attempting to follow Jesus and let Him do what only He can do. Jesus is the Bridge Builder between people groups, and He has made us one. We want to cooperate with Him to see His finished work manifest in the natural.

Loving others well is our goal. We believe that means that you tell the truth with grace and love, you meet them where they are, and you help them to become aware of and experience more of what God has for them.

It's important to have knowledge of how we got here. Especially in America.

Introduction

- Racial trauma, racial identity struggles, racial tensions, racial gender issues are not new.
- However, when they surface anger, rage, discontent and/or defensiveness is often the response that people on both sides of those issues demonstrate.
- That's what some neuro-theologians call "enemy mode" thinking.
- The people who demonstrate those emotions or behaviors usually have feelings of sadness and helplessness or feelings of being threatened personally or they perceive their way of life is threatened.
- As a result, their conscious and sub-conscious centers in their brains present anger and/or defensiveness as the road to safety or the way to get answers to the racial problem they perceive they are facing.

Racism defined by the United Nations

Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice Adopted and proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its twentieth session, on 27 November 1978

Article 2

1. Any theory which involves the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others, presumed to be inferior, or which bases value judgements on racial differentiation, has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity.
2. Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behavior, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practice it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security.
3. Racial prejudice, historically linked with inequalities in power, reinforced by economic and social differences between individuals and groups, and still seeking today to justify such inequalities, is totally without justification.

Pew Research Center

US Greatest Fears

Nuclear Weapons - 23%

Inequality – 27%

Religious & Ethnic Hatred – 24%

Pollution & Environment - 15%

AIDS and Other Diseases – 7%

Inequality, Religious & Ethnic Hatred are also the highest fears in Europe and the Middle East

Pew Research Center

The Next America					
Percent of total US Population by race and ethnicity					
Year	1960	1980	2010	2020	2060
Other	0%	1%	3%	3%	6%
Asian	1%	2%	5%	6%	8%
Hispanic	4%	6%	16%	19%	31%
Black	10%	12%	12%	13%	13%
White	85%	76%	64%	60%	43%

Challenges: For the Church in America

Sociologist Michael Emerson's researched this issue and found and documented in his book *Divided by Faith* that homogenous local churches generally reproduce inequality, encourage oppression, strengthens racial division and heightens political separation.

- **Multiethnic** means when no one race makes up more than **80%** of the congregation and 80% of the leadership.
- Approximately **13.7%** of Churches in America are multiethnic.
- Which means approximately **86.3%** of all Churches in America are homogenous or racially segregated by choice.

Legacy of Exclusionary Beliefs and the related struggles in the Early Church

1st Century Incidents

- Cornelius House,
- Council of Jerusalem
- Book of Galatians

2nd, 3rd and 4th Century Thought Leaders:

- Irenaeus,
- Tertullian,
- Origen
- Eusebius

Irenaeus

Explained Jewish law as necessary for a time because of human sinfulness. But the coming of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem signaled that the time of the Jews and their law was over. According to Irenaeus, Jesus was attacking the Jewish claim to be able to know the Father without accepting the Son. He relied on the parables of the wicked tenants (Mt 21:33-34) and the wedding feast (Mk 22:1-14) to “prove” that God had destined the Gentiles to replace unresponsive Jews in the kingdom.

Tertullian

Presented Jesus as the Messiah who ought to have been recognized by the Jewish people but was not. As a result, he argued, the Jews were subjected to God’s wrath. For Tertullian, Jesus’ severity towards Jews was completely in line with the antagonism expressed by his Father, the Creator.

St Augustine of Hippo in the 5th Century

Augustine introduced the justification of using fear and pain for the sake of the gospel administered at the hands of the government. **Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatists**

Thomas Aquinas 13th Century

Aquinas agreed with Augustine that slavery was the result of the Fall, but he also thought that the universe did have a natural structure that gave some men authority over others. He justified this by pointing out the hierarchical nature of heaven, where some angels were superior to others.

Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery is a set of legal principles that governed the European colonizing powers, particularly regarding the administration of indigenous land. The doctrine emerged from a series of fifteenth-century papal bulls, which are official decrees by the pope that carry the full weight of his ecclesial office. The "Doctrine of Discovery" later became the legal basis for the United States' western expansion as it acquired lands from the First Nation people groups.

June 18, 1452, Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull Dum Diversas

January of 1454, Pope Nicholas V authored the papal bull Romanus Pontifex

May 4, 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued Papal Bull "Inter Caetera,"

Introduction Summary

These ways of thinking and exegesis of scripture were later used as a basis for the scriptural interpretation of the New Testament's:

- Compliance with slavery
- For the colonization of “others“
- For violence towards “others”
- For eventual justification for the enslavement of ”others”
- All under the rubric of evangelism

As we enter the 18th and 19th Centuries in the midst of all of this that the church leadership was complicit with or supporting, God was still moving on hearts of His people to bring His Church to a place of unity:

- 1st and 2nd Great Awakenings
- William Wilberforce in England
- Abolitionist Movement in America