



What We Talk About When We Talk About Race

Various Texts

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Galatians 2:14

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel...

Sociologists use the term multiethnic when a church reaches this benchmark: 80/20 rule, that means one ethnic group cannot make up more than 80 percent of a church or worshiping community. For Christian churches in America, only 2.5 percent of Protestant churches qualifies as multiethnic.

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God,
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve
our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

Name walls and tear down walls.

Ephesians 2:11-18

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands) — remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both

of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

What we talk about when we talk about...

Race vs. Ethnicity

“The Narrative of Racial Difference”

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that **all Men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness...

...The Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the **merciless Indian Savages**, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions.”

- *The U.S. Declaration of Independence*

“Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bought to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indian not taxed, *three fifths of all other Persons.*”

- *The U.S. Declaration of Independence*

“Race is a social construct. There is no biological basis for the superiority or inferiority of any human being based on the amount of melanin in her or his skin. The development of the idea of race required the intentional actions of people in the social, political, and religious spheres to decide that skin color determined who would be enslaved and who would be free. Over time Europeans, including Christians, wrote laws and formed the habits that concentrated power in the hands of those they considered ‘white’ while withholding equality from those they considered ‘black.’”

- Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*

Racism is a system of advantage based on race.

Naming Walls that Divide:

- (American) History

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

- James Baldwin

“The system of race that we’ve created in America is fraught with sin, and it has played a powerful role in shaping the sense of identity of every human being who has lived here. Therefore it would be naïve for devoted followers of Jesus to believe that they can pursue the transformation of identity in Christ without also acknowledging the power of sin as evidenced by the

impact of race. Our old self has been profoundly shaped by race, and we can't grow into the new and redeemed self without naming the presence of that sin, confessing the ways it has impacted us, and doing all we can to break free of its former power.”

- Daniel Hill, *White Awake*

Naming Walls that Divide:

- (American) History
- Complicity

“It is enacted and declared by this Grand Assembly, and the authority thereof, that the conferring of baptism does not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom.”

- *Key Slavery Statutes of the Virginia General Assembly, Sept 1667*

Preach to the Soul, Leave the System Alone

“I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say, follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sidelines and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid

our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, 'Those are social issues which the gospel has nothing to do with,' and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely otherworldly religion which made a strange distinction between bodies and souls, the sacred and the secular."

- Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*

Ephesians 2:14-16

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

"History and Scripture teaches us that there can be no reconciliation without repentance. There can be no repentance without confession. And there can be no confession without truth."

- Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*

Book Recommendations:

- *The Color of Compromise*, Jemar Tisby
- *White Awake*, Daniel Hill