

Speaking to Your Church on Race and Racism

If you are a teaching pastor of a church, or in leadership of a church, this blog is for you.

Everyone else can eavesdrop.

You need to do a series on race and racism. And you need to do it soon—as soon as you can.

Racial division is our culture's most pressing concern, and it is a deeply biblical and spiritual issue. To not address it would be overlooking the largest elephant in the cultural room. And, I might add, the Christian room.

The church is the hope of the world and, in this particular matter, the only hope for modeling racial unity. We have been called into the new community, with Christ as its center. If we can achieve racial unity in our churches, it truly would be offering the world something it does not already have and could never achieve on its own.

It would also be the most arresting picture imaginable of God's salvific work, and would draw people in as few other things would. In fact, in John 17, didn't Jesus Himself pray that we would be unified, and that unity would capture the attention of the world as nothing else would?

We just haven't thought of that prayer in racial terms.

At Mecklenburg Community Church, we just finished a three-week series titled "Woke." You can get mp3s and/or pdfs [here](#).

We began with a theology of race: What is race? Where did the races come from in terms of creation and Adam and Eve? What is God's vision when it comes to ethnicity?

The second week tackled racism itself as a distortion of God's vision and a great stench in His nostrils.

The third week was on the need for civility in our very uncivil world.

Multiple videos were used strategically throughout the series. We ended the entire series with a 6+ minute song (yes, you read that right) that was nothing less than anointed and sealed the series to our hearts in a way that we are still talking about. (The video links and the links to the songs can be found in the .pdfs)

Still have fears? You should also know that along the way we broke every attendance record on the books. Three straight weeks, three straight records. All to say, our world and our people are hungering for us to speak to this.

And in personal terms, I received nothing but gratitude for the series.

Many church leaders are afraid to broach this subject. Don't be. But do your work. I would take advantage of [using our series](#) as a resource, along with the books listed below. I also met with a group of our church members – black, African, Hispanic – for nearly two hours over a lunch to ask them questions like, “What do you hope I'll say in this series?” and “What do you fear I will say?” I asked about the language I should use, the questions white people secretly ask, the balance I should strike, and so much more. The series benefited greatly from the education and insight they graciously bestowed.

I would gently urge that you should do the same.

I write all this because I am deeply burdened by this issue—and by the silence of most churches. Nine out of 10 churches are predominantly one color, whether it be black or white.

That isn't right.

It isn't good.

And it isn't God's vision.

We are the only ones who have the voice and vision to address this imbalance.

Actually, that's not strong enough. The truth is that Christ compels us to address it. If we don't, we will be held accountable as His under-shepherds. I believe we will be judged as to whether we spoke to this issue as His leaders.

So please, [take advantage of our resources](#) as well as so many others at your disposal, and speak to this issue. God will show up, your people will be served,

... and the world just may start to change.

> [Read more from James Emery White.](#)
