

reconciliation & justice
conference **2016**

JANUARY 26th & 27th SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

CEASE
TO DO EVIL;
LEARN
TO DO GOOD;
SEEK
JUSTICE
CORRECT
OPPRESSION.

ISAIAH 1:16-17

general information

steering committee

Macklann Basse

Africa Missions with Nations
Lomé, Togo, West Africa

Abraham Cho

Redeemer Presbyterian
New York, NY

Kenny Foster

Grace Presbyterian
Dover, DE

Barry Henning

New City Fellowship
St. Louis, MO

Jacinto Hernandez

Covenant Presbyterian
Harrisonburg, VA

Duke Kwon

Grace DC-Meridian Hill
Washington, DC

Leon Mukendi

New City Fellowship
St. Louis, MO

Tony Myles

New City Fellowship
St. Louis, MO

Randy Nabors

New City Network
Chattanooga, TN

Jonathan Seda

Grace Presbyterian
Dover, DE

Welcome!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to our 6th annual Reconciliation and Justice Conference. We thank God for each of you who are gathered for these two short days together and we are praying for God's blessing of wisdom, understanding and the Spirit's power to be poured out on us to genuinely, more deeply be reconciled with our brothers and sisters in the Lord across the many ethnic, social and economic divisions that still mark the church in 21st century American evangelical Christianity.

The decision of the 2015 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to ask all the churches and Presbyteries in our denomination to pray, reflect and discuss how to address the history of our failings toward our African American brothers and sisters and also, how we might move forward together in greater unity, has provided the framework for this year's gathering.

We are asking for the wisdom and humility and courage of the Holy Spirit to be upon us as we try to learn together around a broad range of topics that need to be addressed in order for us to truly love one another "not with words or speech, but in action and in truth."

We believe Jesus prayed specifically and especially for this unity; that he died to remove our hostilities not just from God toward us, but also from and against each other; that his resurrection is the power of God for us to truly live these things out in practice; and, that Jesus will rule and reign among the nations until the reconciliation of all things in him and under the Father is complete.

Join us in praying that God will anoint presenters, listeners, discussion groups and everyone else with an anointing of the Spirit that will spark great renewal and maturity in the church around these issues. The watching, hurting, confused, rebellious and destructive world desperately needs us to be the one, united, faithful people of God.

On behalf of the Steering Committee,



Barry Henning

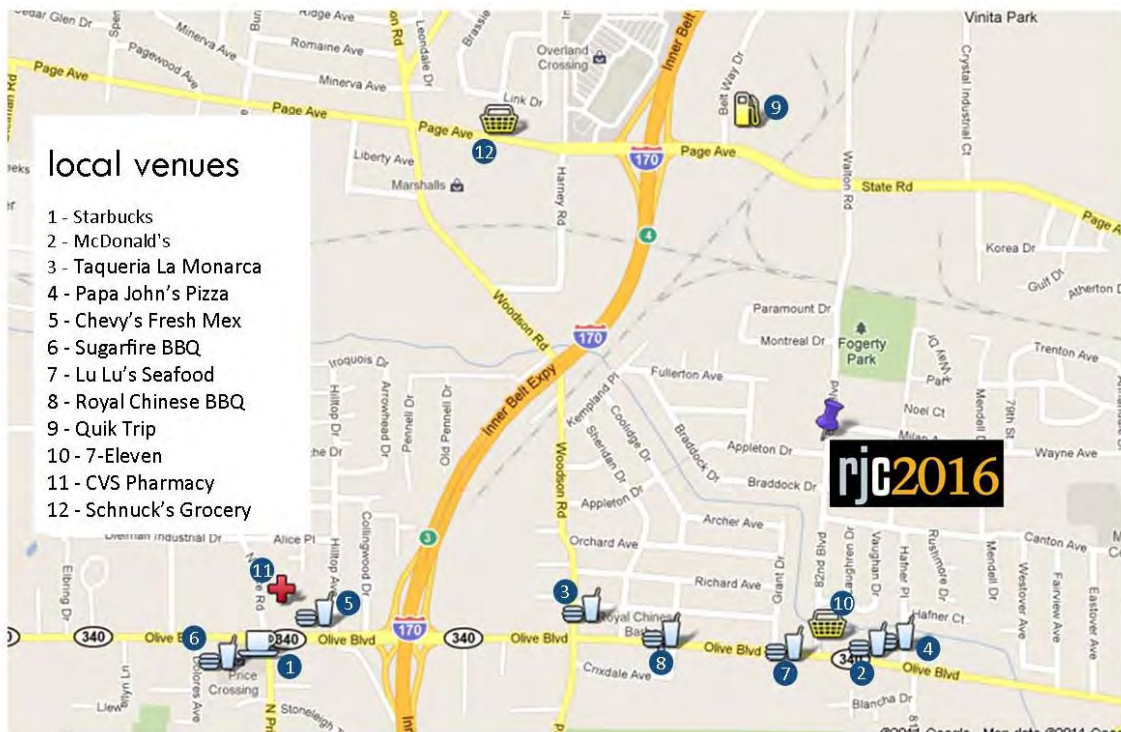
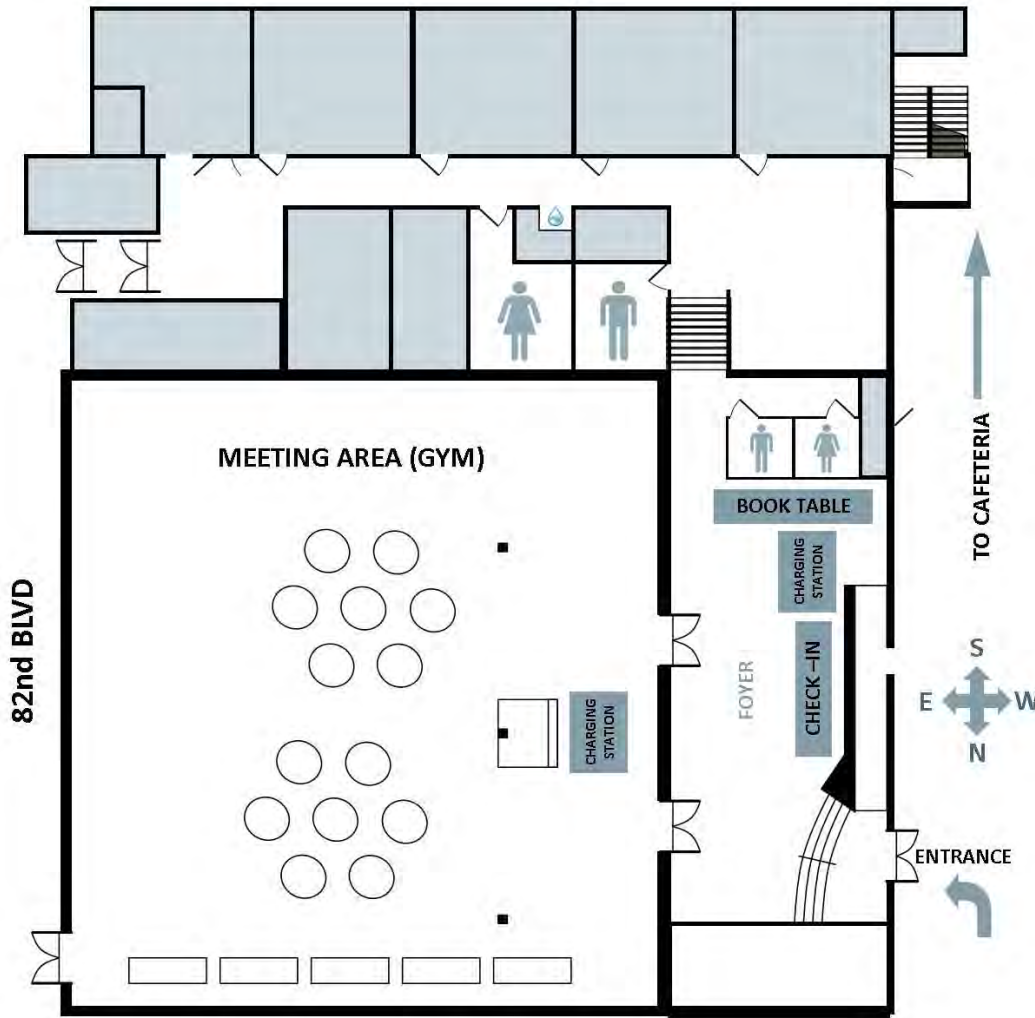
wi-fi connection

- ◆ **Network:** NCF-1483
- ◆ **Password:** LastEnemy

charging stations

Electrical charging stations are available at the sound booth (in the back of the gym) and at the registration table

map of facilities & local venues



tuesday schedule

tuesday, january 26

8:30 - 9:00 am Check-in

SESSION 1 - RECONCILIATION INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

9:00 - 9:30 am Introductions, Worship and Prayer

9:30 - 9:50 am **“Reconciliation: Is There Anything to Repent Of?”** - *Oliver Trimiew*

9:50 - 10:05 am Table Discussion

10:05 - 10:25 am **“White Privilege: Is there such a thing? Is it evenly distributed in the white community? Does the white church participate in it?”** - *Craig Garriott*

10:25 - 10:40 am Table Discussion

10:40 - 11:00 am *Break*

11:00 - 11:20 am **“Corporate Repentance: How can we repent of sins we have not personally committed? Or have we?”** - *Sean Lucas / Randy Nabors*

11:20 - 11:35 am Table Discussion

11:35 am - 12:00 pm Large Group Discussion

12:00 - 12:45 pm *Lunch*

SESSION 2 - KINGDOM JUSTICE

12:45 - 1:05 pm Worship and Prayer

1:05 - 1:25 pm **“The Theology of Kingdom Justice”** - *Carl Ellis*

1:25 - 1:40 pm Table Discussion

1:40 - 2:00 pm **“Does Racial Injustice Intersect with Economic Injustice?”** - *Tony Myles*

2:00 - 2:15 pm Table Discussion

2:15 - 2:30 pm *Break*

2:30 - 2:50 pm **“The ‘Spirituality of the Church’ - What is the Mission of the Church?”** - *Sean Lucas / Randy Nabors*

2:50 - 3:05 pm Table Discussion

3:05 - 3:25 pm **“Justice for the Immigrant”** - *Macklann Basse and Kevin Vandenbrink*

3:25 - 3:40 pm Table Discussion

3:40 - 3:55 pm *Break*

3:55 - 4:45 pm Panel and Large Group Discussion

5:00 - 6:00 pm *Dinner*

6:00 - 7:30 pm Worship and Prayer; **“The Theology of Reconciliation”** - *Irwyn Ince*

wednesday schedule

wednesday, january 27

SESSION 3 - THE VICTORY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

8:30 - 9:00 am	Introductions, Worship and Prayer
9:00 - 9:20 am	“The Cost of Forgiveness: the Foundation of Reconciliation and Justice” - <i>Barry Henning</i>
9:20 - 9:35 am	Table Discussion
9:35 - 9:55 am	“Key Practical Steps a White Church Can Take Towards Reconciliation” - <i>Jonathan Seda</i>
9:55 - 10:10 am	Table Discussion
10:10 - 10:25 am	<i>Break</i>
10:25 - 10:45 am	“A Strategy of Protest and Appeal” - <i>Mike Higgins</i>
10:45 - 11:00 am	Table Discussion
11:00 - 11:20 am	“Beyond Black and White: Why Repentance for Racism Matters to Other Communities of Color” - <i>Abraham Cho and Duke Kwon</i>
11:20 - 11:35 am	Table Discussion
11:35 am - 12:30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Large Group Discussion and Dismissal

Scripture tells of a heavenly city where chosen people from every nation and tongue gather together to worship God. When Jesus returns we will finally see this city perfected, the way it was meant to be. But even now we see vivid glimpses of it in our local congregations. In cities around the world, believers are joining hands across cultural barriers and lifting their voices together in praise of their Savior.

A pastor's gracious words or a deacon's loving deeds, in their own way, can help to heal racial fallout. Likewise, **a musician's songs of praise can unite peoples who were once divided.** The challenge of the cross-cultural worship leader is to search out the cultural angles that connect the grooves to bring everything together.

resources at ncfmusic.com

Several of the songs from the 2016 Reconciliation & Justice Conference are available for FREE download from New City Music:

<http://ncfmusic.com/resources>

Almost all the other songs from the conference can be purchased through *praisecharts.com* or the *African American Heritage Hymnal (amazon.com)*.

TRAINING FOR WORSHIP
LEADERS & MUSICIANS



NEW CITY MUSIC

2016 CONFERENCE
JULY 7-9 • BALTIMORE

More information available soon at NCFMUSIC.COM

Save
the date!

session 1 RECONCILIATION INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

“Reconciliation: Is There Anything to Repent Of?” - *Oliver Trimiew*

- I. Bear fruits of repentance: What did we do?
 - A. A brief reflection on the Baptist: Luke 3:7-14
 - B. The Civil Rights Movement and Presbyterians before the PCA
 - C. The Civil Right Movement at the Formation of the PCA
 - D. The Civil Rights Movements and the PCA today

- II. Racial Reconciliation and Justice in the PCA today
 - A. A Review of the Documents of Confession of Sin
 - B. What Should We Do Now?

Questions for discussion:

1. To bring the discussion to our contemporary culture, and in light of the continued incidents of police brutality and the injustice of our judicial systems, what are ways in which members of the PCA continue to promote racism and impede racial reconciliation and leadership diversity in this denomination? You may also discuss ways in which the PCA is no longer promoting racism, if you think this is true.

2. Can members of the PCA actually repent for sinful atrocities of the past and present that they do not really believe they are guilty of personally? Can you confess, apologize, and seek forgiveness for something that you do not think you have done?

3. As Dr. Trimiew has reviewed, the PCA and other earlier evangelical Presbyterian churches have offered statements of confessions of sin for racism before, but with little practical results and meager signs of the fruits of repentance. What makes you think that Overture 20 will be any different? If you think so, then how will it and in what ways? If you think not, then please discuss why not?

4. The Black Lives Matter Movement, as with all civil rights movements, has a diverse support group of people from all religious, cultural, and political perspectives. Today, our culture would also add various individuals with diverse sexual orientations and affirmations about same-sex marriage. Can members of the PCA work in tandem with such a group on the road toward justice? If so, how? If not, why not? How do we avoid what Morton Smith and others did in the Civil Rights era? They equated the causes of integration, non-discrimination and racial equality with “theological liberalism,” “communism” and social science experimentations?

5. Given the history of the origins of the PCA and their involvement or lack thereof in the Civil Right Movement, how is the PCA going to recruit capable, Spirit-filled African-American preachers and their congregations to join in fulfilling the Great Commission in the PCA? What should we think? What do we need to know now? What should we do?

session 1 RECONCILIATION INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

“White Privilege: Is there such a thing? Is it evenly distributed in the white community? Does the white church participate in it?” - Craig Garriott

“white privilege is the legacy of white supremacy...the assumption of racial entitlement and the normality of whiteness...” Jim Wallis, America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America

“I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.” Peggy McIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

- **The truth about the problem of “whiteness”: Hard Realities**
- **The weakness in the solutions to “whiteness”: Insufficient Power**
- **The need for the gospel to “whiteness”: Theology of Privilege**

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.” Hebrews 11:23-26

- **His Right: Affirming God’s Design**
Vs 23; Ps 139:13,14; Acts 17:26,27
- **Not Right: Owning Corporate Sin**
Vs 24, 25; Neh 1:6,7
- **Must Fight: Standing for Justice**
Vs 24,25; Acts 6:1
- **His Blood Unites: Living in the Centrality of the Cross**
Vs 26; Eph 2:14-16

Questions for discussion:

1. What is a good starting point to help people understand “white privilege”?
2. How do you help people own past and present corporate sins?
3. What does “choosing to be mistreated with the people of God” look like for people of faith today? In society? In the church?
4. How does the accomplished work of Christ’s reconciliation on the cross empower people to persevere together as the “beloved community” of God?

session 1 RECONCILIATION INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

**“Corporate Repentance: How can we repent of sins we have not personally committed? Or have we?” -
Sean Lucas / Randy Nabors**

1. Is there a biblical rationale to confess the sins of previous generations as well as our own?

Yes. See the following biblical texts: Leviticus 26:39-42; Psalm 106:6; Jeremiah 3:25, 14:19-20; Nehemiah 1:5-7 (cf. Nehemiah 9); Ezra 9:6-7; Luke 11:48-51

Taken as a whole, these passages—from the OT and NT, from the Law, writings, prophets, and Gospels—provide us a biblical basis for confessing not only our own sins, but also the sins of our fathers.

2. What is the biblical-theological understanding that ungirds this confession?

One of the key themes that makes sense of all Scripture is the covenantal connection between representative heads and their posterity. What one generation does is connected to and affects the next, whether positively or negatively.

- Adam as the representative head acted for his posterity
- Jesus as the representative head acted for his posterity
- The biblical principle of the generational effects of sin is rooted in this covenantal understanding (Exodus 20:4-6)
- The covenantal nature of households flows from this as well.

It is important to say, with my friend Duke Kwon, that this is not simply about imputation. Rather, this is about covenantal, corporate identification.

3. Why is it important to confess corporately the sins of previous generations?

Two reasons:

- First, corporately identifying with and confessing sins of previous generations recognizes the ways that sin and failure continue to affect me, my family, and my local congregation.
- Second, doing this also takes away stumbling blocks that others have to the Gospel or to further partnership for the Gospel.

4. Is racism along with its attendant legal outworking in legalized segregation a sin worthy of confessing?

Yes—these were sins, moral failures and displays of injustice, that must be confessed and repented of.

Questions for discussion:

1. In what ways does covenant theology provide a strong basis for saying, “Both we and our fathers have sinned”? Does a failure to see this indicate a less-than-robust understanding of the Reformed faith? In what ways might that seem ironic?
2. Why do you or others whom you love find it difficult to confess the sins of previous generations? How might you pastorally guide someone through the biblical material? How does the Gospel free us to tell the truth about ourselves or others?
3. In what ways has the sins of our fathers and forefathers in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition affected you? In your own sins of racism? In the experience of the racism of others? How has that served as a barrier to the Gospel in your heart or for others?

session 2

KINGDOM JUSTICE

“The Theology of Kingdom Justice” - *Carl Ellis*

“Does Racial Injustice Intersect with Economic Injustice?” - Tony Myles

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:17-18

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” James 1:27

The cry of the poor

The color of poverty

The shape of our response

Questions for discussion:

1. Who are the poor in your own context?
2. Is there an intersection in your own city between race and economic injustice?
3. What steps might your church begin to take to promote economic justice in your own city?

“The ‘Spirituality of the Church’ - What *is* the Mission of the Church?” - Sean Lucas / Randy Nabors

1. The “classic” understanding of the spirituality of the church doctrine: James Henley Thornwell

2. Westminster Confession of Faith 31:4

Confessionally, the spirituality of the church teaching is rooted in the Westminster Confession of Faith 31:4: “Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.”

Three parts to the “spirituality” teaching:

- Not to intermeddle with civil affairs
- Petitioning and advising the authorities
- Instructing people in moral imperatives

3. Observations

General:

Underlying the commitment to the spirituality of the church is a worthy motive: to preserve the church as church in its unique role in providing the Gospel through the means of grace. However, the way conservative Presbyterians have typically talked about this has been flawed in several ways.

Historical:

Nineteenth-century black Presbyterians did not have a comparable “spirituality of the church” doctrine.

The confessional paragraph itself was a compromise between Congregationalists and Presbyterians at the Westminster Assembly; it was never intended to shut the church out of discussing social or political issues.

Southern Presbyterians in both the 19th and 20th centuries selectively applied the doctrine of the spirituality of the church: prohibition; evolution; abortion; homosexuality; race/segregation?

Practical:

This doctrine does not prohibit the church from speaking, but rather provides a two-fold basis for speaking as the church:

- First, speaking as the church to the state: by humble petition or by way of advice—bearing testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus.
- Second, speaking as the church to the church: moral instruction for the conscience so that Christians may act biblically.

Questions for discussion:

1. We are often ready to criticize the spirituality of the church teaching for its obvious flaws. But what are some benefits for seeing and emphasizing the unique and even primary role of the church as church in the administration of the means of grace (preaching, sacraments, prayer)?
2. One of the interesting facts of history is that black Presbyterians have never had a “spirituality of the church” doctrine. Why do you think that’s the case? How might the minority experience help all evangelicals now that we are clearly minorities within a majority secular culture?
3. What are some ways that we instruct the consciences of our people so that they might be better prepared to act biblically on issues of racial or economic justice? What are some resources that you found helpful in doing this?

“Justice for the Immigrant” - Macklann Basse and Kevin Vandenbrink

God's Displaced People in the Old Testament and New Testament

The Heart of God

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.”
Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Our Kingdom Opportunity

- The Abrahamic Covenant, The Great Commandment, and The Great Commission
- God's Sovereign rule over the nations
 - *“And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.”*
Acts 17:26-27
- Antioch in the New Testament
- Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf

Living as Dual Citizens

- A Nation of Immigrants
- Displaced People, Refugees, and Immigrants, documented and undocumented.
- Why people flee.
- Christian Declaration on Caring for Refugees: An Evangelical Response
- The need for legal reform in our country.
- Fear and Faith

Questions for discussion:

1. When you think of members in your church, what factors inform their views on immigration, immigrants, and refugees?
2. Do members of your church view care for immigrants and refugees as a matter that is closely connected to our call to “seek first the Kingdom of God” as followers of Christ?
3. Are you familiar with the refugee resettlement agencies in your community? Do you have relationships with any Christians who are recent immigrants or refugees?
4. How do you or others preach and teach on these topics in your church? What might you do differently?
5. What are some practical ways you or your church could welcome the stranger or seek justice on behalf of immigrants and refugees in your community?

“The Theology of Reconciliation” - *Irwyn Ince*

1. Content

- CQ: Embracing the Other

2. Community

- The Image of God: Diversity in Unity & Unity in Diversity

3. Challenge

- Getting Out of the Ghetto

Questions for discussion:

1. How does what Scripture reveals about God's inner life inform our need to pursue reconciliation across ethnic lines?

2. In what ways do you think the sections referenced in the WCF move the conversation forward in churches that subscribe to the Confession and Catechisms?

session 3

THE VICTORY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

“The Cost of Forgiveness: the Foundation of Reconciliation and Justice” - Barry Henning

Three basic commitments necessary to experience the power of the Cross of Christ to bring practical reconciliation and justice to expression:

Genuine Repentance - owning sins as the Spirit has revealed them to us

A Commitment to New Obedience - the desire to replace sinful patterns of behavior with true righteousness

Walking in forgiveness - the willingness to yield the costly pain of embracing forgiveness to Jesus Christ and his work on the Cross

Questions for discussion:

- 1) Where are the places your personal and local and denominational church background need to own repentance toward your minority brothers and sisters?
 - Was there any justification of abusive slavery? Of Jim Crow laws in the South or forced segregation in the North? Of willful neglect of the American Indian, or Chinese or Japanese or Latino minorities in your part of the country?
 - Were you or are you, your church or denomination guilty of a practiced segregation and a turning away from your brothers and sisters in their time of need?
 - Do you believe there is a biblical obligation to see our all minority Christians in our culture as an inseparable part of the white church that need to live in a reconciled expression of the body of Christ?

- 2) What will new obedience look like in your community, nationally and internationally?
 - What kind of changes would need to take place on a local, presbytery or denominational level to see reconciliation and justice come to expression?
 - Would this have any effect on requirements for inclusion in the PCA? For training, licensing or ordination? Will this require working across denominational structures in new ways?
 - How might this effect monetary policies and the priorities of how you and your church use their financial resources?

- 3) What are the costs in giving and receiving and walking in forgiveness that you realize you would need to embrace?
 - Where are you hurt and frustrated the most?
 - What does “absorbing” some of the pain as part of the cost of forgiveness mean?
 - Can you, do you already, will you continue to ask God for a genuine delight in your brothers and sisters as part of the freedom of the Gospel in setting our relationships on solid footing?

“Key Practical Steps a White Church Can Take Towards Reconciliation” - Jonathan Seda

Introduction:

- I will equate “Reconciliation” in the church with becoming “Multi-ethnic.” I know there’s more to it than this but I believe this is the starting point.
- I don’t equate “Multi-ethnic churches” with “Multiple-ethnic churches.”
- I don’t believe we can plant multi-ethnic churches fast enough to redirect the PCA, even if MNA were to limit church plants to “multi-ethnic.”
- I believe the only hope for fundamental change in the PCA is for Mono-ethnic churches to intentionally seek to be multi-ethnic
- I’m not an expert in multi-ethnic ministry ... I speak as a man leading a church on a journey toward a vision (picture of a preferable future)
- I’m not a great leader ... It took me 10 years to move our Session to embrace the vision of becoming a multi-ethnic church. A better leader would have moved the church more quickly than I. I began the journey in 1996
- I am passionate about the vision ... and I’ve been & continue to be relentless – *regardless* of how slow the pace ...
- Currently at Grace ... there are growing numbers of minorities – African Americans / Latinos / Filipinos / Chinese / Korean / Japanese / Indians / Pakistanis / Africans
- We have two Anglos on our staff (Rick Barr & Jeff Rakes) - We have one African American pastor on staff (Kenny Foster) – We have one Latino on Staff (moi ... I mean, “soy yo!”) – We are in the process of hiring a part-time Korean Pastor with plans to make the position full time

Practical Steps:

- The leader must have/own the vision: vision = a preferable future / Revelation 5 & 7.
- The vision must be non-negotiable – ie. it is a Biblical Imperative
 - Racial Reconciliation is at the heart of the Gospel – Ephesians / Paul is imprisoned for declaring “the Mystery of The Gospel” – cf. Acts 21.27-22.29 (esp. 22.21-22)
 - NT Gentile inclusion = archetype for inclusion / Abrahamic Covenant “... *all nations* ...” NOTE: Covenant Theology is at the very heart of racial reconciliation and is the theological foundation of the multi-ethnic church!
 - Racial Reconciliation must be lived out in community – ie in the local church (Eph. 4.1ff; Col. 3.11ff; John 17 (this is why I don’t think “Multiple-Ethnic” hits the mark)
 - Model NT Church = Antioch (not Jerusalem) – Multi-ethnic church led by multi-ethnic “pastoral staff” – Acts 11.19-26; 13.1
 - Only in the leader believes the vision to be non-negotiable will he have the motivation/passion to press forward against push-back. There will be push-back!!
 - Take the long view. I pursued a reformation not a revolution. I didn’t want dis-unity over the matter of unity. Some will leave the church. Make sure people leave because of the vision not because of its implementation.

[CONTINUED]

session 3

THE VICTORY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

- Embrace a “Parish Model” of ministry & eschew the “Homogenous Unit Principle of Church Growth.”
 - Choose a realistic radius using your church as the center to determine your parish
 - Do a demographic study of your parish
 - Find leadership that represents the people of your parish
 - Model inclusion at highest level of leadership (Grace Church – Jonathan & Kenny share equally in preaching and are viewed by the congregation as their pastors. Giving up “power” has not been easy for Jonathan. Korean Pastor will be more difficult because of language but every effort will be made at inclusion.
- All leaders *and their spouses* must embrace vision. That is, they must be “for” the vision not merely “unopposed” Grace Church has this policy:

In order to achieve the vision of GPC, the staff and officers of GPC (along with their wives) must be united in mind and heart regarding the vision. They must be committed to pursuing and modeling the vision regardless of any opposition that may arise and be prepared, to the best of their ability, to articulate the biblical foundation of the vision and defend it within the congregation. Leaders of the church (staff and officers together with their wives) must be for the vision and not merely unopposed to it.
- Preach/teach the vision – bring it into sermons, teaching, announcements, etc. – make it the culture of the church (a recent consultant at Grace was amazed at how many people were able to tell him the mission of the church – their mission statement is: *Our mission is to love and serve our community and world with the good news of Jesus Christ, bringing people together across the lines of race and class to worship and follow Jesus*

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you agree that “multi-ethnic” churches fulfill the Biblical vision better than “multiple-ethnic churches” (White churches; Black churches; Latino churches; Korean churches; etc.)? Why or why not? If not, how would you understand Ephesians 4.1ff & Colossians 3.12ff in their respective contexts?
2. Do you agree that the multi-ethnic vision of the church is both biblical and non-negotiable? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree that Gentile Inclusion is archetypal and thus informs minority inclusion in dominant white churches in our culture? Why or why not?
4. How has the “homogenous unit principle of church growth” excused mono-ethnic churches to avoid the biblical imperative for inclusion?
5. What do you think of the policy of Grace Church that requires all leaders and their spouses to embrace the vision of the church?

session 3

THE VICTORY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

“A Strategy of Protest and Appeal” - Mike Higgins

In trying to understand the use of protest as a way to appeal to power, I have read and reread Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s April 1963 “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.” Here is the paragraph that has compelled me to be just a small part of Clergy Civil Disobedience efforts in Saint Louis.

From The Letter: “There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being “disturbers of the peace” and “outside agitators.” But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were “a colony of heaven,” called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be “astronomically intimidated.” By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.”

Questions for discussion:

Read the quotes below from the *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* and discuss your groups’ answers to the following questions.

“You may well ask: “Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored.”

1. Do you think the church should be involved in a protest?

2. Do you think the church should ever be involved in a protest alongside of non-believers?

“In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action.”

1. Which the above four basic steps is the most difficult?

2. Have you ever been involved in a direct action and did it affect change?

session 3 THE VICTORY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

“Beyond Black and White: Why Repentance for Racism Matters to Other Communities of Color” -
Abraham Cho and Duke Kwon

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you tend to think about race/racism only in black-and-white terms? Why do you think this is so?
2. In your own words, why does repentance for racism matter to other communities of color?
3. What are 1-2 things you learned from this presentation about the unique ways an Asian American (or a non-black/non-white individual) might process race/racism in America and the American church?
4. Are there ways the Asian American (or non-black/non-white) perspective can uniquely support, correct, or challenge your understanding of black-and-white racial dynamics?

notes

conference speakers



macklann basse

Africa Missions with Nations
Lomé, Togo



abe cho

Redeemer Pres - East Side
New York, NY



carl ellis

New City Fellowship
Chattanooga, TN



craig garriott

Faith Christian Fellowship
Baltimore, MD



barry henning

New City Fellowship
St. Louis, MO



mike higgins

South City Church
St. Louis, MO



irwyn ince

City of Hope Presbyterian
Columbia, MD



duke kwon

Grace Meridian Hill
Washington, DC



sean lucas

Reformed Theological Seminary
Jackson, MS



tony myles

New City Fellowship
St. Louis, MO



randy nabors

New City Network / MNA
Chattanooga, TN



jonathan seda

Grace Presbyterian
Dover, DE



oliver trimiew

Covenant College
Lookout Mountain, GA



kevin vandenbrink

New City Fellowship - South City
St. Louis, MO

njc2016