

“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.

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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 archetypical 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?