

Practicing Diversity in Your Vineyard Church

Webinar Terms Handout

We know that talking about diversity can be difficult. As pastors and leaders, we see that Jesus was a word worker, so we wanted to provide you with some helpful working definitions used in our webinar on Practicing Diversity in your Local Vineyard Church. These are simply working definitions that our panelists collaborated on to create a baseline for the conversation and for you to use in your local church. They are not definitive Multiply Vineyard or VineyardUSA definitions, but are simply a tool to begin the conversation.

Kingdom view of reconciliation & multi-ethnicity:

Diversity of ethnicity, culture, and language is the natural result of Genesis 1:28, the cultural mandate to fill the earth and bring it under the reign of God. To achieve this, people would need to multiply in number -> spreading out and migrating -> encountering different environmental conditions -> adaptation to these conditions -> differing ethnicities, languages, and cultures. “When God commanded the first human beings to ‘fill the earth,’ it was a decree to create cultures, because no one culture, people, or language can adequately reflect the splendor of God.” (Brenda Salter McNeil, Roadmap to Reconciliation) Babel was an example of God’s people refusing to migrate any further, refusing to fill the earth with the imago Dei, choosing instead to hold fast to their homogeneity. God scattered them! Pentecost was the opposite, God used the diversity of languages to bring people together, bring glory to His name, and begin His church. And this is the picture of the fully realized Kingdom (Revelation 7:9 - every nation, tribe, and tongue) diversity goes on into eternity because God’s glory is best displayed through His people reflecting His nature - unity/diversity (trinity).

Color-blind:

Many of us (white people) know one line of one speech from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and we’ve developed an entire (false) theology around it. “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” We’ve said “Yes! That’s it! We should see people as individuals, divorced from any race or ethnicity!” And we’ve tried really hard to not see race. Of course this doesn’t work, and “I don’t see color” can come across as “I don’t see YOU” or as if ethnicity is something bad that we should kindly overlook. It can come across as “I don’t see you as a whole person, including the context of your ethnicity, I magnanimously see you as an honorary white person.”

Race:

Race is defined as a category or group of people having hereditary traits that set them apart. While race revolves around the idea of biological traits, ethnicity is based on a shared cultural heritage. Sociologists and other social scientists believe that race is a socially constructed concept. It is an idea that was created in society to justify inequality.

Race is a modern concept. In ancient times, people were more likely to be divided according to religion, language, lineage, and nationality. In ancient Greece, for instance, people were divided by language and culture rather than physical differences. Africans, who may have looked different physically, were accepted into their society as long as they adopted the customs and language of Greek culture.

So where exactly does the idea of race originate? In the 16th century, Europeans used three different categories to classify the different groups of people they encountered through continental exploration. The racial categories used at this time were: Mongoloid (Asians), Caucasoid (European) and Negroid (African). Throughout the centuries to follow, the concept of race was used as a means of justifying superiority and colonization.

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity, while related to race, refers not to physical characteristics but to social traits that are shared by a human population. Some of the social traits often used for ethnic classification include:

- Nationality
- Tribe
- Religious faith
- Shared language
- Shared culture
- Shared traditions

Source: Boundless. "Culture, Ethnicity, and Race." Boundless Communications Boundless, 26 May. 2016. Retrieved 16 Feb. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/analyzing-the-audience-7/demographic-factors-to-consider-38/culture-ethnicity-and-race-169-8389/>

Culture:

Culture is the non-biological or social aspects of human life ; basically anything that is learned by humans is part of culture.

Source: Boundless. "Culture, Ethnicity, and Race." Boundless Communications Boundless, 26 May. 2016. Retrieved 16 Feb. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/analyzing-the-audience-7/demographic-factors-to-consider-38/culture-ethnicity-and-race-169-8389/>

Ethnic Diversity:

Multi-ethnic-no race makes up more than 80% of the total (In 1998, 15% of all congregations were considered multiethnic/multiracial. In 2012, 20% of congregations were considered multiethnic/multiracial. Following Wave III: Religious Congregations in 21st Century America. By Mark Chaves and Alison Eagle. November 2015. Durham, NC: Department of Sociology, Duke University.) This includes Catholic congregations which tend to be more multiethnic than Protestant congregations.

“What then is a good definition of a multiethnic church? I believe the best definition was offered by the late missiologist Paul Hiebert, who said, a multiethnic church is “a church in which there is 1) an attitude and practice of accepting people of all ethnic, class and national origins as equal and fully participating members and ministers in the fellowship of the church; and 2) the manifestation of this attitude and practice by the involvement of people from different ethnic, social and national communities as members in the church.” This definition does not establish a percentage criteria nor does it establish any particular model or format that must characterize a multi-ethnic church. This is a healthy and realistic definition, since the reality is that multi-ethnic churches come in all shapes, sizes, and make-ups.”

From blog by Gary McIntosh, Talbot School of Theology

Power:

The ability to make decisions that impact the lives of others, the ability to control the behavior of others without their agreement.

Racism:

Racism is discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity. Today, the use of the term "racism" does not easily fall under a single definition. The ideology underlying racist practices often includes the idea that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior. The Holocaust is the classic example of institutionalized racism which led to the death of millions of people based on their race.... racism and racial discrimination are often used to describe discrimination on an ethnic or cultural basis, independent of whether these differences are described as racial. According to a United Nations convention on racial discrimination, there is no distinction between the terms "racial" and "ethnic" discrimination. The UN convention further concludes that superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and there is no justification for racial discrimination, anywhere, in theory or in practice. From Wikipedia.com

Systemic racism:

Individual vs. systemic/corporate sin "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. We sin as individuals when we break or violate God's commands. When we sin, we literally "miss the mark" for what God intended for how we live, which was demonstrated through Jesus' life. Corporate sin is defined as any sin committed on a larger scale, from a community or society. Thus it is also referred to as group sin, communal sin or social sin. These corporate sins are characteristic sins of a group, and can also be committed as a whole.

God judges us, not just as individuals but He judges groups -- He judges the nations, Jesus refers to an evil generation, churches are judged in the first part of Revelation.

We can confess the sins of our people -- identificational repentance -- as so many leaders in the Bible did.

Privilege:

A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people.

White privilege:

"Being white means never having to think about it." James Baldwin

White privilege is a set of advantages and/or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. White privilege can exist without white people's conscious knowledge of its presence and it helps to maintain the racial hierarchy in this country.

The biggest problem with white privilege is the invisibility it maintains to those who benefit from it most. The inability to recognize that many of the advantages whites hold are a direct result of the disadvantages of other people, contributes to the unwillingness of white people, even those who are not overtly racist, to recognize their part in maintaining and benefiting from white supremacy.

White privilege is about not having to worry about being followed in a department store while shopping. It's about thinking that your clothes, manner of speech, and behavior in general, are racially neutral, when, in fact, they are white. It's seeing your image on television daily and knowing that you're being represented. It's people assuming that you lead a constructive life free from crime and off welfare. It's about not having to assume your daily interactions with people have racial overtones.

White privilege is having the freedom and luxury to fight racism one day and ignore it the next. White privilege exists on an individual, cultural, and institutional level.

Reconciliation:

Somewhat of a misnomer in the sense that re-conciliation implies that we're restoring something that used to exist in our country.