

Pursuing Racial Reconciliation, Justice, and Multi-Ethnic Diversity

Over the last several years many white Christians have become aware of the racial inequities and injustices that people of color face in this country. Some have grown in awareness of their own racial biases and prejudices, while others have grown to understand the history of systemic racial inequities in our nation. In both cases, we are aware that there is much work for us to do. We, the people of Jesus, who have received the gospel of reconciling grace and who hope in the coming kingdom of God, have a role to play.

This document exists to provide direction as to our approach as a local church in the work of pursuing racial reconciliation and justice in our city, and multiethnic diversity in our church.

Why is Redeemer Pursuing Racial Reconciliation, Justice, and Multi-Ethnic Diversity? (Guiding Truths)

1. **Racism is a sin**: Racism views another person as “less than” due to their skin color, appearance, or ethnicity and ignores a foundational truth of all humanity— all people were created in the image of God, and therefore receive abundant dignity and worth. Racism can be both overt and covert.
2. **Systemic and institutional racism is evil**. Our country has a long history of racism dating back to its inception. There is a remaining residue of slavery, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and many other racist policies that have infected our current institutions. People of color have been experiencing these realities for decades. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are trying to tell us (white Christians) about these experiences, and we want to listen, learn, and engage. As we engage in the work of biblical justice must remember that all injustices are works of evil; works of our true enemy, Satan, who turns men against men and fuels oppression.
3. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only solution to sin in our hearts AND evil in our world**. The cross of Christ has both a vertical axis and a horizontal axis. The Gospel is about both reconciliation to God (redeeming and transforming our personal sin) AND God’s reconciling work through his church in the world (pushing back Satan and evil in this world).

4. **The local church has been commissioned by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel truth AND demonstrate the coming kingdom in a contextualized and embodied way.** At Redeemer, we are a “gospel-centered, missional church”. That means we believe the gospel is good news for all areas of life— work, singleness, marriage, parenting, money, sex, etc. We must also apply the gospel and its implications to matters of race and racial injustice... it’s our duty and honor.
5. **Racial reconciliation, justice, and multi-ethnic diversity won’t be fully realized until the coming of our Lord Jesus.** But he will come again, and when he does it will be our glorious reality. Until then we work to display His kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven (Revelation 7:9, Revelation 21). Until then we live sober-minded, prayerful lives of love that display the Kingdom of God (1 Peter 4:7-12).

How is Redeemer Pursuing Racial Reconciliation, Justice, and Multi-Ethnic Diversity? (Guiding Principles)

We believe that our posture is of great importance in this matter. We live in a culture that is loud and reactive. We live in a time of polarization, hostility, and blaming. How do we engage these matters as ambassadors of Jesus?

1. **Gospel-Centered** - In our responses, we are pointing to Jesus Christ as the only hope in overcoming sin and evil in our world. The church has the best news (the gospel) to offer both racists and those suffering from racism! We must be on-watch for anti-Christian and anti-Gospel solutions and organizations that are influencing this matter and oozing into the church (i.e. movements rooted in cultural marxism or unbiblical, political ideologies).
2. **Relational & Localized** - We will engage matters of racism and racial unity/diversity relationally. We will seek to listen and learn from real people in our church and community. We will engage in real work among real people. We will learn real stories and share our own. We will pursue diverse friendships with real people where we live, learn, work, and play. We will avoid hypothetical debates and disembodied battles online.
3. **Long-Term & Sober-Minded** - We are committed to stay engaged in this long-term, knowing that it is one of the many manifestations of sin and evil in our world. The reason that Jesus has left us here is to proclaim the truth and hope of the

gospel to a world ravaged by sin and satan. We will not shout loudly for a few weeks or preach “one-off” sermons when racism is exposed, and then get back to normal. Rather, we will remain engaged in Jesus’ mission in the world— sober-minded, prepared for action, with our hope fully set on Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13).

What are Redeemer’s Next Steps? (Committed Action)

1. **Pray, Discern, Learn.** The Redeemer elder team took the month of June to pray, discern, and learn. We want to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19). In the past (2016), I (Jordan), was quick to speak on these matters, and while [the sermon I preached](#) was true and good, it was not followed through in a holistic way, and I believe this did not honor the Lord nor help our church. This June, the Lord gave me pause and did not grant me the clarity to immediately act.
2. **Form a Team of Advocates.** After a month of praying, discerning, and learning the elder team established that our next step is to form a team to work closely with the elders to help us resource, equip, and shepherd the church toward racial unity, justice, and diversity. This team will be made of Redeemer members who 1) understand the makeup and history of our church, 2) love the people of Redeemer, 3) who have the gifts, calling, and character to lead others toward the work of racial reconciliation and justice. Team members are: Tanner & Kelsey Easley, Hannah Fitzgerald, Phil & Takisha Jacobs, Andre & Shariff McNeil, Joshua Morales, and Austin & Lauren Schauer. Austin Schauer will lead this team. I (Jordan) will give pastoral oversight.
3. **Address/Present Corporately.** On September 20th we will present and commission this team before the church. At this time I (Jordan) will corporately speak to the reality of racism and racial inequities with a gospel-centered posture and biblical approach in our sermon series, *The Third Way of Jesus*.
4. **Stay engaged and on mission, pursuing racial reconciliation, justice, and diversity following our guiding principles above.** The team will meet regularly to pray, they will advise the elders on ongoing opportunities for action/ministry, and they will serve as a resource to our church relationally.

The Hard, but Necessary Work Ahead for Our Team/Church

A holistic pursuit of racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity at Redeemer means we are committed to engaging the whole problem with the whole gospel.

- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must have a more comprehensive understanding of the doctrine of Imago Dei. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must have our understanding of race and racism shaped by the bible first and foremost, then we must understand how it has been shaped by culture. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must differentiate between Americanized/individualistic theology and biblical/kingdom theology. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must differentiate between biblical justice and today's social justice movements. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must maintain a robust understanding of the gospel and mission of the church. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must recognize and turn from a preferred white culture in ourselves, the church, and community. [[resource to help us](#)]
- To holistically pursue racial reconciliation and multiethnic diversity, we must recognize and repent of the history of racism in our country and in the American church. [[resource to help us](#)]