

*How should we live amidst  
the tensions of diversity?*

PASTOR MIKE YODER • ACTS 10–11



*Burning Issues Related  
to Race & Ethnicity*



# God's Design for Ethnic Diversity



*From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.*

*God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us.*

**Acts 17:27**

*The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.”*

**Genesis 12:1**



*“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.”*

**Genesis 12:2**

*“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

**Genesis 12:3**



*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face  
shine on us —*

**Psalm 67:1**

*so that Your ways may be known on earth, Your salvation  
among all nations.*

*May the peoples praise You, God; may all the peoples praise You.*

**Psalm 67:3**

*May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.*

Put simply, there is no such thing, nor has there ever been, in the biological worlds as race.

**Eloise Hiebert Meneses**

Our Struggle Against  
Ethnocentrism (Acts 10–11)





Ethnocentrism is the attitude that one's own group, ethnicity, or nationality is superior to others.

For many, the idea that Christianity is a white, Western religion, intrinsically tied to cultural imperialism, stands as a major ethical barrier to considering Christ.

**Rebecca McLaughlin**

# Christ's Work to Overcome Ethnic Animosity (Ephesians 2)



*For He himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,*

**Ephesians 2:14**

*by setting aside in His flesh the Law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,*

*and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility.*

**Ephesians 2:16**



*He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.*

**Ephesians 2:17**

*For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

**Ephesians 2:18**

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers,  
but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of  
His household,*

**Ephesians 2:19**

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

**Galatians 3:28**

First and foremost the Gospel reminds us that when we are talking about immigrants (legal *or* illegal), we are talking about men and women made in God's image and pursued by His grace...

**David Platt**

Consequently, followers of Christ must see immigrants not as problems to be solved but as people to be loved.

**David Platt**



This will mean a new global family made up of believers in Christ from every ethnic group on the planet. And it will mean that those who love that vision will work toward local manifestations of that ethnic diversity...

**John Piper**

**Jesus is the end of ethnocentrism — globally and locally.**

**John Piper**

# My Response to Christ's Example (John 4)



Contrary to popular conceptions, the Christian movement was multicultural and multiethnic from the outset. Jesus scandalized His fellow Jews by tearing through racial and cultural boundaries.

**Rebecca McLaughlin**

*When Jesus heard this, He was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, “I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel.”*

*Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.*



*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give Me a drink?”*

**John 4:7**

*(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*The Samaritan woman said to Him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can You ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

*Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water.”*

**John 4:10**

*Just then His disciples returned and were surprised to find Him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do You want?” or “Why are You talking with her?”*

*Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."*



*So when the Samaritans came to Him, they urged Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days.*

*And because of His words many more became believers.*

*They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this Man really is the Savior of the world.”*

Jesus asks us to see the brokenness in society and to articulate an alternative vision for how we might live. This does not mean that we believe that we can establish the Kingdom on earth before His second coming...

It does mean that we see society for what it is: less than the Kingdom...To hunger for justice in a messianic context is to long for God to establish His just rule over the earth through His chosen King.

# Christian Perspectives for Encountering Diversity





IN A FALLEN WORLD

The Gospel doesn't deny the obvious ethnic, cultural, and historical differences that distinguish us from one another. Instead, the Gospel compels us to celebrate...

**David Platt**

our ethnic distinctions, value our cultural differences,  
and acknowledge our historical diversity.

**David Platt**

Through our effort to bring peace we show the world the kind of King and Kingdom we represent. Therefore, the work of justice, when understood as direct testimony to God's Kingdom, is evangelistic from start to finish.

**Esau McCaulley**

AMONG GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE

The [early] 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.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**



The Church is not called to be responsible for the way unbelievers run their lives. But we are called to be responsible... for the way believers live and the kind of relationships that are cultivated in the fellowship of the Church.

**John Piper**

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.  
Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*

**2 Corinthians 5:16**

*Personal Patterns  
for Reconciled Living*



I owe my life and hope to the Gospel. Without it I would still be strutting with racist pride, or I would be suffering the moral paralysis of “white guilt.” The Gospel has an answer to both pride and guilt.

**John Piper**

If you care about diversity, don't dismiss Christianity:  
it is the most diverse, multiethnic, and multicultural  
movement in all of history.

**Rebecca McLaughlin**

1. Followers of Jesus affirm the similarity of every person (dignity and depravity), as well as the diversity (racial and ethnic) of God's design.



2. Followers of Jesus are willing to concede difficult issues and are reticent to give simplistic answers.

**3. Followers of Jesus are people who lower the social temperature to show respect and understanding, not raise the temperature to fuel outrage and conflict.**

4. Followers of Jesus are people who would rather be righteous than viewed as right. We don't have to win the argument.

5. Followers of Jesus realize that the Gospel and our witness to it are primary. Being salt and light should point others to reconciliation in Jesus.

**Diversity is God's design. Sin  
poisons it. The Gospel redeems it.**



God makes us recipients and  
agents of reconciliation.

