

Section 6- Racial Reconciliation

Section Overview

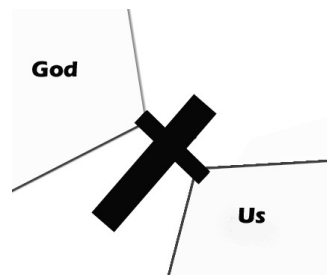
Racial reconciliation is the last of the four teaching topics. This topic can be the most challenging, but it is very beneficial to those coming to the inner city who does not know what to expect or wonder how they may be perceived by the people they will meet. Racial reconciliation will be one of the first things discussed on the trip when you get to City on a Hill. It is imperative that team members understand the basic principles presented in this section.

What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation deals with relationship!

Let's say that you and a friend got in a disagreement. Your relationship is probably not doing so well and you're probably pretty distant from one another! But, in a couple days you decide to talk about your disagreement, forgive each other and you make up with your friend. You are now in a good relationship and are close again. You have just reconciled your relationship.

Now, let's put this in terms of our relationship with God. Romans 6:23 says that sin has separated us from God and there's nothing we can do on our own to be in a close relationship with Christ. But God sent Jesus to die on a cross so that we can be reconciled or brought into a close relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:18). This means that when we ask Jesus to forgive us and come into our hearts, we're able to have a close relationship with God. We were distant from God when we were sinning, but we were brought together by Christ. See how in the diagram below, the cross symbolizes Jesus bringing us together, his work on the cross



What is Racial Reconciliation?

Be One Who Brings Unity

Galatians 3:26- 28 *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

For us to be effective in ministry, we must understand that as believers, we are all children of God despite our outside differences. Paul says in Galatians 3:28 that we are all **one in Christ!**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said 50 years ago that “Eleven o’clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America”. This still remains true today. And yet, for us to be really effective in ministry, we must step out of our comfort zones and reach people who are culturally different from ourselves.

Often, we to keep ourselves in a box where we are comfortable. We hang out with people who are like us or are from the same ethnic group, tending not to reach out of our “norm” .

Racial reconciliation speaks directly to knowing and enjoying people from different cultures or ethnic groups. Whether we are African American, white Anglo Saxons, Latinos, Asians, or from any other ethnic group, we’re all created equally. **Racial reconciliation is bringing people together who are distant from each other because they are from different ethnic groups.**

The key to reaching people from a different culture is to recognize their **EQUALITY**. You cannot minister effectively if you go in with the mentality of, “I’m better than you because I’m ...” or with preconceived ideas or stereotypes of different cultures.

A stereotype is when you judge a group of people (for example, a race, social class, or religious group) based on a generalization. You make a generalization by using the few encounters you have had or see on TV to form an opinion about a whole group of people. So you make a judgment in your head that “these people are always...” You’re making a generalization, not based on fact, but based on a stereotype.

Examples of stereotypes are:

- ◆ Native Americans are lazy
- ◆ Mexicans will work for cheap
- ◆ Americans are rude
- ◆ Blondes are dumb
- ◆ Black men are violent
- ◆ Asians are smart
- ◆ Women are bad drivers
- ◆ People from this side of town are...

We need to see each person as an individual specifically created by God. Celebrate the differences among one another, learn from one another, and understand that we’re all equal in God’s family!!

How can I practice racial reconciliation?



- 1. Think about how you stereotype others** (we all do it, whether we like to admit it or not). For example, do you judge people based on their age, shape, clothes, hairstyle, or music preference?
- 2. Discover what is behind that stereotype.** Is it true or are you judging a whole group of people by the actions of a few?
- 3. Pray for the ability to see people as God sees them, all are equal.**
- 4. Take the initiative to learn about different groups of people**
- 5. Meet new people and reach out to those who are different from you.**

Keeping It Alive

Make a conscious effort to diversify your perspective. Here are a couple ideas of ways to do that:

- ◆ Take time to celebrate different cultures within your group or friends. Have a get together where each person brings food or items that represents their culture.
- ◆ Take time to learn about influential people from another ethnic group.
- ◆ Watch a movie or read a book about a different culture or ethnic group.

