

# “‘Standing in God’s Way’ of Racial Integration” // Acts 10:34–11:17 // SENT #14

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## Transition

We’re really excited about this... our policy is that no Summit pastor makes money directly off of anything we sell here

Happy St. Patrick’s/no other reason/UVA/I’m prepared!

## Introduction

ACTS 10, IF YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLES...

What an **answer to prayer** last week was... I felt like it was the fulfillment of a decade long hope. (I listened to the sermon 3 times, voluntarily)

- Now, certain things I didn’t consent to: **Raudel saying he had to preach quickly** like border patrol was chasing him
- And I can never talk about **family reunions** quite like Chris Green did. We have family reunions, but after hearing Chris, I’m pretty sure we’re missing something.

For years, I (several of us) have **dreamed of a church** where *God is glorified* and the *power of the gospel is magnified* through the multiplicity of races and cultures—where it is obvious that something that brings us together that is so glorious and magnificent that any divisions between us fade in significance... (I remember **Chris G** telling us years ago, when we had like three non-white people in the whole church, that he believed the Holy Spirit had shown him that this was our future)

I’m going to pick up where Pastor Raudel left off in Acts 10... And explain a little bit more **why cultural diversity** is so important to the church, why it’s **so hard for us**, and then some of the challenges and opportunities specifically for us, the Summit Church, ahead.

- What I am doing today is **not an attempt to fill in anything** I think they left out... but this cultural integration was a major event in the book of Acts, **covering two entire chapters**, so I want us to spend one more week on it...

## Acts 10:34–11:17

*Acts 10: Peter has this dream...*

- **A great sheet** coming down from heaven and in it were a number of animals the Jews thought of as unclean: birds of the air, reptiles, pigs (the original, “**pigs in a blanket**” idea) and a voice from heaven telling Peter, “**Kill, and eat.**”
- Peter responds by saying, “**Not a chance, Lord.** I have never touched anything unclean.”
  - Sometimes I **don’t think we appreciate the magnitude** of this. For 1400 years they’ve avoided these animals because God told them they were unclean!
  - And now God is saying to Peter, “Eat up!” I’ve said before it’s like a **Baptist pastor having a dream** in which a sheet descends from heaven with a joint and a bottle of Jack Daniels’ in it. But even more than that—for 1400 years they have avoided these things because God told them they were unclean!
- **God responds** by saying, “*What I have cleansed, Peter, you are not to call unclean.*”

Well, Peter is trying to figure out what all this means... when someone **knocks at his door** and Peter opens it and there stands Cornelius and a bunch of Gentile soldiers saying, “*An angel told us to come to talk to you.*”

- ...and then Peter puts it all together (light comes on...)

[34] “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, [35] but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

All along **the prohibition on eating unclean animals had just been a picture of human sinfulness** (just like they couldn’t eat certain animals because eating them would make them unclean, **sin defiles the human spirit**, making it unable to enter God’s presence)... but **now that Jesus has died** he has removed the defilement for the whole human race, for all who would receive it...

**Chris Green:** *Man has one problem: sin; there’s one Savior: Jesus; we’re all part of 1 race: human; with one hope: the resurrection.*

The **word that recurs** throughout Peter’s sermon over next 10 or so verses is the word **“all”**:

- Vs. 36, Jesus is Lord of *all*.
- Vs. 38, Jesus healed “all” who were oppressed by the devil (which included Gentiles, tax collectors, Roman soldiers and prostitutes...).

And then Peter ends his sermon this way:

[43] To him *all* the prophets bear witness that *all* who believe in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

[44] While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

- (BTW, I’ve always loved that verse, because it shows the **simplicity of faith**—no ceremony; no prayers, even. No coming forward or baptism.
- Just faith in the message! Conversion happens **when you believe that Jesus has died for you** and you embrace that as your own.

- *That happens sometimes as I’m preaching. The Holy Spirit falls on you right then.)*

[45] And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. [46] For they were hearing them **speaking in tongues and extolling God.** (HOW DID THEY KNOW? They could understand them! This is the reverse of Acts 2; now these Romans are speaking Hebrew and Aramaic)

Then Peter declared, [47] “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

Let’s talk for just a minute here about **tongues in Acts**:

- **Tongues were given in Acts 2 to believers**, who proclaimed the gospel in actual human languages they didn’t already know, as a sign that the gospel was not just for Hebrew people, but people of any culture.
- **Paul said in 1 Cor 14:21** that tongues were a fulfillment of a promise given to Israel in Isaiah 28:11–12 that God would speak the gospel to ISRAELITES through strange tongues, as a sign to their unbelieving hearts that the gospel was going to Gentiles...

That’s what was **happening here!** In speaking through tongues God is giving a sign to the Jews that he is including the Gentiles in his salvation covenant...

- You see, this was **hard for them**. For **1400 YEARS** the focus has been on the Jews.

**Look at how the next chapter opens:**

[11:2] So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party (of Christ-followers!) criticized him, saying, [3] “You went to **uncircumcised men and ate with them.**”

[4] But Peter began and explained it to them in order...

(and then he tells them about the dream; preaching to Cornelius, and then he says...)

[11:15] As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them *just as on us at the beginning*. [16] And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' [17] If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

**Who am I to stand in God's way? God is integrating his church! Who are we to stand in his way?**

That's the question I want us to consider today:

Are you, or I, standing in God's way of culturally integrating his church?

**So, 3 THINGS:** Why cultural integration is **important**; why it is **hard**; and then I'd like to give us some guidance as a church:

## I. Why the Cultural Integration of the Church Is Important

### A. God's purpose in salvation is to bring the races back together

- The cultures and races split in **Gen 11**.
  - Man had come together in **one place, one culture**, to build a tower that declared their greatness. **So God separated them** and created new cultures and languages them.
  - Let me tell you a **little secret about God's judgment on sin**—a lot of times when God judges you for your sin, he does so by giving you the very thing you wanted in the first place, and lets you taste the bitterness of it (**e.g. porn**): Man had been building a tower to proclaim his pride; now he separated us into various cultures, and, ironically those cultural distinctives would

become one of the **primary sources of our pride!** (Our culture is better; our race is better).

- That's Genesis 11... so in **Genesis 12** God chooses a man, Abraham, and tells him he is going to make him a blessing to all these scattered cultures in the earth.
- The **plan from the beginning** was to bring them back together not united around their pride, but around their common knowledge of God and salvation!
- **Little hints in the OT**
- We see **the end in Rev 5**: representatives from every tribe, tongue and nation, united in praising God for his salvation!
- **In the middle** is the **CHURCH**, which is supposed to be giving a **SIGN** of coming fulfillment.
  - **We can't do it all**, because down here we still can't understand each other's languages.
  - But **as much as we can**, we need to be painting a picture for our community of that coming kingdom.
- And so **throughout Acts**, you get glimpses of this.
  - **Acts 2**: Pentecost: all languages.
  - **Acts 16**: When Paul goes into Philippi... the chapter record 3 people getting saved: Lydia, a slave girl; a Roman jailor. 3 things a Jewish man would pray every morning: "Lord, thank you that I'm not a woman, slave or Gentile."
  - **Acts 13**.... By Acts 13, Antioch had become the **capital of the Christian world**, because of the persecution in Jerusalem. And there's something Luke says in Acts 13 most people **read right over: Acts 13:1** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch and Saul.
  - Luke lists **5 church leaders in Acts 13**:
    - You've got **Saul and Barnabas**: they are Hellenistic Jews, which means ethnic Jews who have adapted Greek culture.

- **Manaen** was from Herod's household, which means that he was Jewish aristocracy
- **Simeon** had the nickname "Niger" (which literally meant "black"), because he was from the region of Sub-Saharan Africa that the modern nation of Niger sits.
- And **Lucius** was from Cyrene, modern-day Libya.
- That means **of the five leaders** mentioned, one is from the Middle East, one from Asia, one from the Mediterranean, and two from Africa.
- **Why tell us this?** And you'd never hear of any of these guys again, which means the **only reason** Luke includes that detail is to show you the early **church's leadership in Antioch** was culturally diverse.
- **Acts 11:26**, "...And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."
  - This **was the first group to be called "Christians."** They ceased to be identified as much by their races and more by their identity in Christ.
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> race:** 1<sup>st</sup> race is your race; 2<sup>nd</sup> race is everyone else; 3<sup>rd</sup> race is the new creation in Christ. That becomes weightier than the others, so that the unity we have in our 3<sup>rd</sup> race is more significant than any divisions present in our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> races
  - **The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch** (because this is where this "3<sup>rd</sup> race" became more defining in the church than their cultural identities)... **and it was from Antioch the gospel went throughout the world.**

#### B. A multi-cultural church is a powerful evangelistic witness

- **Eph 3:10**, "The mystery that God has made known in the church that manifested his wisdom was that Gentiles are

*fellow heirs, members of the same body, partakers of the promise."*

- **What was the mystery that manifested the wisdom and power of God?**
  - A multi-racial church, in which peoples who have been historically divided are brought back together in Christ points to the mystery and power of the gospel.
  - A group of people all sharing one culture and one history listening to great music and an entertaining speaker is not the manifest wisdom of God.... That's called **TAILGATING**, and it happens at football games or Bruno Mars concerts
  - **But when you have a group of people** who have little in common except for a common love for Jesus and experience of grace—that speaks to the world.
  - **Bill Hybels** to me... regretting his employment of the homogenous principle in building Willow Creek: "The corporate witness of a racially united church in America would be more evangelistically effective than a numbers surge at any one congregation (like Willow)."

#### C. God is glorified through a beautiful tapestry of cultures

- **In Revelation 5**, the beauties of every culture are represented around God's throne!
- **Revelation 21:26<sup>1</sup>** says he brings in "the wealth and honor and glory of the nations!" What wealth?
- **God is glorified** by variant cultures, worship styles, cultural expressions. He's not an all-vanilla God; he's a 31,000 flavors God
- Ever heard the phrase, "**We should all just be colorblind**"? God is not colorblind. He delights in our various cultures; he made us that way. Jerome Gay: "**The gospel is not colorblind but color engaging.**"
- **Psalms:** A lot of OT books have a NT counterpart. No counterpart for Psalms. Why? **God never intended one culture to write the praise for all the others...**

<sup>1</sup> 21:26. See also Isaiah 66:12

## II. Why Cultural Integration is Hard

### A. Pride

- Like I said, our race has become a source of pride for us.
- You see, we are **constantly coming up with things** that we believe make us significant; set us apart from others.
  - **THE RING. I'm smart. I'm rich.** I went to this school. I'm a Democrat or Republican. That makes me better.
  - **Race is one of the worst** of those.
  - We have feelings of **superiority, inferiority, or insecurity** with one another.
- What you have to see is that **all racism comes from fear and insecurity**.
  - I *need something* to help me feel safe and significant, because I don't obtain my worth and significance from God... so I've got to find something that will make me worthy...
  - ...and so we latch onto race, and that turns into a sense of **superiority** (my race is the best); **inferiority** (**I'll never measure up**); or **insecurity** (are you not treating me with the respect I deserve)?
- **Chris Green:** *"The reason we have skin issues is because we have sin issues."*

### B. Cultural preferences run deep

- **The great white myth:** when we repented of our racism all the blacks would come rushing back into our churches thanking their lucky stars they could worship with us again!
  - What we learned is that a lot of black people preferred black worship, and a lot of white people preferred white worship.
  - (Student to me who complained about our church not being diverse enough, and then later that our church was too demonstrative in worship): **multi-colored vs. multi-cultural**
- A lot of times we say we want diversity, but we really don't:

- Not just in the church: I read an article in *the Atlantic*<sup>2</sup> in which they studied individuals who say they prefer mixed neighborhoods and moved in, when they were in those neighborhoods, gravitated toward the neighbors that were their color. Racial integration has worked better as a theory than in practice.
- **How do you know if you're in a multi-cultural church? You feel uncomfortable!**
  - From one of our black leaders: "You white people, as soon as you get done with a song you are re-capo-ing that guitar as fast as you can to get to the next song... us black people we need to linger." That is valid.
    - **Raudel:** In talking to him about whether or not to go to **2 services**... Well, how much time do you need for your first service so we know when to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> one? "I have no idea... You guys have your order of worship... we're just sort of in the moment."
  - **I grew up in a church with some people who loved God intensely**—many would live the most sacrificial lives, pouring themselves out for the gospel; lives of integrity; deep people of prayer; they just weren't emotionally expressive. I know people who would look and say, "They are not filled with the Spirit." SINCE WHEN DID BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH A WORSHIP STYLE? Served God faithfully; sacrificially generous; brought people to Jesus constantly.
- **Our Saturday services at BCC: Southern Baptist.** Not that expressive in worship. Hands raised. CARRY THE TV. Tears in their eyes. Occasionally Shout Amen. And they'll write everything down
  - **Contrast that to Koreans...** shouting in worship—GIVING THE LORD A HIGH FIVE; WASHING WINDOWS, but say NOTHING to me during the sermon.

<sup>2</sup> "Seeing Around Corner," Jonathan Rauch, 11/12/12

- ***I know a missionary in TOKYO: If you look at their faces, they are extremely expressive, but everything they do is a whisper. We want to express our hearts to God by our emotions, but we also want not distract others from doing the same.***
- **Which of these is right? AMEN.**
- **What is wrong is when we judge each other.** Bible says: “Man looks on the outside; God looks on the heart.”
- *We all have cultural preferences. They become sin when we put too much value on them.*

### III. How The Summit Church Must Pursue Racial Integration<sup>3</sup>

12!/A LOT/ 12 DISCIPLES/MOVE QUICK

1. **Our goal is not just the elimination of racism, it is the achievement of diversification**

People feel like, “Oh, I’m not a racist. So, I’m good on this!” **God’s goal is not just the elimination of racism;** it is the achievement of diversification.

**God’s vision to Peter** was not just “stop being a racist,” but to embrace Cornelius. To go in and eat with him, to worship with him.

- So... Congratulations that you are not a racist, but have you gone to the full measure of what the gospel calls for you?
2. **Each us of us must elevate his or her ‘3<sup>rd</sup> race’.**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Marti and Yancey contradict at several points.

<sup>4</sup> I first he *And sometimes there are theological differences... this is not just a difference in culture; that’s a difference of belief. Theologically, based on 1 Cor 14 we don’t believe that unintelligible, uninterpreted tongues ought to be part of a worship service.* and this from D.A. Carson at the Gospel Coalition.

Your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> race do not disappear. Like I said, “God is not colorblind.” But the 3<sup>rd</sup> race becomes weightier than the other two.

- **(Interesting example of this with Paul:** Paul said to the Jew he “became a Jew.” How could that be? He was a Jew. Even his Jewishness was so “light” to him he could take it on and off like a garment. His “3<sup>rd</sup> race” (“in Christ”) was *weightier* to him than his ethnicity. Whites can never cease to be white, and there is nothing wrong with fitting most naturally in white culture... but our identity in Christ should be *weightier* than our white American ethnic identity and thus make unity in the church possible because it is a unity that goes deeper than cultural styles and preferences.)

3. **Realize that it is not just about the music.**

**Music matters; but many other things on this matter much more.**<sup>5</sup> We won’t be unified because we find the perfect blend of music, because here’s what I’ve learned: never going to be perfect for everyone. Someone is *always* not happy. Too loud. Too soft. Too much drums. Too much keyboard.

4. **Realize that it is about the music**

- This seems to be the biggest sticking point! What is always brought up...
- LET ME JUST BREAK THIS DOWN: *There are some who feel that those who are not expressive in worship are not connecting their posture to their hearts and not giving God what he is due or not showing God’s worth to a watching world. Football game. **And to that concern I say “Valid.”** (A lot to learn...)*
- *There are some who feel like aggressively “charismatic” worship leaders play on emotion, building crowd dynamics,*

<sup>5</sup> This from Gerardo Marti, who served at multiracial church in LA in an article he wrote for Calvin College. <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/gerardo-marti-on-successful-multicultural-churches/>. From

and then unjustifiably labeling that “the Spirit.” Somehow the spirit always goes with crescendo, shouting... And to that concern I say, “Valid.”

- REVERB.
- (Loud music, shouting, and charismatic leadership can get a crowd worked up regardless of the subject matter. Unbelievers particularly are very skeptical of emotional moments they see as contrived, especially when you label that, “God.” What you call “God” is a specially staged musical manipulation.

- We need to listen to, and be influenced by each other.
- **In general, we need to grow at the Summit in our expressiveness in worship**, especially if we are going to reach people from other cultures;
  - ...and we also need to be aware, that outsiders, particularly unbelievers, are very sensitive to what we call “Spirit moments” in worship that are little more than group hysteria. Such group hysteria can be fun for us, but it makes unbelievers feel really uncomfortable or that we’ve lost our minds, something Paul explicitly warned against in 1 Cor 14. Thus, we want to be exuberant in worship and to put the glory of God on display, engaging with God directly as we worship, but we also have to be sensitive to do things decently and in order (1 COR 14:40), which means sometimes reining in our emotions as an act of deference to those we are trying to reach.
- (And, there are some **genuine theological differences** that have nothing to do with cultural preferences... we don’t believe in loud tongues speaking as a part of our worship service if its not accompanied by an interpreter... that’s not culture; it’s 1 Cor 14, which applies to all races.)

5. **We need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable**

- That’s how you know you’re in a multi-cultural church. Different cultures have ways of expressing things... it’s not wrong!
- We need to quit judging each other, and instead start appreciating each other, giving each other the benefit of the doubt, and learning from each other.

6. **We must prioritize diverse leadership**<sup>6</sup>

- Like **Acts 13**... Racially diverse congregations always have racially diverse leadership.
- We want **those on our stage to send a welcome signal** to all races (me at **all black church**)
- Let me answer the charge: **tokenism**:
  - Tokenism is when you either a) when you (as part of the majority race) **have no intention of actually giving away authority** but simply want a face up front to make it look like you are. B) **Put an unqualified person in a position of leadership** simply because of their skin color
  - That is different than intentionally pursuing racial diversity.
  - We’re looking for qualified white people, black people, Asian, people of every race!

7. **Pre-Revelation 5, racial diversification has its limits**

I say this because I want to help you manage your expectations. If for no other reason, **language puts barriers** between us!

- Certain outreaches are done best on **homogenous grounds**—athletes reaching athletes; professors reaching professors; Latinos reaching Latinos.
- That’s **not wrong**. You say, “No, everything should be fully multi-cultural, all the time.” But you **can’t expect people to**

<sup>6</sup> 5 of these last 6 from *One Body, One Spirit Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*, by George Yancey. [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200703/200703\\_066\\_sb\\_SevenPrinciples.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200703/200703_066_sb_SevenPrinciples.cfm)

**act mature** in Christ before they are mature, and embracing other cultures is a sign of maturity.

Even **corporate worship** has its limitations. We have to adapt to our context and the amounts of the kinds of people God has given us to reach.

**Chris P: 3 different ways to think of multi-culturalism in the church: bag of marbles; melting pot; beef stew.** Even the best analogy will break down. Perhaps this one more than others, because we're not cooking ingredients, but I think you get the point we're trying to make.

- The church is a sign... which means, as much as we can, we pursue cultural diversity while balancing it with all the other assignments God has given us

8. **Multi-culturalism is not our primary goal; gospel proclamation is**

"Multiculturalism" can't be the primary goal of the church. The Great Commission is making disciples.

- **There are times we will not do things as fast as some** of you want us to in pursuing diversification, because we are trying to lead people to Jesus, which includes majority community around us.
- For many people, multi-racial diversification has taken on **too much weight**: it's the one tell-tale sign of whether a church is good or not.
  - (I would remind you of the definition of **idolatry**: when a good thing takes on too much weight.)
  - Multi-racial diversification is ONE OF the things we pursue at our church, but it would be unwise to do undue damage to other parts of our church to accomplish that.

9. **We must devote ourselves to humility and patience**

- **HUMILITY** means we must be quick to hear; slow to speak.

- **A lot of white people in our country look at the racial situation** in our country and say, "Why don't y'all just get over it already?"
- Listen... **One thing I've had to learn**: My son will never have to deal with people who assume things about him because he is white. I'll never have to teach Adon the way black parents may have to coach their sons... have to live in **white privilege**
- I need to **seek to understand** before I am understood.
- Humility, and **PATIENCE**...
  - **We're going to say dumb things...** but **we're family** and we need to learn together.
  - **PEOPLE SAY DUMB THINGS IN MY FAMILY**, but I know we're not leaving
  - Which leads to...

10. **Let's give the "benefit of the doubt" whenever we can**

- We talked about this a **few weeks ago. Assume the best** about others' intentions until they prove they have bad ones. We need that principle **more on this issue** than perhaps any other!
  - Ex. Me ~~giving change to girl at fast food place~~ who thought I wouldn't touch her because she was of a different race, when I was simply trying to put the change down. ~~She may have reasons she felt that way...~~ But in this case, she created a problem when there didn't need to be one
- **Chris Green's example**: "I remember in high school, being in Atlanta (on a college tour trip) and a mid-aged older white woman walked past a few of my friends and I (we were all neatly dressed) and she began running and yelling - "Don't take my purse, don't take my purse!"
- Lady of a non-white race: Don't feel welcome here. I'm having trouble getting connected: CP: do you volunteer; small group?



- If you are terrified of snakes, then when you go in the woods, you think every stick is a snake!
- So, give the benefit of the doubt... What if you give them the benefit of the doubt and they do have bad motives?
  - The Bible says, **“Love covers a multitude of sins.”**
  - And one of the **best ways to change** their motives!
  - Crying “foul” and political incorrectness at every possible point is not going to change our society.
- **Listen! THERE IS RACISM... in our church. Wicked, and sinful.** Some of you have experienced that, and I am so sorry. **But we will go so much farther here** if we give each other the benefit of the doubt when we can, and overcome one another’s evil with good when we do fall short!
- **Someone asked a few of our non-majority pastors where they had experienced racism at our church.** Some gave a few examples... but what struck me was that these pastors they had a difficult time coming up with examples **because they generally aren’t looking for it.**
  - **Some in the audience were offended** because they saw evidence everywhere. “It’s just in how they look at me.”
  - **These guys are happier; they have risen above the sin of racism** in all of our hearts and **called us all up** to a higher level.
  - **Raudel:** *If I am secure in who I am in Christ, I am not as offended by everyone who might think less of me and I won’t be as sensitive.*

#### 11. Acknowledge that your sinful flesh is racist

- Racism, whether that’s a) giving your cultural preferences too much weight to b) feeling superior because of your race is **not a white thing**, or a **Latino thing**... Asian thing... it’s a sinful,

**depraved human heart thing**, and that’s something all races have in common.

- **John Owen: “The seed of every sin is in every heart.”** SELAH.
  - Not admitting this leads merely to **greater blindness!**
  - We need to acknowledge that is there and posture ourselves in repentance about it.
    - **Luther:** all of a Christian’s life is one of repentance.
  - **It affects me... I need your patience and forgiveness**
12. Some of you should consider this a “calling.”
- Like a **call to missions**. We’re all called to it, but some of us more specifically.
    - Some of you may need to make this a central part of your ministry focus: to leave “your community” and enter another.
    - As Chris said, it makes no sense to go 10,000 miles across the globe to reach people of other cultures but not 10 miles across the city.
    - Let me use this moment to **acknowledge that we have some in our church from other races** who have entered a mostly white church; they are “pioneers” who should be celebrated!
  - **A calling is just a specialization in a responsibility given to all Christians!** Having said that: We **ALL must intentionally form relationships** with people outside our comfort zone on all sides. **If you don’t do this, it will never happen!** (All the articles I read say this.) **TO NOT BE INTENTIONAL MEANS TO BE INTENTIONALLY NON-DIVERSE!**
  - Pastor Chris said it well: *“Don’t go to multi-cultural events; live a multi-cultural life.”*

#### **Conclusion:**

We are in a *kairos* moment regarding race –

- **Kairos means...**

- The **racial harmonization sentimentally presented** in movies is not accurate. **We have a chance** to demonstrate real, amazing unity in a way that magnifies the power of the gospel:
  - One problem: sin
  - One savior: Jesus
  - One race: human
  - One hope: the resurrection
  - One calling: world evangelization

***Are we standing in God's way of diversifying his church?***

- Make this a matter of prayer with me!

And I'll **close with good news**—God is doing this!!!!!! This was his idea, not Peter's. The Spirit of God is doing it. We just need to sit back, yield ourselves fully to him, and then watch him do it!

IT'S GUARANTEED BY HIS BLOOD: TRANSITION TO COMMUNION

## Bullpen:

- **Write this down:** *Multiculturalism is the fruit of the gospel, not the gospel itself.* These can *never* be confused!

There's this "musical buffet" myth: Do you want black people in your church? Play gospel music. Want Latinos? Play salsa music.

A few problems with this: a) it is impossible to do with excellence; b) it usually just reinforces the differences between us; and c) it never really *works*.

- Which had to have been a **weird moment**—they don't know why exactly the angel told them to talk to Peter, and Peter hasn't figured out what all this means either... so they stare at each other... (Kharis getting parents on the phone). So they stare...

The authors of *United by Faith: the Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (2003) say that a benchmark for American churches that no racial group should be more than 80% of the congregation.

- Chris Green: only 2.5% of congregations in America fit this
- Not sure what our number is, but we don't fit that yet.

Raudel: Basis of our unity:

- Common creation—God created us all in his image; he shows no partiality,
- Common salvation (to use Chris Green's words) One common problem, sin; one Savior, Jesus; only one real race, human; one hope: the resurrection.

Raudel explained the moral argument is not enough—we need a heart change that only comes through the gospel, and Chris Green: the reason we have skin issues is we have sin issues

So, what I want to do today.

- *Some say that cultural preference is not a bad thing.*
  - Eugene Rivers III, a black Boston preacher in the mid-90's, rather famously challenged Martin Luther King on his call for integrated society and worship, claiming that that King's vision of society was shaped more by secular utopian theories than a biblical concern for the poor and the marginalized. Rivers said that it was doomed to fail because it was insufficiently Bible-based.<sup>7</sup> He said that we can reach people easier and worship more freely if the cultures remain content to stay separated.
  - I disagree because of Revelation 5, but Rivers' insights still ought to be considered. Lost people respond better to those speaking to them out of their culture, and *this includes white people*. The answer has to be some kind of balance.
- **Politics (and I say this w/o verdict)**
  - Black people feel like whites are insensitive to the privileged position they enjoy as a part of the majority culture, blind to systemic racism in America, insensitive to the social needs of black Americans and unappreciative of the gains they have made. They feel like many white people merely vote to keep in power a system that favors them.
  - Many white people feel like the Democratic party panders to black people and exploits them and keeps them in dependent on the government so they can keep their vote. They can't understand how black people ignore abortion and gay marriage and align themselves with a party so decidedly anti-God in its charter.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1996/february5/6t2014.html?paging=off>

- Not trying to answer that here, but this discussion needs to happen. This is an opportunity for evangelical churches to lead in civil public discourse.
  - I told many at our church, on both sides, that politics is “too important” to them.

Other challenges...more obvious<sup>8</sup>

- In some areas, only one racial group exists. No one talks about integration of Arab peoples here. Black, Hispanic, Korean.
- Translation issues; first-generation immigrant groups

#### PANEL QUESTIONS:

- Where do you see racism at work in each of you?
- What do you think are the most important things for the majority culture to be aware of?
- What are examples of things people say that are unintentionally offensive or hurtful?
- What flaws in thinking, or unrealistic expectations, do those in the "minority" (How much adaptability should minorities expect in American culture?)
- Are we ok with our kids all marrying each other?
- Withstanding God: not just the absence of racism, but the presence of diversification
- Summary of Peter's sermon:
- Seismic shift is hard to overestimate: all the cleanliness laws are obsolete

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<sup>8</sup> From *United by Faith: the Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (2003) by Michael Emerson, et al.