

Rediscipling the White Church

Discussion Questions

Session 1: Disciplined by Race

1. Describe the discipleship habits of your own congregation. Has your church talked about anything like racial discipleship?
2. Consider David's definition of discipleship: "Christian disciples are made as they follow Jesus (into the kingdom of God) to become like Jesus (through habit-shaping practices that orient our desires) in order to do what Jesus does." How is this definition similar or different from your own understanding of discipleship?
3. How does your church measure up to the vision of Ephesians 2:14-18, especially in regard to pursuing racial unity? How do you personally measure up to this vision, especially in regard to your relationships with those who are different from your own racial and ethnic background?
4. What is one racial practice you can identify that has shaped your racial identity?

Session 2: Concealed by Race

1. David writes that multiracial churches often perpetuate white culture rather than disciple white people. What is your response to that statement? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. David names three tools that white Christians use to organize and assess their experience: individualism, relationalism, and anti-structuralism. How might you have used these tools in your own understanding to explain racial differences in our society? Why is it problematic to use these tools to explain the racial differences in our country?
3. David contends that white Christians often choose between an emphasis on personal salvation or social justice. Has this been true for you? Has it been reflected in your own circles and networks?
4. In your own context, what are some of the societal systems and structures that privilege white people?

Session 3: Wounded by Race

1. When was the first time you remember thinking about your own ethnic or racial background?
2. Consider how you or your family may have personally benefitted (or been harmed) by the ways white people have been favored over people of color in the areas of education, home ownership, access to employment, the criminal justice system, or in other systemic/structural ways.
3. Are there ways your church has not been a hospitable place for people of color? (If you are white, consider reaching out to people of color who either previously attended your church or who are current attendees/members to ask for their honest assessment about your church's cultural context.)
4. What would it look like to make lament a more regular part of your spiritual practice?

Session 4: Practicing Table Fellowship

1. How does your church observe communion? What are some ways your communion habits either increase or decrease solidarity with one another and with the broader body of Christ?
2. How often have you experienced time to reflect on corporate sins in your communion services versus individual sins?
3. What are ways your church can more intentionally collaborate with other churches in your local area, especially those serving different ethnic groups than in your own church?
4. What opportunities are there in your church or community to create space to celebrate communion with Christians of color from other congregations?

Session 5: Practicing Kingdom Preaching

1. Have you ever experienced a style of worship and preaching that was different from your cultural norms? What was that experience like for you?
2. David writes that white preaching tends to be directed at the congregation members' minds, while black preaching treats people more holistically and assumes that people want to *experience* the sermon, and not just learn from it. What is your own experience and understanding of the purpose of preaching?
3. Have you ever experienced a different cultural style of preaching? What was it like, and how did you think and feel about it?
4. How do you respond when you hear the phrases "white identity" or "white privilege"? Do either or both of these exist? How have you become aware of them?

Session 6: Practicing Subversive Liturgies

1. Describe the liturgical practices of your church. What are the major forms that define your church's liturgy?
2. When was the last time you recall your church naming sins such as racism, prejudice, and segregation as things we should confess and repent from?
3. How does your church conceptualize the idea of mission? Is the pursuit of racial justice a part of that mission?
4. What would need to be reimagined in your church's liturgy so that each Sunday people would be sent to discern our racialized world more accurately?

Session 7: Practicing Children's Ministry of Reconciliation

1. How often do your children see people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds represented in your worship service? How often do they see the leaders of the church submitting themselves to the leadership of people of color?
2. Are topics such as racism, racial injustice, and white privilege a part of what is addressed and explained in the children's ministry and youth programming? If not, what are concrete steps you can begin to take to help those who shape the curriculum and discipleship of children to include these kinds of topics?
3. Are parents in your church equipped to address issues of race from a biblical perspective? What could this look like in your church if such programming does not currently exist?

4. Evaluate your church from a child's vantage point. Are they being formed for the adventurous journey of following Jesus into the reconciled kingdom of God?

Session 8: Practicing Presence

1. How did whiteness emerge historically? What were the key factors that led to race subverting God's intentions in his creation of diverse people?
2. As you look at your own neighborhood or city, what racial divides do you observe? What accounts for those differences, and what is the impact of those divides on the people who live in the various areas?
3. How might a commitment to a place in your own life demonstrate costly discipleship in solidarity with the larger body of Christ?
4. Not everyone has the privilege of mobility. Who are the people in your community whose presence has been enforced by our racialized society?

Session 9: Practicing Salvation from Supremacy

1. David shares about the incident in Acts 19 in which Paul's proclamation of the gospel led to societal disruption. Why does evangelism in the US context rarely lead to systemic disruption and change today?
2. Why is there a lack of urgency in much of white Christianity to pursue righteousness and justice, but the opposite ethos in many Christians of color?
3. David talks about the need to make disciples specifically of white people. How does this strike you, and why? What do you think about his contention that white people need to learn difficult truths about privilege and supremacy from other white people?
4. How could a church begin identifying the contentment with segregation and complicity with injustice as some of what Jesus saves us from?

Session 10: Practicing Uncommon Friendship

1. Why is developing cross-racial friendships insufficient in the pursuit of racial justice? At the same time, why are embodied relationships so important in order to pursue solidarity?
2. Name a time when you have learned about your own cultural blind spots from a person of color. How did that feel, and how often do you have those kinds of experiences? What is the value of experiencing those kinds of moments?
3. Name the last ten books you remember reading. How many were written by authors of color? How can you more intentionally diversify your own reading lists?
4. Are you content with the racial and ethnic diversity of your current friend group? If not, commit yourself to praying that God would move you beyond segregation and into the diverse community of his kingdom.