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DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO RACIAL  
RECONCILIATION IN THE COMMUNITIES OF  
DALLAS, TEXAS, THROUGH  
THE VILLAGE CHURCH

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A Project  
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the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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by  
Adam Edward Griffin

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO RACIAL  
RECONCILIATION IN THE COMMUNITIES OF  
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THE VILLAGE CHURCH

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This work is dedicated to the love of my life, Chelsea Lane, for whom I have the upmost respect and incommunicable gratitude—who, along with our three growing boys, has been an ever-present support and delight.

In addition, this work is dedicated to all of the marginalized people of the city of Dallas past, present, and future.

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## PREFACE

This work is a result of a God-given passion to know and serve those who have endured hardships that I could not possibly imagine. In every way possible, I have fallen short of being a pastor to the marginalized people living around me. It is my hope that this work will not only help my church and me reflect on those shortcomings and address them, but provide a plan by which the forgotten people of Dallas will no longer be forgotten.

Completing this project would have been impossible without the persistent loving support of my wife, Chelsea Lane. It is not an exaggeration to say that without Chelsea, I would have missed out on the heart of Christ for the poor and the foreigners in our city. It is her courage to live in the heart of every kind of diversity in our city that has challenged me and given traction to a project that would not have otherwise crossed my mind. It is also her willingness and fortitude to manage double duty during my many travels to complete this project that made it possible.

Similarly, Steve Hardin's heart for the Lord and for the city of Dallas has in a great part inspired me to know and love both more. He has set the example for godliness as a pastor, father, husband, and, most significantly for this project, a fearless member of a troubled community.

The friendship and experience of Matt Younger in navigating this doctoral project were invaluable to me as a student. I hope I get the opportunity to serve someone in the way he served me in project.

If not for the prodding, confidence, and invitation of Josh Patterson, I would not have even taken the first step on this journey. It is his encouragement and his permission that made this entire process possible and worthwhile for the sake of the church.



In addition, this work would have been far less focused or effective without the contributions of various friends at The Village Church and others in the city of Dallas for whom racial discrimination has brought much personal grief and suffering, and whose ideas and hopes for The Village Church are likewise personally, deeply rooted. I see the prejudice in the city and in myself more clearly because of the willingness of non-white friends who have helped me to learn to identify where I could not see the world through the eyes of others. They have helped me see how I could be part of shaping our community for the better.

A special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Kevin Jones. His insights and untold hours of work were a blessing to this project and the people of Dallas.

Lastly, many men and women have come before me to be a voice for the marginalized in generations past in Dallas and many are hard at work in doing the kind of life transforming, godly work that I here only type about. Thank you for your tireless efforts that inspire those like me to be more like Christ.

Adam Griffin

Dallas, Texas

May 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In January of 2017, The Village Church preached for the sixth year in a row on a January Sunday concerning the heart of God for racial reconciliation. While this dedicated time to this important topic is a great first step to an effective strategy for the church to address racial reconciliation, there is tremendous room for improvement in how our church follows through on the tangible and practical attention we lend this issue. This project will address the current realities of prejudice and diversity at The Village Church as well as how the history of our community affects ongoing efforts to be more cognizant and representative of our diverse city. The Village Church is passionate about racial reconciliation, but we want more to show for that passion in the way of fruit and reconciling effort among TVC attenders in the various communities into which we reach. This project will lay the ground work for strategic actions to be implemented by TVC to advance racial reconciliation in Dallas, Texas.

#### **Context**

The Village Church (TVC) has five campuses spread out across the metroplex of Dallas-Fort Worth. The surrounding community of each campus has slightly different racial demographics, yet each campus maintains relatively similar racial demographics when it comes to staff, leadership, and membership. In short, the campus attendance is mostly white and the leadership even more so, and they do not reflect the diversity of the surrounding communities. This homogeneity is true in spite of a now six-year-old initiative to give more time, attention, and resources to racial reconciliation and specifically to diversity within the church body.

The Fort Worth campus is the only TVC campus whose pastor was a person of color. Sadly and unfortunately, he was removed from his position in 2017, due to a moral failure. In turn, he ceased to be a part of TVC's executive team.<sup>1</sup> As of 2017, there is only one non-white Central Elder<sup>2</sup> and only two total non-white elders across the entire Village Church elder team.<sup>3</sup> A church that represents more than 10,000 weekly attenders is governed by a group of white elders, despite six years of preaching about the hopes of an increasingly multi-ethnic church and, in particular, diversifying leadership. While TVC staff as a whole is not 100 percent white, it is only slightly more diverse with around 8 percent of the staff identifying as non-white.

While being homogenous is not necessarily evil nor is it automatically disadvantages in every circumstance, it is potentially indicative of a lack of action in racial reconciliation. As of the 2010 census, Dallas-Fort Worth was recorded as being 50 percent white, 15 percent African American, and 28 percent Hispanic.<sup>4</sup> The membership of TVC, on the other hand, is well above 80 percent white at each campus.

As the pastors have preached annually on racial reconciliation, we have also set aside consecutive weekends to address the sanctity of human life—specifically as it relates to abortion—and the need for the gospel in all nations. In the last six years, we have seen significant resources poured into these two initiatives. TVC has sent an annual

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<sup>1</sup>The Executive Team of TVC is the decision-making and leadership team made up of the lead pastors, campus pastors, executive directors, and spiritual formation pastors. In addition, two women were added in 2017, to round out the male-dominated room with diverse perspectives. As of the end of 2017, and after the removal of the Fort Worth Campus Pastor, the team is 16 people—14 men and two women, and it is 100 percent white.

<sup>2</sup>The central elders are a decision-making representative team of 15 elders from across all campuses. In 2017, there are 15 central elders, and 14 of them are white.

<sup>3</sup>As of the end of 2017, TVC has 36 elders across 5 campuses, and all but 2 of them are white.

<sup>4</sup>United States Census Bureau, "Community Facts," American Fact Finder, accessed November 30, 2016, <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

team to the March for Life in Washington, DC,<sup>5</sup> recorded TVC Stories revolving around the preciousness of unborn life, and provided tangible follow up opportunities for people to learn more about the topic, be equipped to have conversations about it, and send their dollars to assist in the movement as well as volunteer in organizations that address the issue every day. As for the nations, TVC has added several full-time ministers to solely consider how we train and send missionaries as well as focus international initiatives with strategic partners. TVC gives generous gifts every month to missionaries around the world. This giving, along with finances for international partnerships and short-term trips, has made up a large percentage of the Dallas Campus budget for years. If someone at TVC wanted to know more about the nations, what we do, or how to get involved, there are a variety of ways to help them get plugged-in in various capacities. Unfortunately, the practical emphasis afforded these other two issues has not been replicated in the area of racial reconciliation.

In addition to the internal issues at TVC, Dallas-Fort Worth is not only diverse but has its own historical baggage of prejudice, which complicates and necessitates consideration for the local church to be active in racial reconciliation. Racial tension has been a significant issue from the very beginning of the city all the way to now. In the summer of 2016, a lone gunman opened fire on police at a Black Lives Matter protest killing several officers and sparking a broad church desire for a movement in the city to address the divide between races, particularly whites and blacks.<sup>6</sup> Though it is often forgotten, Dallas has a long history of racial segregation and discrimination that has greatly limited the opportunities afforded to citizens of Dallas who are not white. The

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<sup>5</sup>The March for Life is an annual demonstration that has been hosted in Washington, DC, every year since the Roe v. Wade case in 1973. People from all over the nation organize and demonstrate in order to voice their desire to see abortion's legality overturned.

<sup>6</sup>Regular meetings were started between diverse ethnic church leaders in order to covenant with one another to address the racial divides of the city. Unfortunately, the meetings are irregular and attendance is even more so.

explicit bias of the past has greatly impacted the current makeup, particularly geographically, of the city. As a church that geographically spans the metroplex, TVC is uniquely equipped to address the injustices of prejudice across Dallas-Fort Worth.

### **Rationale**

In order to match the attention afforded the other initiatives the church has been involved in and to begin to see traction in this essential area TVC must design and implement an effective approach to racial reconciliation. After six years, TVC has yet to create a well-known and clear connection with any partner organization or relationship with any church to specifically address prejudice. TVC does not have clear, practical next steps for its people to put their time and resources to counteract institutional and individual prejudice. TVC has given significant pulpit time to this issue, but the church has not created accompanying educational or strategic actions to the level it has with other initiatives. TVC has the resources to do so; the church just needs the initiative and ideas to carry it out. While TVC has an increasingly well-formed theology and strategy concerning international missions and church planting, theology and strategy for local mission remains ambiguous. It is in the area of developing a heart for one's immediate community—local mission, for which TVC administers through home groups<sup>7</sup>—that the church would start to see racial reconciliation come to bear and would start to address if not reflect the diversity of the city. TVC needs to add a philosophy and strategy for local mission as robust as those being developed for international mission. Currently the staff who overseas local mission is the home groups staff. They also oversee missionary care, member care, recovery, pre-marital counseling, group leader training, and several other large tasks. In fact, much of the adult ministry of the church is done through groups, which has huge advantages and disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that any one

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<sup>7</sup>Home groups are intentionally organized small groups of believers at TVC, the context for community, whose leaders are responsible for local mission mobilization, discipleship, and low-level member care.

undertaking through local mission, in this case racial reconciliation, is just one venture among many on the plate of a home group leader. A TVC strategy that clarifies local mission, racial reconciliation, and potentially hires and programs accordingly is needed to see advances made.

The lack of diversity and supermajority of leadership stemming uniformly from the majority white culture reflects two significant issues. First, it displays a lack of personal effort put forward by TVC attenders to be among the people of the city evangelistically, local mission. Second, it means that TVC likely has implicit biases in forms and functions that affect corporate gatherings, home groups, hiring, appointing leadership, and developing leaders.

Since the majority of TVC's leadership structure is white, they do not know what they do not know about being a minority in North Texas American culture. Before addressing the issues of racial reconciliation in the city around TVC, it will be necessary to train the current staff and leadership on the implications of diversity and the history of prejudice in which TVC resides. There is a great need for racial reconciliation in Dallas that, for the leadership and attenders of TVC, is a an opportunity to plan and pursue strategic actions to address the current divisions.

### **Purpose**

In order to righteously shepherd and bring gospel unity to the people of Dallas, The Village Church must design an effective approach to addressing racial reconciliation by understanding its own organizational context and implicit biases as well as providing a new, clear, and practical plan that pursues reconciliatory advances both institutionally and individually.

## Goals

Three goals determined the success of this project:

1. The first goal was to assess the current understanding and condition of The Village Church's racial reconciliation initiative as it pertains to implicit bias, existing and potential strategy, and an understanding of Dallas's racial context.
2. The second goal was to assess the current state of ongoing local missions that address racial reconciliation through The Village Church Dallas Home Groups.
3. The third goal was to develop a plan that produces actionable steps to advance racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas.

## Research Methodology

Three goals determined the direction and effectiveness of this approach. The first goal was to assess the current understanding and condition of TVC's racial reconciliation initiative as it pertains to implicit bias, existing and potential strategy, and an understanding of Dallas's racial context. This goal was measured by administering the Church Racial Reconciliation Survey (CRRS)<sup>8</sup> to a randomly selected cross section of at least 30 minority members/attenders, and a cross section of at least 30 white members/attenders.<sup>9</sup> This goal was considered successful when 60 surveys are completed and the results were analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the current state of the racial reconciliation initiative at TVC Dallas.

The second goal was to assess the current state of ongoing local missions that address racial reconciliation through The Village Church Dallas home groups. This goal was measured by administering the Local Mission Home Group Survey (LMHGS)<sup>10</sup> to one hundred TVC Dallas home group leaders. This goal was considered successful when 100 home group leaders complete the LMHGS and the results were analyzed, yielding a

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<sup>8</sup>See appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup>All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

<sup>10</sup>See appendix 4.

clearer picture of how racial reconciliation is or is not currently being addressed through local mission initiatives in neighborhood home groups.

The third goal was to develop a plan to produce actionable steps to advance racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas. This goal was measured by a panel of two elders and two non-white deacons who will utilize a rubric<sup>11</sup> to evaluate the functionality, feasibility, theological underpinning, and adherence to The Village Church's overall vision of the plan. This goal was considered successful when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. Had the plan not met the 90 percent benchmark, it would have been retooled and adjusted until the benchmark for success is attained.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

*Community.* There are many and various uses and definitions of “community.” The word can be used to describe anything from an entire township to an online affinity group. The only apparent unanimous tenet of “community” definitions is “that communities are made up of people.”<sup>12</sup> As best distilled from the multitude of definitional options, and sufficient for use in this project, community is “people in a specific area who share common ties and interact with one another.”<sup>13</sup> For this project, this term will be employed in two senses. In the first instance, TVC will refer to biblical community that is usually manifested through home groups, where TVC people share a space for sanctifying, discipleship purposes and for caring brotherly love. Second, the term “community” might be used in the sense of geographical community that refers to the region of Dallas in which an individual lives, sharing their life with those who may or may not share their beliefs but

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<sup>11</sup>See appendix 5.

<sup>12</sup>Larry Lyon. *The Community in Urban Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.



do share proximity and, therefore, have some possible shared proximity related interests and a potential for interaction. This project refers to both types of community, biblical and geographic.

*Race.* For the purposes of this project, the use of the word *race* will be used to broadly identify ethnic groups of people traditionally distinguished from one another by biological descent or biological characteristics like “skin color, morphological features, or hair texture.”<sup>14</sup> While human variation is a reality, this definition is not intended to imply that there are truly different kinds of humans. Despite past, flawed scientific explanations and public policies, race is a social construct and it would be a gross inaccuracy to associate any human physical characteristics with actual cultural identity.<sup>15</sup> This project will address the historical tribal, familial groupings of nationalities and ethnic groups traditionally referred to as a race and make general categories of races based on the way public sentiment and policy has affected those different groupings.

*Racism.* For this project, racism will generally refer to any partiality, prejudice or discrimination perpetrated, experienced, or believed based on the physical race of one group or individual against another. According to Pierre L. van den Berghe, it stems from “an attitude or theory that some human groups, socially defined by biological descent and physical appearance, were superior or inferior to other groups in physical, intellectual, cultural, or moral properties.”<sup>16</sup> While many Americans associate racism with hatred and hate crimes as well as societal power structures, all of which are realities, this project also

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<sup>14</sup>Simon Worrall, “Why Race Is Not a Thing, According to Genetics,” *National Geographic*, October 14, 2017, accessed December 5, 2017, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/10/genetics-history-race-neanderthal-rutherford/>.

<sup>15</sup>Audrey Smedley and Brian D. Smedley, “Race as Biology Is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem Is Real: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Race,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 1 (2005): 18.

<sup>16</sup>Pierre L. van den Berghe, “Race (Racism),” in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, February 15, 2007, accessed December 5, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosr007/abstract>.

used the term to refer to common internal biases. According to the BBC News, “Few people openly admit to holding racist beliefs, but many psychologists claim most of us are nonetheless unintentionally racist. We hold what are called ‘implicit biases.’”<sup>17</sup>

*Implicit bias.* While what is most familiar to the general public as it concerns racial tension are those examples of prejudice that are consciously perpetrated and obviously manifested, all of humanity suffers institutionally and individually from “implicit” biases. These biases are not deliberate or calculated and are, therefore, more difficult to be perceived, particularly by the perpetrator. Implicit bias is a subconscious prejudice. The Kirwan Institute explains that it is “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” that may “encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments.”<sup>18</sup> Laurie Rudman writes that implicit biases are

thought to be automatic not only in the sense that they are fast-acting, but also because they can operate without (1) intention (i.e., are involuntary and uncontrollable), and (2) conscious awareness. For this reason, implicit biases have also been described as automatic or nonconscious.<sup>19</sup>

*Racial reconciliation.* Racial reconciliation is the process by which harmony is brought about between racial communities where historic and present division and bias have often resulted in various social disparities. In short, this process requires an institution and/or individual to “admit, submit, and commit.”<sup>20</sup> Michael Emerson and Christian Smith explain:

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<sup>17</sup>“Implicit Bias: Is Everyone Racist?” *BBC News*, June 5, 2017, accessed December 5, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-40124781>.

<sup>18</sup>Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, “Understanding Implicit Bias,” accessed November 30, 2016, <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>.

<sup>19</sup>Laurie A. Rudman, “Social Justice in Our Minds, Homes, and Society: The Nature, Causes, and Consequences of Implicit Bias,” *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004): 133.

<sup>20</sup>Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice, *More than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 27.

They [Christians] must admit that there are racial problems. They then must submit by recognizing the problems are spiritual and only solvable by surrendering to the will of God. They also must submit to each other by building loving relationships across racial barriers. Finally, they must commit to relationships, as in a marriage, and to overcoming division and injustice.<sup>21</sup>

This project frequently discusses diversity within The Village Church. Diversity within the church is not equivalent to racial reconciliation. Though diversity or lack thereof in a neighborhood, school, or church can be a good indicator of whether racial reconciliation is a priority, has or is taking place. Southern Seminary professor Jarvis J. Williams eloquently summarizes this concept in his article on racial reconciliation written for *9Marks*:

Gospel-grounded racial reconciliation produces multi-ethnic and diverse churches. But diversity is not the same as gospel-centered racial reconciliation and the goal of gospel-centered racial reconciliation is not simply diversity. An assembly of the United Nations is multi-ethnic and diverse, as is the army, or the local public high school, or so many other groups. Yet such settings hardly enjoy the racial reconciliation of the gospel.<sup>22</sup>

*Racialization.* Racialization goes beyond bias in the form of momentary or historic racism to the current state of a culture long affected and permeated detrimentally by bias. Emerson and Smith write that it is “the collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities of some racial groups.”<sup>23</sup> Eduardo Bonilla-Silva writes that “racialization” is the result of reproducing racially divisive practices that “(1) are increasingly covert, (2) are embedded in normal operations of institutions, (3) avoid direct racial terminology, and (4) are invisible to most Whites.”<sup>24</sup>

Since these racial power structures are invisible to most of the white population and The Village Church is mostly white, the research will rely heavily on comparing the

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<sup>21</sup>Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54.

<sup>22</sup>Jarvis Williams, “Racial Reconciliation the Gospel and the Church,” *9Marks Journal* (Summer 2015): 12-16.

<sup>23</sup>Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 9.

<sup>24</sup>Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 48.

perspectives of minority members of The Village Church to their white counterparts. However, implicit bias and prejudice are not exclusively white problems—these are human issues. While the context in which this research takes place is in a mainly white context where being white may be considered a position of power and advantage, the sin of racism is not a disease exclusively infecting white populations. This is one of several delimitations.

The scope of the project will have certain delimitations in order to focus the approach in a manageable field. While TVC has members and attenders as well as staff and leadership who span a vast urban landscape in and around Dallas and Fort Worth, the respondents will be limited to those who attend or lead the Dallas campus, which will spotlight the results in a more diverse, urban context. However, the results of the project will likely affect the church-wide strategy around racial reconciliation.

### **Conclusion**

TVC's local culture is and has been divided by race for far too long, but not hopelessly so. The Village Church can play an important role in strategically addressing this issue in its local context by casting a clear vision and providing salutary next steps for its people. Reconciliation is a biblical imperative for the people of God. Being reconciled to God and to one another is part of the role of the church, and in racial division, Scripture describes an obvious and present opportunity to be the church.

CHAPTER 2  
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS  
FOR RACIAL RECONCILIATION

This project attempted to create an achievable plan for action pertaining to racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas. The purpose of this chapter is to draw from Scripture to explain where or in whom the value of man emanates and where mankind has gone wrong in assigning value based on race. From that foundation, the theological basis for multiethnic gospel work will be set forth, both individually and corporately, the theological basis for multiethnic gospel work. This chapter will conclude with a biblically-principled study of confronting sins of partiality in the church.

**The Inherent Worth of All Humanity: Genesis 1:26-27**

The idea of the comparative or fluctuating value of any person is a human invention. The temptation to be worth more than others or to make people of any less value is rooted in a selfish, self-promoting, and self-centered philosophy that rails against the truth of human value instilled by God. Humanity's value is not in its utility or beauty, and certainly not in its genetic distinctions. The value of a person is in no way subjective. There is no difference in any one person or people group that can affect their inherent worth. The people of Dallas cannot be scaled in value based on socioeconomic status, position, nation of origin, or race. The basis of this theological assumption is found in Genesis 1 where God describes how each human has been created in the image of God. It is not some of mankind that are image bearers, but, as John Currid points out, "all mankind, without distinction, are the image of God."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John D. Currid, *Genesis 1:1-25:18*, Evangelical Press Study Commentary (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2003), 85.

The value of human beings is directly correlated to the value that God himself places on them. In racial prejudice, the worth of a human being is assigned based on their genetic heritage, ethnicity, neighborhood, education, or societal position. Those who make a distinction between one person and another assigning each one disparate value for whatever reason including their race, then they are committing the sin of partiality that James warns about: “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (Jas 2:8-9). In the creation narrative, as well as the rest of Scripture, God makes no such variable value statements but rather reinforces that each person is valuable “without distinction.”<sup>2</sup> In order to understand the value of humans it has to be understood what it means to be created in God’s image.

The first question then that must be answered concerning the image of God is to whom does the image of God apply? There is one human distinction made in Genesis, the distinction made between male and female. Yet, even in this distinction, the two are not given variable value, they are both affirmed as image bearers therefore certifying that all of mankind is to be considered likewise without exception. According to Victor P. Hamilton, “The verse affirms that God created in his image a male *adam* and a female *adam*. Both share the image of God.”<sup>3</sup> While this reality of gender applies most directly to addressing the prejudice of sexism, it is worth noting that no race has not descended from Adam and Eve and therefore all races are inherently image bearers in both their male and female counterparts. Nations, tribes, and races come into existence only after all men and women have been deemed God’s image. The one predating the other supersedes

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<sup>2</sup>Currid, *Genesis 1:1-25:18*, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 138.

any later arguments that could be levied about differentiating men in their kinds for the sake of fostering discriminatory differences.

Second, since both men and women are created in God's image, something must set them apart from the rest of creation. In the ancient world, the use of the language of "image" would connote something to be worshipped since the image bearer contained the "deity's essence" in being labeled an image bearer.<sup>4</sup> Since God made it clear in Exodus 20 that people are both to have no other Gods and to refrain from creating anything that might draw human worship from directly to him, people can be sure that God does not mean in Genesis that men and women are to be worshipped. In fact, according to Waltke, the use of the additional term "'likeness' underscores that humanity is only a facsimile of God and hence distinct from him."<sup>5</sup>

Kings also used images at times to setup a likeness of themselves, as Walton explains, "in places where they want to establish their authority."<sup>6</sup> Many eastern cultures believed that their leaders alone bore the image of God, however, their rulers were distinct from the common man in that respect. Wenham writes, "Man is made in the divine image and is thus God's representative on earth was a common oriental view of the king."<sup>7</sup> The significant difference between this ancient eastern belief and what is attested to in Genesis is that, as Wenham says, "it affirms that not just a king, but every man and woman, bears God's image and is his representative on earth."<sup>8</sup> The universality of bearing God's image, therefore, erases any opportunity for class or position to be the

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<sup>4</sup>John H. Walton, *Genesis to Deuteronomy*, The IVP Bible Background Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 43.

<sup>5</sup>Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 66.

<sup>6</sup>Walton, *Genesis to Deuteronomy*, 44.

<sup>7</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 30.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

reason to be considered of value to God or to each other. If all men and women are God's royal representatives on earth, commissioned to oversee and subdue the earth and the animal kingdom, which simultaneously elevates human life over the rest of living things, then all people bear equal responsibility and have equal inherent value.

Third, the role of royal representative imbues an innate value unto mankind. Wenham states that when discussing Genesis 1:26 and comparing it to another use of the word "image" in Genesis relating to the consequences of murder, "because man is God's representative, his life is sacred: every assault on man is an affront to the creator and merits the ultimate penalty (Gen 9:5-6)."<sup>9</sup> Human life is set apart from all other life. To destroy a human would be to destroy God's royal representative and would resultantly be to destroy God himself in effigy. In these God ordained consequences and the contextual use of the word "image," it is clearly communicated that all human life has value and that value is not variable based on which man or woman might be at hand.

Last, all mankind being made in God's image gives all mankind the opportunity to communicate aspects and attributes of God to one another. Waltke explains, "A human being is theomorphic."<sup>10</sup> The reason each human is designed the way that he is and given his role on earth as he has been is in order to bring attention to whom God is so that every man might know how to comprehend God. The fact of uniformity across racial lines to both bear similar human anatomy, autonomy, and biblically ordained function endues every human with the resultant royal representative title as well as inherent value as reminder of God's qualities and attributes. The way that humans understand each other to be the image of God must then resultantly affect the way that they respect each other. If humans were created in God's image to love God, one must love humans.

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<sup>9</sup>Wenham, *Genesis*, 32.

<sup>10</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 65.



### **The Diversity of God's People: Revelation 7:9-10**

Though it is not known what color Adam and Eve's skin were, how much they were alike, or even for what purpose God has created variation in human appearances, it is clear that mankind has, for many years, existed in many variations and these variations are not outside the plan of God. The diversity of humankind is not a result of sin and no variation of humanity is any less likely to be saved by God or spend eternity with him. While all of mankind are image bearers, this does not mean that all mankind are identical nor that differences are departures from God's ordained plan. In the book of Revelation there is a vision of the people of God who are now living in perfect heaven and there, in perfection, the diversity of God's people is on full display.

In Revelation 7, John is given a vision of the saved people of God in the presence of God. Several important things are communicated in this section of Scripture. Of course, John gets to witness what life is like after death. It is, as it should be, centered on the holiness and glory of God. In addition, what is promised to those in Christ is seen in fulfillment, namely, life in heaven with God for those who are saved. First, John describes seeing the numbers of those Jewish people who had been saved. Each tribe is numbered. Morris points out that it is not a necessity to do this numbering but in so doing God "puts some stress on the inclusion of all God's people."<sup>11</sup> In other words, the point is not the actual total but rather the imperative understanding that many from every tribe are saved.

From the numbering of the Jewish tribes, John describes seeing a massive crowd from all the nations of the world. Paige Patterson notes,

John is making the point that this group is ethnically distinct from the Jews who are sealed in the first part of the chapter, and they are further ethnically, tribally, and

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<sup>11</sup>Leon Morris, *The Book of Revelation*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 20, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1987), 115.

linguistically diverse from one another—indicating the extent to which the gospel of Jesus Christ has permeated the entire earth.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that the differences that existed in these people on earth continue to differentiate them in perfect heaven. In heaven there will not be one ethnicity, but many. This communicates both that ethnic differences are not sinful since they will exist into perfect eternity and that any bias that would segregate the people of God on earth is not God's "will being done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10). The fact that so many nations are represented in heaven means that, very likely, the former bias of the people of God, particularly the Jews, has been overcome for the sake of the gospel. In reference to this scripture Keener says, "The gospel challenges our prejudices."<sup>13</sup> Any church or Christian who seeks a preview of heaven here will seek a worship open to diverse people groups being congregated, not segregated.

When describing the multitude, John describes them as hailing from every nation, tribe, people, and language (Rev 7:9). This fourfold description is imposed to stress the comprehensiveness of the assembly.<sup>14</sup> By utilizing four different delineations of the peoples present he emphasizes not just that people from every country will be saved, but from every tribe within that country and from every clan. It can be assumed by what is known of the racial diversity across nations, tribes, peoples, and languages that the multitude John saw was exceptionally multiethnic and multiracial. He saw, in the culminating church of heaven, a more diverse church than many have witnessed on this side of glory.

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<sup>12</sup>Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, The New American Commentary, vol. 39 (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 200.

<sup>13</sup>Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 246.

<sup>14</sup>Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 162.

It is important, lastly, to note that this multitude does not negate the exclusivity of Christ in salvation. Just because it was an uncountable number does not mean that God wished to communicate here that this mass was all the people who ever existed. This is the resurrected church of those who had put their faith in Christ, that it will be massive and diverse, but not that it will be every human who has ever lived.<sup>15</sup>

If the culminating church of Christ is multiethnic then there must be, between the cross and culmination, a diverse mission of the gospel that crosses racial and social boundaries. In the imperfect, sinful world, many people groups are separated by barriers of prejudice. The diversity of the present and future church depends on God destroying the boundaries between factions of mankind.

### **Barriers between Men and God Removed: Ephesians 2:13-16**

In Paul's writing to the Ephesians he is addressing a Gentile crowd during a time when the gospel is affecting not only how they view their relationship with God, but in addition the gospel is impacting how they interact with each other and people for whom they have long held resentment. According to Hoehner, Ephesians 2 "is an important section to understand, for it gives insight into the deep rift between the Jews and Gentiles before Christ and what God did in Christ to bring the two entities into one entity."<sup>16</sup> Previous to Christ's coming, the division between these two people groups was notoriously harsh and entrenched.<sup>17</sup> Israel was protected from the "impurity of the Gentiles" by its moral and ceremonial laws and as a result the two worlds were estranged

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<sup>15</sup>G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 155.

<sup>16</sup>Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 363.

<sup>17</sup>Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 191.

to the point of antagonism and opposition.<sup>18</sup> Along with their ceremonially specified segregations came a perception of their own supremacy.<sup>19</sup> Lincoln explains,

The laws which forbade eating or intermarrying with Gentiles often led Jews to have a contempt for Gentiles which could regard Gentiles as less than human. In response, Gentiles would often regard Jews with great suspicion, considering them inhospitable and hateful to non-Jews, and indulge in anti-Jewish prejudice.<sup>20</sup>

The feeling was mutual and equally dehumanizing. The religious world, in particular, was racialized. These two differentiated and antipathetic peoples needed to be reconciled not only to God, but to one another.

The sacrificed blood of Christ had a twofold affect on the people of the world, that the separation between them and God would both be reconciled in Christ's death and resurrection. O'Brien explains that Christ "is the central figure who effects reconciliation and removes hostility in its various forms."<sup>21</sup> This reconciliation is not something that could have simply been achieved by human exertion and no amount of education or effort could have transformed their prejudice, but rather Christ's sacrifice alone.<sup>22</sup> Bruce writes that Christ's sacrifice has reconciled a broken and depraved humanity to God and has also

reconciled them to each another; in particular he has reconciled those of Jewish birth to those of Gentile birth . . . that his people enjoy their twofold peace. It is he who has brought the formerly hostile groups into a new unity, in which the old distinction between Jew and Gentile has been transcended.<sup>23</sup>

This simultaneous reconciliation is not intended only for prejudice from or toward ethnically Jewish people, but even more so for all Christians for all time that Christians

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<sup>18</sup>Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 141.

<sup>19</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 196.

<sup>20</sup>Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 142.

<sup>21</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 193.

<sup>22</sup>Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 366.

<sup>23</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 295.

might always be a people recognizing that Christ made a way for believers to cross the breach of separation between humanity and God, as well as the rifts between various human factions. In Christ's death, he has made a way for all people to be brought near to God and to each other despite people's mistakes and differences.

Ephesians 2:13 talks about the gentiles formerly being far away, and now, through Christ's blood, being brought near. Best writes, "'Afar' and 'near' are relative terms requiring a fixed point from which to be measured" and that fixed point is God.<sup>24</sup> Paul makes it clear that, though, as O'Brien says, "in Judaism, where 'to bring near' a non-Israelite meant to make him or her a proselyte, so joining them to the people of Israel,"<sup>25</sup> in this section of Scripture he is talking about something much grander than just grafting them into an existing Jewish people group. Lincoln writes that this is not a description of Gentiles becoming some kind of new Jew, "but the language of 'coming near' undergoes a transformation. Because of Christ's work, it can be used of Gentiles in general . . . that they have become members of a newly created community whose privileges transcend those of Israel."<sup>26</sup> It is in Christ that Christians transcend their earthly heritage to become something new and united.

In the kingdom of God, people of all backgrounds find themselves, according to O'Brien, "on equal footing. They are in Christ Jesus and members together of his one body."<sup>27</sup> It was not long after that Christians even began to describe themselves as a "new race" or a "third race."<sup>28</sup> By abolishing the ceremonial laws that separated and segregated the Jews and Gentiles, that for so long had fostered enmity between them, Christ cultivated

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<sup>24</sup>Ernest Best, *Ephesians: A Shorter Commentary* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1993), 245.

<sup>25</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 191.

<sup>26</sup>Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 139.

<sup>27</sup>O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 191.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 194.

a “new humanity” in himself.<sup>29</sup> O’Brien writes, “Here in Ephesians 2, Jews and Gentiles who had been deeply divided and at enmity with one another are created in one new person”<sup>30</sup> and in that illustrate the example of what beauty can come from the end of animosity found in racial reconciliation made solely possible through Christ’s blood making him all believer’s peace.

Verse 14 says that Christ “himself is our peace.” It is not a new strategy that achieves this racial reconciliation, or even makes it possible, but the fulfilled arriving of a savior and the completion of his mission. Hoehner states, “In this context [peace] indicates a lack of hostility and a mutual acceptance between those who were hostile or appeared to be hostile”<sup>31</sup> It is not simply a calm emotion; it is an end to pervasive detestation. O’Brien writes, “The biblical concept of peace has to do with wholeness, particularly with reference to personal relationships.”<sup>32</sup> The peace here discussed is only made possible through Christ who embodies it. In unity with him Christians are made unified with one another and all former hostilities can be overcome.

Man’s sin nature creates a barrier between him and man as well as fosters enmity between him and other men. It is only in Christ’s blood that there is now the possibility and actualization of reconciliation in both spheres of relationship, human and divine, the twofold reconciliation. Knowing that the gospel of Jesus Christ’s death gives opportunity for divisions to be surmounted, it is logical that the mission Christ has afforded his church is to take that gospel message to all peoples of the earth.

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<sup>29</sup>Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 144.

<sup>30</sup>O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 200.

<sup>31</sup>Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 367.

<sup>32</sup>O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 192.

## **The Multiethnic Corporate Mission of the Church: Acts 1:8; 2:1-12**

At the time when Christ most clearly communicated the multiethnic mission for his church, his ascension, the apostles were still fixated on the restoration of the nation of Israel. Stott remarks that in their inherited ethnocentrism, “the apostles still cherished narrow, nationalistic aspirations.”<sup>33</sup> Even after Christ made it abundantly clear that their mission would take them beyond the borders of Israel by stating in Acts 1:8 that they would be his “witnesses . . . to the end of the earth” it would still, as Bock notes, “take the apostles and others time to realize that Jesus does not intend for the message to go just to Jews dispersed throughout the world but also to Gentiles . . . God’s intention was the world,”<sup>34</sup> meaning all peoples of all backgrounds. In not answering the disciples’ questions about the restoration of Israel and instead giving them instruction concerning their mission outside their nation and thereby implying outside their nationality as well, he was helping them see that regardless of when Israel would or would not be restored, there was an urgent mission in front of them now.<sup>35</sup>

Acts 1:8 serves as a type of table of contents for the rest of the book of Acts as this mission plays out. F. F. Bruce explains:

“Ye shall be my witnesses” might be regarded as the theme of the book; “in Jerusalem” covers the first seven chapters; “in all Judea and Samaria” chs. 8:1 to 11:18; and the remainder of the book deals with the progress of the gospel outside the frontiers of the Holy Land until at last it reaches Rome.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 42.

<sup>34</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 66.

<sup>35</sup>Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 126.

<sup>36</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 39.

The disciples were not being called simply to a geographic mission, but a multiethnic mission. Bock confirms, “The phrase ‘end of the earth’ then, is geographic and ethnic in scope, inclusive of all people and locales . . . the mission of the disciples is world mission.”<sup>37</sup> Bock refers to this mission as the church’s “key assignment.”<sup>38</sup> First on Christ’s list of those non-Jewish peoples to whom the disciples must now witness and eventually resultantly reconcile, is “despised Samaria.”<sup>39</sup> While they were concerning themselves with how great their own nation might become, Christ was reminding them of their mission to love those who, for so long, they had rejected.

This mission was not given to just one individual or even just to the disciples. The mission of Acts 1:8 is the mission of the church until Christ returns, to go to the nations and peoples who do not know him, regardless of cultural differences, and share with them the gospel that breaks down barriers between men and God as well as men and each other. Bock writes,

The priority for the church until Jesus returns, a mission of which the community must never lose sight, is to witness to Jesus to the end of the earth. The church exists, in major part, to extend the apostolic witness to Jesus everywhere. In fact, the church does not *have* a mission; it is to be missional and *is* a mission.<sup>40</sup>

Yet this mission the disciples were instructed to spark was expected to wait for its inception until the Holy Spirit came upon them, which would not happen until Pentecost.

The Feast of Weeks, when Pentecost took place, was the next pilgrim feast, in other words, the Lord waited until the next gathering of people from all over the world before declaring his resurrection emphasizing his desire to see his gospel spread to all

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<sup>37</sup>Bock, *Acts*, 65.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>39</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 42.

<sup>40</sup>Bock, *Acts*, 66.



people.<sup>41</sup> A global strategy can here be clearly discerned. A movement of the spirit to be taken to all people and reconcile long divided nations begins when the divided ethnicities are assembled. Bruce notes, “Even if they were Jews, these ‘devout men’ are considered by Luke to be representatives of the lands from which they came, and of the local dialects of those lands.”<sup>42</sup> Those present at Pentecost were strategically heading to various parts of the globe where the message of the gospel could be diversely delivered.

This new church brought with it some stark differences from the old Jewish religious sects. In this new universal church that was ruled by Christ there were to be no barriers to fellowship based on nation, race, rank, or gender.<sup>43</sup> As Barrett describes, “The church from the beginning, though at the beginning located only in Jerusalem, is in principle a universal society in which universal communication is possible.”<sup>44</sup> This new church seen here in its germ is a reflection of the Revelation church drawn from every nation.<sup>45</sup> As opposed to the older homogeneous congregations, from Pentecost onward, Christian churches, or at least the church globally, would be heterogeneous bodies of believers. This would mean, for the Jews then as much as for people today, that Christians would have to recognize bias in order to fulfill the mission of God with godly impartiality.

### **The Impartial Mission of the Individual Christian: Luke 10:25-37**

In Luke 10:25-37, a lawyer comes to Christ and asks about the process by which he might inherit eternal life. When Jesus instructs him to love his neighbor he

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<sup>41</sup>C. K. Barrett, *Acts 1-14*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T & T Clark, 1994), 112.

<sup>42</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 61.

<sup>43</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 43.

<sup>44</sup>Barrett, *Acts 1-14*, 110.

<sup>45</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 43.

seeks to justify himself<sup>46</sup> by determining who his neighbor is and is not, and in so doing gives Christ and anyone reading the scripture the opportunity to see that in the kingdom of God there is no place for distinguishing human value, or whether someone is to be considered a neighbor, based on ethnic bias. Christ does this by pointing out the partiality of the Jews toward their own nationality and against their neighboring nemesis, the Samaritans.

Because of the Samaritan history of intermarriage, most Jews devalued and looked down on the Samaritans to the point of overtly refusing to interact with them. Robert Stein notes, “So great was the Jewish and Samaritan hostility that Jesus’ opponents could think of nothing worse to say of him than, ‘Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?’ John 8:48.”<sup>47</sup> Morris describes the relationship between the two peoples as a “traditional bitterness” that had reached the point of estrangement where if a Jew were in need, a Samaritan was the last person on earth that might have been expected to help.<sup>48</sup> When it came to a universal idea of love for all of mankind, the Jews had not yet even considered it.<sup>49</sup>

According to Darrell L. Bock, the Jewish lawyer’s question “about identifying his neighbor is really an attempt to say there is such a person as a ‘non-neighbor.’”<sup>50</sup> He asks, “Who is my neighbor’ in order “to calculate the identity of those to whom he need

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<sup>46</sup>Many people throughout history have used and twisted Scripture to justify not loving certain groups of people. The Bible has been used to justify anti-Semitism and slavery. This scripture and the rest of this chapter help unpack how misguided and evil any such use of God’s Word would be.

<sup>47</sup>Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 318.

<sup>48</sup>Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 207.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>50</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1028.

not show love.”<sup>51</sup> In desiring to justify himself he was attempting to confirm that some people were to be served and other people were to be rejected. Bock rightly points out, “Jesus refuses to turn people into a subspecies or into things that can be ignored.”<sup>52</sup> The reality of both the Old and New Testament, which Christ communicates to the lawyer in his parable, is that “neighbor love knows no boundaries” and therefore to follow Christ and the Scriptures is to offer service and love to all people without prejudice.<sup>53</sup> While the lawyer, much like people today, feel comfortable in loving when convenient or when people are alike in ways that create comfort. Bock writes, “Jesus rejects all attempts to shrink the scope of responsibility. The lawyer is looking for the minimum obedience required but Jesus requires total obedience.”<sup>54</sup> Likewise, the Christian church cannot shrink its responsibility to only a homogenous subspecies of humanity in any city in which a body of believers might find themselves. Christians must reject the ancient Jewish definition of “neighbor.”

For the Jew, neighbor exclusively meant other Jews. As Stein states, “For most Jews a neighbor was another Jew, not a Samaritan or Gentile. The Pharisees and the Essenes did not even include all Jews.”<sup>55</sup> The Jewish people tried to create a definition of neighbor that would only be narrowly applied geographically to mean the people who lived, literally, nearest to them and/or religiously to mean those people whose doctrine most nearly followed their own. Marshall describes this phenomenon of exclusivity as stemming from the fact that “the Jews interpreted [neighbor] in terms of members of the

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<sup>51</sup>Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 425.

<sup>52</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 1028.

<sup>53</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 425.

<sup>54</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 1028.

<sup>55</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 316.

same people and religious community, fellow Jews.”<sup>56</sup> The difference in Christ’s approach is that he removes bias for the sake of actual human compassion and defines humanity’s neighbors much more liberally than the narrow Jewish view. In this new Christian approach, it is clear why Jesus chose a Samaritan to be the neighbor in his parable—to address the issue both of godly compassion and the antithetical discrimination that so easily undermines it.

It is no accident that Jesus chose to use a Samaritan the way he did in his parable. Stein points out, “Jesus deliberately chose an outsider, and a hated one at that, for his hero in order to indicate that being a neighbor is not a matter of nationality or race.”<sup>57</sup> In a very real sense, to Christ, the lawyer was asking the wrong question. Instead of an exclusionary question that would eliminate some people from his list of those he must love, Stein notes, “Jesus indicated that one should worry less about who a neighbor is than about being a good neighbor.”<sup>58</sup> Christ’s perspective re-centers the concept of religion on an unrivaled commitment to God that resultantly transfers to a love of mankind.<sup>59</sup> For the Christian, Bock says that “there is no distinction between devotion to God and treatment of people. They go together. Jesus encourages total love for God and humankind.”<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately, The Village Church is in a city with a history of deciding who their neighbors will be to the intentional exclusion of certain ethnic groups, and thusly, Dallas has created human needs that are inseparably intertwined with racial background. The underprivileged are in need as the result of injustice, as will be explored in chapter 3.

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<sup>56</sup>I. Howard. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 444.

<sup>57</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 317.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>59</sup>Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 443.

<sup>60</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 1025.

The church must now be the “neighbors” to address needs in racially diverse communities historically excluded from opportunity and assistance as Christ is here calling it to be. In his commentary on this parable, Bock clearly expounds on the idea that the Christian understanding of neighbor must transcend all that divides:

Neighborliness is not found in a racial bond, nationality, color, gender, proximity, or by living in a certain neighborhood. We become a neighbor by responding sensitively to the needs of others. . . . The issue is not who we may or may not serve, but serving where need exists. We are not to seek to limit who our neighbors might be. Rather, we are to be a neighbor to those whose needs we can meet.<sup>61</sup>

The call to be neighborly to those who have been formerly despised is not exclusive to the lawyer or even just to the Jews. In his concluding command to “go and do likewise,” Christ drives home the lesson to all of humanity.<sup>62</sup> That lesson being to let love transcend all of the boundaries between people that have been established by human prejudice.<sup>63</sup> The parable of the Samaritan is explicit in its communication to a chosen people that “racial considerations are . . . irrelevant” and that instead all should follow the example of the Samaritan who loved regardless of racial division.<sup>64</sup> Too often the American church is aware of this fact but still, as in Dallas, lives in constant unjust separation. Knowing that God has called believers to reconcile racial divisions is not enough. Bock points out, “Such knowledge needs to be put into practice. Love that comes from the heart responds with the hands.”<sup>65</sup> Not only must the church corporately and Christians individually attempt to reconcile the historic divisions between racially divided people, but it must also overtly address the internal prejudices that still exist in its people anywhere that this despicable discrimination and segregation might rear its ugly head. To

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<sup>61</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 1035.

<sup>62</sup>Morris, *Luke*, 208.

<sup>63</sup>Stein, *Luke*, 319.

<sup>64</sup>Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 450.

<sup>65</sup>Bock, *Luke*, 1027.

be active in multiethnic gospel work, God’s people must be prepared to recognize and condemn racially segregating traditions and actions.

### **Addressing the Sin of Christian Prejudice: Galatians 2:11-14**

In Galatians 2, Paul recounts a conflict between himself and the apostle Peter in the city of Antioch concerning Peter’s actions that fostered segregation based on Peter’s own fears and bias. At the time, John Stott records that Antioch was “a hotbed for various philosophies, cults, and religions. It was a city that prided itself on its toleration, with even its Jewish population more open to Gentiles than anywhere else in the Jewish diaspora.”<sup>66</sup> Yet, amid this city and culture notorious for tolerance, Peter segregated himself intentionally from certain groups of gentiles when he was in the presence of certain groups of Jews. This was not an honest mistake but rather a knowing removal of himself from certain confederates based on their ethnicity and traditions.<sup>67</sup> Scripture does not show, however, Peter refusing to let the Gentiles gather, only that he would gather separately. In his selective separation can be seen a clear picture of segregation—multiple gatherings of believers separated along ethnic lines. Paul rightly points out that this kind of segregation is incongruent with the unifying and loving thrust of the gospel in action. As such, Peter was acting hypocritically, asking men to follow the gospel and then living opposite thereof, as he decried unity but lived divisively.<sup>68</sup>

Peter’s motivation for this segregation was the fear of the opinion of Jewish people who came to Antioch. Peter, who had denied Christ in the temple court for fear of

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<sup>66</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 70.

<sup>67</sup>Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 117.

<sup>68</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1986), 52.

the personal consequences, now denied Christ's gospel for fear of the circumcision party.<sup>69</sup> Fear of man was the sole reason for this decision and not a decision based on Peter's conscience.<sup>70</sup> Paul's rebuke had to be swift or they would risk seeing what is now common place in modern American cities, "multiple communions"—multiple groups of Christians in the same city that are unwilling to worship together based on superficial preferences.<sup>71</sup>

Peter and Paul are so well thought of, so thoroughly venerated, and Peter's offense was so egregious equaled only in significance by the public nature of Paul's rebuke, that several later church fathers tried to ignore and remove the offense, or at least the nature of the offense, presented here in Galatians for fear it reflected poorly on their sainted apostles.<sup>72</sup> However, Peter's mistake and Paul's rebuke serve as a thoroughly edifying example for all believers. What Paul did was "for the sake of the gospel's outreach to Gentiles and the oneness of all believers in Christ."<sup>73</sup> When there has been public sin in the life of the church, as has been committed in Peter's case, then it is good and right that the rebuke should also be public.<sup>74</sup> Peter's bias and resultant participation in segregation of the various people groups are unfortunately common attributes in modern day Christian churches, as will be explored in chapter 3 of this project. Paul shows that this hypocritical discriminatory practice should be something that those within the body of Christ call out in each other in order to put it to death and prevent it from taking shape in the first place.

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<sup>69</sup>Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 52.

<sup>70</sup>R. A. Cole, *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentary, vol. 9, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1989), 75.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>72</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New international Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 133.

<sup>73</sup>Longenecker, *Galatians*, 79.

<sup>74</sup>Cole, *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians*, 77.

Division based on prejudice of any kind, and specifically racism, is incompatible with the gospel of Jesus Christ. God does not operate in a partiality to one race or another and neither should his body, the church. George describes this impartiality as “God . . . bringing into being, the body of Christ based not on caste, color, or social condition but on grace alone,”<sup>75</sup> and it is this same grace that Christians are to extend to all of mankind. If Christians cannot represent this unity within the body of Christ, those who are united by the gospel, how can Christians be expected to lead out in loving those outside the church?<sup>76</sup> If a Christian cannot love his brother in Christ because of his race, then he should not call himself a Christian.

Paul states that Peter’s behavior is not according to the “truth of the gospel” and what is that truth but what Stott calls “the good news that we sinners, guilty and under the judgment of God may be pardoned and accepted by his sheer grace, his free and unmerited favour on the ground of his son’s death and not for any works of merits of our own.”<sup>77</sup> In short, the gospel is acceptance to God that breeds acceptance of one another, a twofold reconciliation. The grace of God has leveled any hierarchy and eliminated all classes. There is no “second-class” for Christians.<sup>78</sup> Any version of racially driven bias within the body of Christ should be identified and rebuked, believer to believer, in order to remove far from the body of Christ division where God has brought a ministry of reconciliation and acceptance through his gospel.

If prejudice and partiality is a sin that can be found in the heart of any person who has implicit biases and therefore all people, then it should be an issue that the church addresses both privately and publicly. Wherever the church participates through acts of

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<sup>75</sup>George, *Galatians*, 183.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>77</sup>Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 54.

<sup>78</sup>George, *Galatians*, 182.



omission or commission in the ongoing survival of both individual and institutional prejudice and wherever the church witnesses it in the community, it must be addressed. Regarding this systemic blight, Jarvis J. Williams says, “Christians must be honest about our racist past to answer some of the complicated questions in our racist present. Moreover, progress will be difficult, if not impossible, if we deny that racism still exists—individually and systematically, in both church and society.”<sup>79</sup> Addressing the ongoing issues of division will start with admitting and understanding the history and current reality of those divisions, and in that process of discovery the church will find its place in the wounded community of long divided peoples where the sin of partiality begs to be called out and put to death and all of its toxic tendrils of wickedness uprooted.

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<sup>79</sup>Jarvis Williams, “Racial Reconciliation the Gospel and the Church,” *9Marks Journal* (Summer 2015): 12.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RACIAL DIVISION IN DALLAS

This project attempted to create an achievable plan for action pertaining to racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas. The purpose of this chapter is to address the historical context to ascertain why and where racial reconciliation must take place. In addition, in understanding the history, the strategic plan for racial reconciliation through TVC can better address the roots of the cycles of disenfranchisement and pervasive separations. The racial tensions and disparities Dallas is now experiencing are an institutional as well as individual problem that can be seen more clearly with an understanding of how explicit racism in the past has served to shape the persevering separation of communities today.

Racial division is a Dallas phenomenon that has pervaded and persisted in this city since its inception. Understanding the current barriers and impediments to racial reconciliation, their anti-gospel provenience, as well as grasping the best avenues for strategically unraveling the resulted urban racial separation and racial tensions can only be achieved through a thorough understanding of how this current reality is a result of years of explicitly racist, sinful strategies implemented by city leaders in order to intentionally increase segregation. It is essential to have a thorough historical understanding of Dallas racism since it has been largely invisible to the casual onlooker due to its sly and subtle complexity.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the intentional segregation implemented by city leadership, various public events emblematic of consistent institutional and individual

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 17.

oppression have contributed to further broadening the un-reconciled gap. A strategic plan for racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas must consider the historical and practical context of division. Dallas historian Harvey J. Graff expertly summarizes this sentiment in his local history, *The Dallas Myth*:

Dallas's history is a major chapter in the creation story of the differential, unequal shares in opportunities and benefits within the American urban polity. Those inequalities shape the place spatially, socially, economically, and culturally. Dallas's history is marked prominently and powerfully by long-standing traditions of prejudice, intolerance, racism, violence, extremism, segregation, and other efforts aimed at control. Struggles of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class have deeply scarred and sometimes rent the urban fabric, even if the traces of these ruptures have been mended and ironed out in retrospect. While not unique, Dallas is disturbingly exceptional, especially with respect to African Americans and Mexican Americans. Race is a central element in Dallas's past, present and future.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Importance of City History**

Though racial segregation is not a solely Dallas phenomenon, the North Texas metroplex version of ethnic estrangement is its own unique blend. Each city has its own story and it is important for churches that want to make a difference in Dallas to understand how Dallas is different. In his 1877 speech to the people of Baltimore, nineteenth-century African American social reformer and abolitionist Frederick Douglass said, "Great cities, like great men, have their distinctive, individual characters and qualities. While all have something in common, each has something peculiar to itself, and each makes its own peculiar impression on the outside world."<sup>3</sup> In order to strategically unravel racial tensions in Dallas, it is imperative to understand the historically distinct and unique entanglements of hate, apathy, bigotry, alienation, and separation that make up past and present-day Dallas. In reference to Dallas, Graff states emphatically, "History

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<sup>2</sup>Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 98.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Douglass and L. Diane Barnes, *Frederick Douglass: A Life in Documents* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 186.

matters . . . for confronting demons past and future and imagining alternatives in the present.”<sup>4</sup> It is these demons of racial division stemming from the past that in their uncovering will shape strategy for the present.

Those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it, and those who know Dallas know that Dallas does not study its own history. One of the hindrances to studying the history of Dallas is that so much of the more disturbing aspects of its racial past have been intentionally glossed over or forgotten or have become too uncomfortable to mention. This intentional ignorance has undoubtedly led to the persistence of prejudice. Longtime local journalist Jim Schutze has observed the ignorance and pleasant myths for decades, leading him to conclude that many Dallas citizens are so unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the topic of racial strife, and specifically slavery, that they have very little understanding what “the truth about slavery in Dallas . . . [is] and what basis it formed for the historical relationship between the races today.”<sup>5</sup> Graff discovered in his research into the city’s history that “its white, middle-class residents preferred to ignore, especially its marked racial-ethnic segregation.”<sup>6</sup> This intentional ignorance falls in line with historian Michael Phillips similar hypothesis: “In this obsessively image-conscious city, elites feared that a conflict-marred past filled with class and racial strife represented a dangerous model for the future. City leaders transformed the community into a laboratory of forgetfulness.”<sup>7</sup> These historians and journalists discovered that Dallas not only forgot, it forgot on purpose. Since whites wrote the history of the city and the history did not look favorably on whites,

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<sup>4</sup>Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 86.

<sup>5</sup>Jim Schutze, *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1986), 33.

<sup>6</sup>Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, ix.

<sup>7</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 22.

its ugly scars were hidden behind a veneer of success and progress: “The unimportance of the past lay at the heart of the city’s self-image.”<sup>8</sup>

By way of example, Patricia Evridge Hill’s popular city history book *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* does not even begin its history in the first chapter until 1880,<sup>9</sup> and even then, the chapter is about opportunities in Dallas for the “elite,” completely ignoring the pervasive disadvantage or even existence of those who were not white elites. As Graff describes it, even if a local history does mention the racially motivated “violence, disorder, and inequality” in Dallas, they tend to be acknowledged only as “problems of the past that progressively have been overcome; their legacies in the present are too uncomfortable to explore.”<sup>10</sup> The present realities are best understood only if the hidden histories are uncovered and the past injustices are laid bare as well as who wrote them. Dallas churches will have to address and overcome what Graff calls “the prevailing version of Dallas’s written history,” which was written and therefore focuses on “a minority among its population, though the most powerful prominent, well-to-do, and visible minority: the overwhelmingly Anglo and male entrepreneurial and leadership class.”<sup>11</sup>

In speaking about the historical accounts that Dallas must lean on in order to understand Dallas’s racial context, prominent African American pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Tony Evans, states, “Secular history has often excluded the whole truth from its record of accounts. It has rewritten the annals of our foundation to offer a

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<sup>8</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 3.

<sup>9</sup>Patricia Evridge Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996), ix.

<sup>10</sup>Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 117.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

one-sided and limited view.”<sup>12</sup> He is referring specifically to the tendency in white historians recording narratives whose biased view diminishes the role of minorities in history as well as the blemishes of whites’ sins of oppression against them. By way of national and local example, many traditional histories of America begin with Columbus’ journey from Europe to “discover” a new land, ignoring all the native people who had lived in America for centuries and were summarily displaced or destroyed. Similarly, nearly all local histories of Dallas start with a white Tennessee lawyer named John Neely Bryan setting up a trading post and home on the Trinity River in the 1840s. To start with Bryan is to ignore thousands of years of non-white residents in the area.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Removal of the Original Non-White Residents of Dallas**

According to the *Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County* written in 1892, Dallas County “was occupied by the Indians when first approached by the white settlers . . . especially on the Trinity River, to such an extent as to cause the earlier (white) settlers much trouble and annoyance, as well as damage.”<sup>14</sup> According to John Henry Brown, one of Dallas’s first white historians, writing in 1887, the Dallas area was a vast “unpeopled wilderness, excepting in its occupancy by roving tribes of hostile savages.”<sup>15</sup> It is clear from other historical and archeological sources that in actuality the area had been well settled for hundreds of years by various Native American tribes and

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<sup>12</sup>Tony Evans and Cheryl Dunlop, *Oneness Embraced: Reconciliation, the Kingdom, and How We Are Stronger Together* (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 34.

<sup>13</sup>Roy H. Williams and Kevin J. Shay, *Time Change: An Alternative View of the History of Dallas* (Dallas: To Be Publishing, 1991), 22.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis Publishing Company, “Memorial and Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas,” 1892, accessed January 10, 2018, [texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph20932/](http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph20932/), 136.

<sup>15</sup>John Henry Brown and John H. Cochran, *History of Dallas County, Texas: From 1837 to 1887* (Dallas: Aldredge Book Store, 1887), 5.

was far from “unpeopled.”<sup>16</sup> What followed whites settling was a removal of Native people both from the land and from the memory of the remaining whites.

As opposed to the beginnings of civilized communities being traceable to the settling of whites along the Trinity River, instead it is the first haunting events of ethnic estrangement and battles between races in which whites were both the victorious perpetrators and the historians. In May of 1841, General Edward H. Tarrant for whom Fort Worth’s Tarrant County is named<sup>17</sup> was sent by the Texas Government to remove the entirety of the remaining Native American population living in the North Texas area. The leap forward in the white population destroyed Native American villages and hunting grounds. In 1846, the tensions between whites and remaining Native Americans resulted in vigilante violence in which whites who lived in the present-day neighborhood of TVC hunted down, scalped, and murdered suspected Native American raiders. The whites thus made themselves “judge, jury, and executioner” over Native Americans in the area. Early white historians lauded this specific incident of white supremacy and its resulting violence.<sup>18</sup> From its white beginning, Dallas has been a city of perpetrating and overlooking the injustices of racism and the havoc it has played on its non-white residents, even when whites were the initial minority. Phillips describes the first white settlers and their vision as “the founders of Anglo Texas,” who “envisioned a race-based society in which Indians would be driven out, blacks exploited as slaves, and Mexicans reduced to the role of surplus labor.”<sup>19</sup> In many tangible ways their vision became a reality and its ramifications pervade the city even today.

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<sup>16</sup>Williams and Shay, *Time Change*, 29.

<sup>17</sup>Handbook of Texas Online, “Tarrant, Edward H.,” accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fta11>.

<sup>18</sup>Williams and Shay, *Time Change*, 31.

<sup>19</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 20.

## The Early History of Black Oppression in Dallas

In the mid-nineteenth century, blacks in Texas were either slaves or were expected to get out of the state. In 1840, Texas attempted to pass a law “which gave free blacks two years to leave Texas or risk being sold into slavery.”<sup>20</sup> Many white settlers to Dallas brought African slaves with them to work in cotton fields. In 1819, only seven slaves were reported in all of Texas.<sup>21</sup> The population of slaves in Dallas County rose from 207 in 1850, to 1,074 in 1860, in total making up about 12 percent of the population.<sup>22</sup>

Schutze describes the revisionist racial history common among white Dallas when it comes to slavery as “pleasant self-delusion.” He is referring to the popular myth that slavery in Dallas was somehow “less harsh,” even though “almost every credible study of American slavery argues just the opposite.”<sup>23</sup> A first-hand account of Texas slavery from Frederick Law Olmsted described the regard with which plantation owners addressed their slaves as “a threat to make their life infernal if they do not submit abjectly and constantly . . . with a sole eye to selfish profit.”<sup>24</sup> A far cry from the friendly “partnership” some have heard in the Dallas polished history of slavery.<sup>25</sup>

One of the most infamously forgotten narratives of Dallas history that displays the true violent oppression of the day, is that of the fire of July 8, 1860. Twenty downtown buildings were burned down. Over a fifteen-day period, “the Committee of Vigilance secretly interrogated nearly one hundred slaves, using torture to extract confessions.”

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<sup>20</sup>Handbook of Texas Online, “Tarrant, Edward H.”

<sup>21</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 38.

<sup>22</sup>Williams and Shay, *Time Change*, 33.

<sup>23</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 29.

<sup>24</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted and J. H. Olmstead, *A Journey through Texas; or a Winter Ramble of Saddle and Camp Life on the Border Country of the United States and Mexico, etc.* (London: Scholar’s Choice, 1857), 123.

<sup>25</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 29.



Black abolitionists were blamed, the “self-appointed” white Committee of Vigilance wanted to hang every black person in Dallas County in retribution, which would have been legal in Texas at the time. When the economic ramifications of the proposed massacre were pointed out, they decided to hang three of the eight men who had been specifically accused instead of the entire population. Although the judge doubted their guilt, all present agreed that “someone had to hang.” After the hanging, almost all the black men, women, and children in the county were publicly whipped and had salt and oil rubbed in their wounds in order to punish them and warn them against insurrection. Again, all of this based on no evidence of foul play whatsoever.<sup>26</sup> The three slaves they hung were known for a lack of proper “racial etiquette” and selected specifically to make a clear point about the importance of black subservience.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to these gruesome injustices and the daily oppression of slave labor, slavery had a terrible impact on the structure and stability of black families. Local African American historian Robert Prince describes the slave culture in its bleak reality: “Every slave family lived in constant fear of a loved one being sold away. Marriages among slaves were not recognized and this wicked practice destroyed the African concept of ‘family.’”<sup>28</sup> The ramifications for generations to come of slavery, family degradation, and devaluing of human worth are devastating.

Though many may observe the dates of these incidents and dismiss them as irrelevant to the tensions of today, it is important to note for Dallas and racial reconciliation’s sake that, as sociologist Glenn C. Loury points out,

Societies are not amalgams of unrelated individuals creating themselves anew—out of whole cloth, as it were—in each generation. A complex web of social connections

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<sup>26</sup>Williams and Shay, *Time Change*, 35-36.

<sup>27</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 30.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Prince, *A History of Dallas: From a Different Perspective* (Austin, TX: Nortex, 1993), 12.

and a long train of historical influences interact to form the opportunities and shape the outlooks of individuals.<sup>29</sup>

Remembering and recognizing the realities and ramifications of past oppression are essential aspects of understanding current divides and tensions.

Often ignorantly, the attitude of many Americans is that it is best for America, and African Americans specifically, to “get over” slavery, it being so long ago.<sup>30</sup> In 1979, Texas became the first state to recognize Juneteenth as an official holiday. Due to the “dynamic nature of public memory,” it took 114 years to officially recognize this day on which Texas now quietly commemorates emancipation, celebrating what is considered the date the last slaves in Texas were freed.<sup>31</sup> Though Juneteenth in Dallas is a lesser-known milestone of slavery’s legacy, and one of the few whose intention is positive, there is a growing public debate about the public legacy of slavery that surrounds Dallas’s citizens every day. A contentious debate between protestors in the streets has made it into the city council chambers and the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) boardroom and it was in the local news often in the fall of 2017. It is a debate over commemorative memorials and namesakes calling back to a legacy of slavery in Texas.

In 1936, President Roosevelt was in Dallas for the dedication of a fourteen-foot tall statue of Robert E. Lee, the confederate general. The statue was not a Civil War memorial, but rather a “tribute to the lost cause of the confederacy.”<sup>32</sup> In September of

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<sup>29</sup>Glenn C. Loury, “An American Tragedy: The Legacy of Slavery Lingers in Our Cities Ghettos,” *The Brookings Review* 16, no. 2 (1998): 38.

<sup>30</sup>Wanda J. Ravernell, “Home for the Holidays: Juneteenth/Remembering Days of Slavery and Celebrating Their End,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 15, 2005, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.sfgate.com/homeandgarden/article/HOME-FOR-THE-HOLIDAYS-Juneteenth-Remembering-2662359.php>.

<sup>31</sup>Janice Hume and Noah Arceneaux, “Public Memory, Cultural Legacy, and Press Coverage of the Juneteenth Revival,” *Public Memory, Cultural Legacy, and Press Coverage of the Juneteenth Revival* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 155-62.

<sup>32</sup>Carol Toler, “Councilman McGough Faces Constituents Angry over Monument Removal,” *Lake Highlands Advocate*, October 3, 2017, accessed November 2, 2017,

2017, the mayor of Dallas, Mike Rawlings, and the Dallas City Council voted to have the statue removed. Mayor Rawlings said the “monument was a symbol of injustice.”<sup>33</sup> Even so, an angry contingent of white citizens fought to keep this monument to prejudice.<sup>34</sup>

The same debate of commemorating confederate leaders in the past has made it to the DISD school board. In September of 2017, DISD administrators recommended renaming four of their schools: Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, and William L. Cabell. In addition to those four, the district is researching seventeen other names and considering their connections with slavery and the Confederacy to make decisions about potential name changes.<sup>35</sup> Among those schools is Thomas Jefferson High School, which sits across the street from TVC in Dallas.

One of the protestors at the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue removal brought up an interesting point in light of the long and storied past of Dallas prejudice. The Robert E. Lee statue is far from the only trace of racist leadership memorialized in Dallas. Robert Beverly, president of the Texas Freedom Force and self-identified commanding officer of the Texas State Militia, posed the question, “RL Thornton was a known KKK leader in Dallas, and he’s got highways named after him. . . . He was the mayor back in the 50s. How can you allow a [memorial] to stand like that and you take this one away?”<sup>36</sup> If one

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<http://lakehighlands.advocatemag.com/2017/10/councilman-mcgough-faces-constituents-angry-monument-removal/>.

<sup>33</sup>Rex Curry, “Dallas Removes Robert E. Lee Statue from City Park,” *Reuters*, September 14, 2017, accessed September 17, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-dallas-statue/dallas-removes-robert-e-lees-statue-from-city-park-idUSKCN1BQ07Z>.

<sup>34</sup>Toler, “Councilman McGough Faces Constituents.”

<sup>35</sup>Corbett Smith, “Houston, Franklin and Jefferson Are among Dallas ISD Campuses That ‘Require Further Research’ for Possible Name Changes,” *The Dallas Morning News*, September 17, 2017, accessed September 17, 2017, <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2017/09/17/sam-houston-ben-franklin-thomas-jefferson-among-dallas-isd-campuses-require-research-possible-name-changes>.

<sup>36</sup>Tanya Eiserer, “Protestors Rally against Removal of Confederate Statue in Dallas,” *WFAA.com*, September 17, 2017, accessed September 18, 2017, <http://www.wfaa.com/news/local/dallas-county/protesters-rally-against-removal-of-confederate-statue-in-dallas/475563529>.

were to make a list of all the institutions, schools, roads, and areas of Dallas that were named for known racists, confederates, and KKK members, it would be a very long list indeed. These legacies of notoriously racist public figures are worth noting, not to make an argument for name changes as a step toward racial reconciliation necessarily, but rather in setting the cultural scene in modern day Dallas—a city in which the legacy of past prejudice and oppressors is all around its residents every day. There are pervasive reminders and vestiges of racial division and systemic oppression. Just because slavery is over does not mean its disparaging ghosts do not still haunt Dallas. In 2017, a black family in Dallas might drive down a highway named in honor of a KKK leader to drop off their kids at a school that has never racially integrated and is named in honor of a Confederate general, and then go home to a neighborhood that is, and always has been, orchestrated to be homogenous, separate, and inferior to other Dallas neighborhoods that were designed for white residents.

### **The History and Persistence of Segregation in Dallas**

In 1907, the city charter of Dallas went through a revision so that it sanctioned racial segregation in schools, housing, and churches.<sup>37</sup> In 1916, Dallas became the first city in Texas to allow for racial housing segregation by law. The law forced any already homogenous neighborhood to remain that way, which created three kinds of neighborhoods in Dallas; white, black, and open—open being neighborhoods that had already been integrated—all of which were poor.<sup>38</sup>

In 1940, political scientists described Dallas as “divided into a number of areas by the Trinity River and the railroad tracks. These barriers separate Mexicans and Negroes

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<sup>37</sup>Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 169.

<sup>38</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 63.

from the whites and from one another.”<sup>39</sup> These barriers that now include large thoroughfare freeways, continue to divide and segregate Dallas seventy-five years later. Harvey J. Graff expertly describes how these discriminatory practices affected Dallas spatially.

The predominantly white population, moved by racist fears, periodically perpetrated legal and extralegal violence against people of color. Continuous domination of the polity and society by the Anglo population worked to the disadvantage of racial and ethnic minorities, especially Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Racism influences social relationships and marked spatial development throughout Dallas’s history. Social hierarchies rooted in race, ethnicity, class and gender were expressed spatially in the city’s physical development. On most measures, Dallas was—and is—one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States. . . . Discrimination pervaded city hiring policies, priorities in planning, and the provision of housing, utilities, education, and other services and collective goods.<sup>40</sup>

### **Dallas Neighborhood Segregation**

In the early and mid-twentieth century, the black and Mexican neighborhoods received poor and few city services. Many black and Mexican families lived in slums.<sup>41</sup> The first Mexicans in Dallas lived in train boxcars near the train station.<sup>42</sup> Due to limited housing options available after segregation laws were instituted, the neighborhoods became overcrowded.<sup>43</sup> In 1949, 9,459 black families lived “doubled up” with more than one family per dwelling.<sup>44</sup> Even if blacks could afford to move, however, they still faced

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<sup>39</sup>Harold A. Stone, Don Krasher Price, and Kathryn H. Meyers Stone, *City Manager Government in the United States: A Review after Twenty-Five Years* (Chicago: Published for the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council by Public Administration Service, 1940).

<sup>40</sup>Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 158.

<sup>41</sup>Dennis Hoover, “Blight 1: Slum Shows Other Face of Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 14, 1962.

<sup>42</sup>Glenn M. Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas: Four Decades in the Federal Courts* (Dallas: Three Forks, 1995), 4.

<sup>43</sup>Richard Moorehead, “Crisis Seen Over Negro Housing,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 30, 1954.

<sup>44</sup>William H. Wilson, *Hamilton Park: A Planned Black Community in Dallas* (Baltimore:

the possibility of white backlash and violence. In the late 1920s and again in the 1940s and early 1950s, the continuation of segregation in the city was “enforced” by whites that burned, stoned, and bombed the homes of blacks who tried to move into mostly white neighborhoods.<sup>45</sup> In 1950, some whites had begun to threaten and demonstrate against realtors who were showing blacks homes in their neighborhoods.<sup>46</sup>

This violence and division was not surprising in a city that, in the 1920s, boasted the largest chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in the nation with more than 13,000 members.<sup>47</sup> In the spring of 1922 alone, the Klan was attributed with 86 bloody floggings in their designated “whipping meadow” along the Trinity River.<sup>48</sup> In 1922, the Dallas Police Commissioner, among many other city and business elites, was a member of the Dallas Klan Executive Committee.<sup>49</sup> Though the Dallas KKK’s membership would diminish significantly by 1930, the historians contest that the “Klan profoundly shaped Dallas racial beliefs for decades to come.”<sup>50</sup> Dallas could, for the most part, ignore the black housing crisis as long as it did not “tarnish” the city’s image of “commercial prosperity,” and since any “overt” conflict between whites and blacks would threaten the “cultivated view” of Dallas they had worked so hard to create.<sup>51</sup> Some housing solutions would have to be found to avoid negatively impacting Dallas business.

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Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 21.

<sup>45</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 63; “Howell Street Battle Reaches Truce after Negro Home Stoned,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 4, 1940; Charles Murphy, “Negro Property Made Bombing Target Again,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 2, 1951.

<sup>46</sup>Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 25.

<sup>47</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 85.

<sup>48</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 55.

<sup>49</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 85.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>51</sup>Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 11.

The Hamilton Park neighborhood is an enduring example of a prototypically prejudiced Dallas solution to both the violent conflicts over housing in South Dallas and the issues of overcrowding in black neighborhoods.<sup>52</sup> Hamilton Park was a ghetto<sup>53</sup> solution proposed by white city leadership<sup>54</sup> to give black families a place of their own far enough away from whites that the two would remain peacefully segregated. The isolated neighborhood of Hamilton Park had to be far from whites but close enough to where whites needed the black citizens to work.<sup>55</sup> Hamilton Park was “designed in part to slow the expansion of blacks into white neighborhoods, if not to thwart it altogether.”<sup>56</sup> By the time it was completed in the mid-1950s, however, whites had conceded South Dallas to the black population thereby “solving” by the means of “white-flight,” much of the crisis that Hamilton Park was designed to alleviate. At the times of the bombings in South Dallas there were 22,281 whites in residence and ten years later only 1,781 were left.<sup>57</sup>

In stark contrast in nearly every way to Hamilton Park but similar in its enduring homogeneity, is the wealthy white enclave, Highland Park. The Highland Park neighborhood

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<sup>52</sup>Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 28.

<sup>53</sup>Here the term *ghetto* is used in its original sense—a neighborhood that is created with specific boundaries in order to isolate a specific ethnic group. Though the term is now commonly used to describe black neighborhoods in general or poorer neighborhoods in a city, a *ghetto* was and is any area of a city created for this specific purpose of racial segregation.

<sup>54</sup>The city of Dallas was in many ways politically and philosophically run by a self-appointed group of white business men known as the Dallas Citizens Council. They selected mayors and city councilmen as well as made decisions on land use all in service to their agenda to benefit business. Ironically and deviously, more than half of these men did not even live in Dallas. They lived in Highland Park, a planned white enclave. Their decisions for the rest of the city were to benefit themselves, often to the detriment of citizens who were not white. More can be found about the Dallas Citizens Council in many of the local history books used to resource this chapter.

<sup>55</sup>Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 13.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.

began in 1907, as a “refuge from an increasingly diverse city.”<sup>58</sup> It was a “sundown town,” allowing no people of color to live within its boundaries, keeping it intentionally all-white, and implying with the term that any person, non-white, found in the city after dark would pay a hefty price at the hands of the law or of the citizens.<sup>59</sup> Though no blacks or Mexicans were allowed to own homes, some of the wealthy white residents did have live-in maids and gardeners who were black or Hispanic. The children of their live-in servants were allowed to attend schools outside Highland Park with tuition paid for by the community—that was, until the *Brown v. The Board of Education* Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools.<sup>60</sup> In 1954, Highland Park alderman C. K. Bullard suggested the firing of all live-in servants to avoid having to racially integrate Highland Park schools.<sup>61</sup>

The first African American student would not attend Highland Park High School until twenty years after *Brown*, in 1974. James Lockhart endured racial slurs and harassment after his transfer into the school to complete his senior year.<sup>62</sup> It was not until 2003, right around 100 years after the town began, that Highland Park had its first non-white homeowner.<sup>63</sup> Across town in Hamilton Park, segregation has also thrived. Though there has been an influx of Hispanic families, nearly 65 years later, Hamilton Park remains almost entirely free of white residents.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 64.

<sup>59</sup>James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>61</sup>“Segregation Pondered by Park Cities,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 8, 1954.

<sup>62</sup>Loewen, *Sundown Towns*, 403.

<sup>63</sup>Mark Miller, “American Postcard: At Last,” *Newsweek*, June 3, 2003, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/american-postcard-last-137765>.

<sup>64</sup>“The Racial Dot Map: One Dot Per Person for the Entire U.S.,” accessed December 8, 2016, <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/DotMap/>.



Though Hamilton and Highland Park were planned from their inception to be reserved for their respective races so they could live separately, there are more insidious methods with which the government and financiers ensured the enduring ethnic estrangement seen in Dallas today. Dallas thoroughly participated in and practiced redlining, which *D Magazine* describes in Dallas as spreading “throughout the mortgage industry and beyond, preventing investment in black neighborhoods and reinforcing a segregated, unequal society. Redlining was made illegal by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, but its effects linger.”<sup>65</sup> Through the recent digitizing of 1937 Dallas redlining maps,<sup>66</sup> it is clear how past intentional discriminatory lending practices have continued to reinforce segregation and inequality.<sup>67</sup> A 2015 Pew Research study found that in Dallas

there [are] clear divisions between low-income neighborhoods and middle- and upper-income areas, as well as divisions along racial lines. . . . Of the 306 majority lower-income census tracts in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, 83% are predominantly non-white. Meanwhile, 95% of the 108 majority upper-income tracts are predominantly non-Hispanic white.<sup>68</sup>

Dallas is one of sixteen “hypersegregated”<sup>69</sup> cities in the nation.<sup>70</sup> In Dallas, redlining has

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<sup>65</sup>Alex Macon, “New Maps Show Consequences of Redlining in Dallas,” *D Magazine*, August 16, 2017, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://www.dmagazine.com/frontburner/2017/08/redlining-dallas-maps/>.

<sup>66</sup>Leah Binkovitz, “Redlining’s Enduring Legacy,” *The Urban Edge*, August 9, 2017, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://urbanedge.blogs.rice.edu/2017/08/09/redlinings-enduring-legacy/#.WcEwOXd97BL>.

<sup>67</sup>Macon, “New Maps Show Consequences.”

<sup>68</sup>Timmy Huynh and Lauren Kent, “In Greater Dallas Area, Segregation by Income and Race,” Pew Research Center, June 29, 2015, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/29/in-greater-dallas-area-segregation-by-income-and-race/>.

<sup>69</sup>Douglas S. Massey describes “hypersegregation” as any community that scores high in multiple dimensions of the segregation of blacks from whites in a city. He lists five dimensions, all of which Dallas scores high on making it a hypersegregated city. The five dimensions are neighborhood unevenness, neighborhood isolation, tightly clustered neighborhoods, neighborhoods concentrated in a small area, and neighborhoods centralized around the urban core. Douglas S. Massey, *American Apartheid: Housing Segregation and Persistent Urban Poverty* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, 1994), 74-76.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*

negatively impacted non-white life spans, infant mortality rates, exposure to danger and crime for minorities, and increased the racial wealth gap.<sup>71</sup> According to the Pew Research Center, in addition to the quality of the neighborhoods, Hispanic and black families are “concentrated in the neighborhoods in Dallas that have the fewest commercial and city services, the worst transportation and the worst schools”<sup>72</sup> The demographics and history of those schools is one of the clearest indicators of the opportunity gaps created by segregation.

### **Dallas School Segregation**

When Dallas public schools began in 1884, there were four white schools and two “colored” schools.<sup>73</sup> The now arts magnet high school, Booker T. Washington High, was originally opened as The Dallas Colored High School in 1892.<sup>74</sup> “By the 1930s Booker T. Washington High School held 1,664 students on a campus meant to hold only 600,” which led the school to educate freshman and sophomores for one half of the day and juniors and seniors the other half.<sup>75</sup> This meant that black students were receiving only half of a school day to every full day of school their white counterparts were getting at white schools.

Overcrowding was far from the only display of racial inequity in Dallas education. In 1927, a Dallas School Board-approved textbook explained that the non-white races made such a small impact on modern civilization that their contributions were not

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<sup>71</sup>Kirwan Institute, “Redlining Dallas: How Past Policies Shape Current Inequalities,” July 8, 2015, accessed December 8, 2016, [http://www.dallasfacesrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015\\_07\\_08.-Redlining-Dallas.-Kirwan-Institute-Presentation..pdf](http://www.dallasfacesrace.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015_07_08.-Redlining-Dallas.-Kirwan-Institute-Presentation..pdf).

<sup>72</sup>Huynh and Kent, “In Greater Dallas Area, Segregation by Income and Race.”

<sup>73</sup>Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 2.

<sup>74</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 109.

<sup>75</sup>Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 70.

worth mentioning. It also attested that the dark skin of blacks reflected a darker mind. Another textbook touted the “White Man’s Burden” to care for these lesser races by allowing them “the privilege of life under white civilization.”<sup>76</sup>

As for Mexican-Americans in Dallas public schools, though there was no mention of the atrocities committed against Mexican Americans by Anglo ancestors, school children were taught that the Alamo was a slaughter of white men who had surrendered only to fall prey to the murderous hands of barbaric Mexicans.<sup>77</sup> In addition, “the Texas legislature in 1918 passed an English only law that banned any school employee from using Spanish on school grounds and made it a criminal offense to teach in any language other than English.”<sup>78</sup> Not only was the quality of education disparate between races, but the curriculum itself taught the promotion of the white race as did the language in which it was taught.

The Texas Constitution of 1876, required a separation of races in schools. This law would remain on the books for the next almost one hundred years.<sup>79</sup> In 1954, the Supreme Court decided in *Brown v. The Board of Education* that “racial discrimination in public education was unconstitutional and all provisions of federal, state or local law requiring or permitting such discrimination must yield to this principle.”<sup>80</sup> DISD’s drive to desegregate was far from immediate. Two years later black parents were still being turned away from enrolling in white schools. Dallas created a plan to slowly integrate the schools with “token” desegregation of a few families at very few schools. At that time, Dallas

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<sup>76</sup>Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 67.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>79</sup>Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 2.

<sup>80</sup>*Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954).

ISD was about 80 percent white.<sup>81</sup> Dallas was trying to do the bare minimum to obey the law while remaining segregated. At the same time, they were attesting that they were moving toward full compliance with the law requiring integration.<sup>82</sup>

Despite its lip service to integrating schools, after nearly twenty years, Dallas was so slow and resistant both in its leadership and in those enrolling parents that the courts had to intervene in order to force Dallas ISD to desegregate their dual system. A system of busing was instituted that would bus white students to black schools and black students to white schools. While the blacks who were enrolled in white schools were willing to be bused, parents of white students refused to send their children to black schools.<sup>83</sup> In 1971, only 65 of the 986 white students assigned to be bused to black schools showed up for the first week of class.<sup>84</sup> These white students who were disappearing from the district were some of the first significant signs of white flight—white families moving out of the city in order to avoid being in close proximity, at home or at school, to non-white families.

By 1968, white enrollment in DISD had dropped by 31 percent with an estimated 40 percent of white students moving to the suburbs of Plano, Richardson, Lewisville, Duncanville, and Garland.<sup>85</sup> Dallas's plans for integrating the various races in schools continued to fail repeatedly. Federal judges addressed it for decades and instead of a more racially-diverse school system, schools that were mostly black or Hispanic

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<sup>81</sup>Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 25.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

remained that way and schools that had been white saw huge declines in white enrollment as families moved away refusing to be a party to integration.<sup>86</sup>

In 1994, forty years after *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, a judge declared Dallas ISD finally desegregated, not because it had successfully integrated its schools—it has never actually achieved that—but rather because all that could be done had been done to remove discrimination from its policies, according to the judge. Although there was still a significant achievement gap between white and minority students, they could not connect it directly to discriminatory practices in the school district.<sup>87</sup> In 2016, Dallas ISD was 70 percent Hispanic, 23 percent black, and less than 5 percent white.<sup>88</sup> Comparing that to the demographics of the city of Dallas population itself overall, which was at the same time 42 percent Hispanic, 30 percent white, and 25 percent African-American,<sup>89</sup> it is clear that Dallas ISD had never integrated, it was simply abandoned by the white families who either fled to the suburbs or took their kids from the public school system to educate them at home or in private school, thereby achieving a new form of separate, unequal education. That lack of integration in schools endures. Any church strategy attempting to address racial divides must take into consideration the enduring divides pervading in Dallas schools, but the churches must also consider their own history of contributing to ethnic division.

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<sup>86</sup>Linden, *Desegregating Schools in Dallas*, 163.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>88</sup>Dallas Independent School District, “2016.2017 Facts,” August 2016, accessed January 10, 2018, <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/2609>.

<sup>89</sup>Dallas City Hall, “Mayor’s Taskforce on Poverty,” September 7, 2016, accessed January 10, 2018, [http://dallascityhall.com/government/Council%20Meeting%20Documents/hsn\\_1\\_mayors-task-force-on-poverty-combined\\_080717\(2\).pdf](http://dallascityhall.com/government/Council%20Meeting%20Documents/hsn_1_mayors-task-force-on-poverty-combined_080717(2).pdf).

## Dallas Church Segregation

Baptist churches in Dallas have a long history of contributing to divisive diatribes and overtly racist perspectives that have led the way for other churches who wish to remain racially segregated across the nation. In 2017, First Baptist Dallas received national attention for its pastor Robert Jeffress's unabashed support of President Trump and several of his policies that many consider racist, particularly Jeffress's and Trump's perceived shared "deep antipathy toward Muslims."<sup>90</sup> Jeffress sees himself as Trump's "most vocal and visible evangelical spokesman" and has been pushing the boundaries of how a church speaks into the political landscape in America.<sup>91</sup> In discussions with the *Huffington Post* about Trump's banning certain nations and ethnic groups from entering America, Jeffress stated, "While Scripture commands individual Christians and churches to show mercy to those in need, the Bible never calls on government to act as a Good Samaritan."<sup>92</sup> It is an incredibly dangerous distinction for a pastor to make to say that individuals are to love their neighbor but to excuse the institutional systems from having to do the same. These words can easily be interpreted as a justification for institutional systems of disadvantage and corporate discriminatory practices. The exact oppressive governmental systems that racial reconciliation in a church should seek to overcome, Jeffress seems to be justifying.

Jeffress is just the latest manifestation of a longer legacy of overtly discriminatory preaching at First Baptist Dallas and by Baptist pastors in Dallas in general.

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<sup>90</sup>Peter Beinart, "Trump's Celebration of an Exclusionary Vision of Freedom," *The Atlantic*, July 3, 2017, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/trumps-celebration-of-an-exclusionary-vision-of-freedom/532575/>.

<sup>91</sup>Emma Green, "One Way We Push Back Against Evil Is through the Leaders We Elect." *The Atlantic*, October 28, 2017, accessed November 02, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/robert-jeffress-trump/544196/>.

<sup>92</sup>Carol Kuruvilla, "Trump Evangelical Adviser: 'God Is Not an Open Borders Guy,'" *The Huffington Post*, September 14, 2017, accessed November 02, 2017, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/robert-jeffress-trump-god-open-borders\\_us\\_59bac8b1e4b02da0e1402fda](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/robert-jeffress-trump-god-open-borders_us_59bac8b1e4b02da0e1402fda).

In 1956, when First Baptist Dallas was the biggest Baptist congregation in the country, its then pastor W. A. Criswell delivered two segregationist speeches that surprised even those in his denomination for their overtly racist philosophies. In a speech at a South Carolina Evangelism Conference, he suggested that the best thing for white Christians to do for blacks was to force isolation on them. Criswell stated, “It is a kindness and goodness to them that they go to a colored church, while we seek to develop our own people in our own church.”<sup>93</sup> In a time when desegregation had just become the law of the land, Criswell suggested that those who obeyed these new laws were “bad citizens and bad churchmen.”<sup>94</sup>

Four years later, Martin Luther King, Jr., stood in stark contrast to Criswell as he described Sunday mornings as one of the “most segregated hours in America” and stated that any church that “has a segregated body and stands against integration is standing against the spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ and it fails to be a true witness.”<sup>95</sup> While many national Baptist figures, including Billy Graham, also spoke out to condemn Criswell’s suggestions, other local prominent Baptist voices in Dallas spoke out in aligning affirmation.

Around the same time Reverend Earl Anderson of Munger Place Baptist Church asked for 20,000 whites in Dallas to be “openly committed to the principle of purity of the races.”<sup>96</sup> He also stated, “Negroes who understand God’s teachings don’t want to mix with us . . . they have as much right to a pure race as we do. . . . Negroes

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<sup>93</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 92.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Most Segregated Hour in America—Martin Luther King, Jr.,” YouTube, April 29, 2014, accessed November 2, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q881g1L\\_d8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1q881g1L_d8).

<sup>96</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 108.

believe mixing races is disobedient to the word of God.”<sup>97</sup> Similarly, his contemporary Reverend Ralph H. Langley of Wilshire Baptist in East Dallas said around the same time,

At the time, I am in agreement with the Supreme Court’s decision that the Negro should have first-class citizenship rights. But I feel separate and equal facilities for the Negro satisfies this aim, and that it will be many, many years before this section of the country will be ready for complete integration.<sup>98</sup>

While his affirmation of segregation is grievous to the Christian who understands the sin of partiality propagated by these sentiments, it seems that his prophetic word about the likelihood of segregation’s survival in Dallas for years to come was sadly all too accurate.

A 2015 poll completed by LifeWay research showed that “among 1,000 American adults, 82 percent say diversity is good for the country—but not necessarily in their church pews.”<sup>99</sup> Even sixty years after Criswell’s speeches, which would likely be even more publicly inflammatory today, Langley’s prediction that the church would resist integration remains true. A 2014 poll showed that 86 percent of churches in America, nearly nine in ten, had congregations made up of one predominant ethnic group.<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, instead of being agents of change that led to reconciliation and cooperation between races, churches, particularly in Dallas, have continued to be one the most segregated sectors of public life. In its endeavor to become part of the solution rather than a perpetuator of the problem, TVC must foster and follow an effective strategy for overcoming racial divides.

TVC has many strategic, but not maximized, ministry and church relationships close to those who have been deprived of opportunity due to these institutional prejudices

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<sup>97</sup>Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 108.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>99</sup>Cathy Lynn Grossman, “U.S. Churchgoers Still Sit in Segregated Pews, and Most Are OK with That,” *Religion News Service*, January 16, 2015, accessed November 02, 2017, <http://religionnews.com/2015/01/16/u-s-churchgoers-still-sit-segregated-pews-ok/>.

<sup>100</sup>“Americans Agree U.S. Has Come Far in Race Relations, but Has Long Way to Go,” LifeWay Research, December 16, 2014, accessed November 2, 2017, <http://lifewayresearch.com/2014/12/16/americans-agree-u-s-has-come-far-in-race-relations-but-long-way-to-go/>.



and who now live in systemically disadvantaged communities. Therefore, TVC is well positioned to lead the city in racial reconciliation for Dallas. TVC has planted an African American pastor in a predominantly African American and historically disadvantaged neighborhood in South Dallas, South Dallas Community Church, and yet we have not maximized the relationship or the story for the sake of the dream of racially reconciling our city. TVC is the largest partner financially and in volunteers for a mentoring program in that same neighborhood, Champions of Hope, which was started by TVC members. TVC has a great relationship with Jerry Wagner, the pastor of Mercy Street Church, an intentionally multi-ethnic church in historically disadvantaged West Dallas. In South and West Dallas, TVC has been heavily involved, but only at a leadership level, with Advocates for Community Transformation, who help remove drug houses and slum lords through the legal system. TVC has also been supportive of Mercy Street, a ministry that mentors kids in West Dallas. In the local neighborhood of TVC Dallas Northway, Buckner International is actively involved in Spanish ministry in ways that the TVC could easily support and augment.

TVC is planning to plant churches in Lewisville, Richardson, and East Dallas over the next few years. These communities are diversely populated with various ethnic groups and immigrant/refugee populations. The opportunities abound, but the practical vision is not codified. To pair their passion with some practice, TVC will have to leverage the relationships they have within the divided and diverse city in which they exist, to bring harmony where there are still open wounds from the barbs of prejudice and discrimination.

### **Conclusion**

In 2015, bestselling author Ta-Nehisi Coates summarized the American black experience and its results as “two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy . . . until we

reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.”<sup>101</sup> Dallas’s prejudice past cannot be denied and should not be ignored. The realities in it and from it are some of the most significant underpinnings on ongoing institutional divisions. The need for reconciliation is evident, the separations persist, and the gospel as lived out by Christ’s church should be the tool with which TVC actively pursues being part of the reconciling force in the city. Since the racial divides in the city of Dallas are deep rooted and far reaching, TVC strategy for racial reconciliation must be thorough and broad. Before forming a complete strategy, however, TVC must not only understand the essential history of its context, but also the existing disparate opinions of its people. These opinions and perspectives will be determined through focused research of distinct parties with the church body.

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<sup>101</sup>Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Best American Magazine Writing 2015*, December 31, 2015, 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND SUBSEQUENT STRATEGY

This project attempted to create an achievable plan for action pertaining to racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the diverse perspectives of the TVC members as well as the activity or inactivity of TVC's home groups in the work of racial reconciliation. Building off the foundation of the theological directive and means for racial reconciliation and then grounding that on the firm understanding of the historical context, TVC needed to implement several research tools in order to understand the perceptions of its members and leaders. Then, based off the results and findings of that research, a fully formed and well-rounded strategy was formulated and evaluated.

#### **Church Racial Reconciliation Survey**

TVC exists in a racially and socioeconomically diverse context, yet the membership and attendance does not reflect the same diversity seen in the surrounding locality. The racial diversity that does exist in the church may represent only those of minority ethnicity who are fluent, comfortable, and feel at home in a majority white culture. TVC is passionate about racial reconciliation and yet the church is mostly made up of white, middle or upper-class members. The passion concerning racial reconciliation has not translated into diverse relationships for members or for a diverse Christian gathering. It may be that the reason that more fruit has not been seen in this initiative is because of undiscovered implicit bias in the methods and philosophy of the church.

This first survey attempted to determine the correlation between ethnicity and perception on church practice and member experience at TVC.<sup>1</sup> This mixed methods study was designed to compare the perspectives of majority white members with their minority member counterparts to seek out similarities and departures that might inform the overall racial reconciliation strategy for the church.

The intent of this two-phase, concurrent mixed methods study was to understand implicit bias. The first phase was a qualitative study of issues regarding race in church practice and experience by collecting survey responses from ethnic minority and ethnic majority members. Findings from this qualitative phase were then used to test for differences of perception and experience between those members.

This research sought to answer three questions. (1) What, if any, is the relationship between race and perspective on racial reconciliation? (2) What, if any, is the relationship between race and perspective on church practice? (3) What is the homogeneity of the members' social circles?

### **Methodological Design**

To answer these research questions using mixed research methods, I surmised both quantitative research data, particularly as it pertained to demographics and racial makeup, and qualitative data ascertained from a survey tool. I surveyed a selection of both white and minority members to determine their opinions and perceptions of personal and corporate implicit bias at TVC. The participant group was from the TVC membership roll as of 2015, and was randomly selected from two populations, minority and majority ethnicity. Selecting those who would receive the survey was done by electronically randomizing the two sample groups in a Microsoft Excel. I sought at least 30 respondents from each population. This survey also gave insight into the daily interaction members

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix 2.

have with a diverse population at work, in their neighborhood, and among their closest friends by seeking quantitative data on the respondents daily social circles.

In addition to a few demographic inquiries, questions in the survey were from three different categories. Each category represents one of the research questions. The three categories are the general perspectives on race and racial reconciliation, TVC practices regarding racial reconciliation, and social circle homogeny.

Table 1. CRR survey categories

CATEGORIES	QUESTION #
Demographics of respondents	2, 3
General Perspectives on Racial Reconciliation	
Regarding the history of race relations	12, 17
Influence of the home and family on racialization	24, 38
Personal involvement in racial reconciliation	9, 14, 20, 33
General opinions on race and racism in Dallas	10, 13, 16, 37
TVC Church Practices Regarding Racial Reconciliation	
Awareness of and opinion on TVC's current strategy	7, 8, 11, 15, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36
Perspective on the diversity of TVC	18, 22, 29, 32
Comfort level with church practice	21, 30
TVC's Communication about racial reconciliation	25, 31, 34
Social Circle Homogeny	
Levels of homogeny in social circles	4, 5, 6

The first category sought to ascertain the opinions of respondents concerning their general understanding of race and racial reconciliation. Comparison were made between respondents who are majority white and those who are not. The results of this section helped determine if there is a difference of opinion between those who are majority and minority in the membership in general when it comes to race.

The second category attempted to focus specifically on the practices or potential practices of TVC when it comes to racial reconciliation. The hypothesis was that majority and minority respondents would have differing opinions when it came to their opinions on how TVC is doing in this area and what they could do better.

Lastly, the questions regarding social circle homogeneity revealed exactly how homogenous each person's social circle has become. The hypothesis is that since these respondents are members of a mostly white church, that most of the members, regardless of race, are part of a largely white, majority culture social group.

### **Findings:**

Two lists were compiled from the church database. One list was of members who identified as white on the 2015 membership renewal survey. The other list was those who identified as any race other than white on the 2015 membership renewal survey. 2015 was the most recent survey of racial demographics the church had completed, so it was the most up to date list available at the time of this project.

Using a randomized number column in Microsoft Excel, the members listed on the sheets were randomized. The first 50 members on each list were sent an email on July 24, 2017, asking them to fill out the survey, incentivizing completing it, and providing a link to the survey itself.<sup>2</sup> The recipients of the survey were blind carbon copied so that they could not see who else was receiving the invitation or reply all to other respondents. When the total respondent goal was not reached within the first week, the email was sent to the next 20 people on each list on July 31, 2017. When the desired 30 respondents had not been received by white participants by August 7, 2017, another email was sent to the next 20 randomized white members from the list. By August 14, the survey had 73 respondents, 35 white and 38 non-white, which achieved the goal of 30 respondents from each list.

### **Analyzing the Data**

Responses to each question are summarized as follows.

Question 1: "Agreement to Participate." 100 percent of respondents agreed to participate.

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<sup>2</sup>See appendix 1 for the email.

Question 2: “What is your ethnicity.” 48 percent identified as white, 25 percent as Hispanic, 14 percent as black, 11 percent as Asian, and the other 2 percent of respondents were Native American and Indian.

Question 3: “How long have you lived in Dallas or the surrounding area?” The response varied widely from three years to over thirty years.

Question 4: “Think of your ten closest friends excluding your family. How many of them are a different ethnicity than you?” Of the 38 minority respondents, 2 responded that none of them were different, as opposed to 10 respondents who stated that all 10 were different than them. Seven more said that 8 or 9 of their ten closest friends were a different ethnicity than them. Two said that 2 were different and one said that 1 was different. Of the minority respondents, 45 percent have 8 or more of their ten closest friends a different ethnicity than them. Of the 35 majority respondents, one said that 6 of their ten closest friends were of a different ethnicity and 1 said that 5 were. No white respondent listed more than 6. Ten responded that their 10 closest friends were 100 percent white. Sixteen of them said that 1 or 2 of their closest friends were not white. Of white respondents, 74 percent have 2 or less of their ten closest friends a different ethnicity than them.

Question 5: “Estimate: What percentage of your coworkers are white/non-Hispanic?” Thirteen of 38 minority respondents, or 34 percent, said that 80-100 percent of their coworkers were white. Eight estimated it was 60-80 percent. Five estimated it was 40-60 percent. Six estimated it was 20-40 percent. Six estimated it was 0-20 percent. Seven of 35 white respondents, or 20 percent, estimated that 80-100 percent of their coworkers were white. Ten estimated it was 60-80 percent. Eight estimated it was 40-60 percent. Only one person said it was 20-40 percent. Eight white respondents, or 23 percent, estimated that their coworkers were 0-20 percent white.

Question 6: “Estimate: What percentage of your neighbors are white/non-Hispanic?” Eight of 38 minority respondents, or 21 percent estimated that their

neighborhood was 80-100 percent white. Another 8 estimated it was 60-80 percent white. Eleven estimated that their neighborhood was 40-60 percent white. Only 5 estimates that their neighborhood was 0-20 percent white. Seven of 35 white respondents, or 20 percent, estimate that their neighborhood is 80-100 percent white. Nine said it was 60-80 percent white. Five said it was 40-60 percent white. Eight said their neighborhood is 0-20 percent white.

Question 7: “How did you hear about TVC’s heart for racial reconciliation?” Of the minority respondents, 76 percent heard through a sermon. One person said they had not heard. Of white respondents, 91 percent said that they heard through a sermon.

Question 8: “Are you aware of any significant institutional relationships between TVC and other churches that are not majority white?” Fifty percent of minority respondents said “no,” and the other 50 percent said “yes.” Seventy percent of white respondents said “yes” they are aware of these relationships and 30 percent said “no.”

Question 9: “What factors contributed to you living where you do (check all that apply).” Six minority and six white respondents listed “missional opportunity” as one of the reasons they chose to live where they do. That’s 12 percent, meaning that about 80 percent of members did not consider the mission of their neighborhood as they selected where to live.

Question 10: “In Dallas, racism is more of an individual issue than an institutional one.” Of minority respondents, 5.3 percent strongly agreed, 7.9 percent agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat agreed, 13.2 percent somewhat disagreed, 34.2 percent disagreed, and 23.7 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 8.6 percent agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 28.6 percent disagreed, and 14.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 11: “TVC cares about racial reconciliation.” Of minority respondents, 34.2 percent strongly agreed, 36.8 percent agreed, 21.1 percent somewhat agreed, and 7.9



percent (3 respondents) strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 37.1 percent strongly agreed, 54.3 percent agreed, and 8.6 percent somewhat agreed.

Question 12: “It would be best to move on from studying or exploring racial history since it is fraught with racial tensions.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 2.6 percent (one respondent) agreed, 0 percent somewhat agreed, 2.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 34.2 percent disagreed, and 60.5 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent (one respondent) strongly agreed, 0 percent agreed, 0 percent somewhat agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 22.9 percent disagreed, and 60 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 13: “Our country has serious race issues.” Of minority respondents, 65.8 percent strongly agreed, 23.7 percent agreed, 7.9 percent somewhat agreed, and 2.6 (one respondent) somewhat disagreed. Of white respondents, 42.9 percent strongly agreed, 37.1 percent agreed, 17.1 percent somewhat agreed, and 2.9 percent (one respondent) strongly disagreed.

Question 14: “I have an intentional, growing relationship with someone who is significantly different from me for the sake of the gospel and racial reconciliation.” Of minority respondents, 21.1 percent strongly agreed, 26.3 percent agreed, 23.7 percent somewhat agreed, 7.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 10.5 percent disagreed, and 10.7 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 11.4 percent strongly agreed, 37.1 percent agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat agreed, 8.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 28.6 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 15: “TVC’s current work for racial reconciliation is making a big difference in Dallas.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 18.4 percent agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 13.2 percent disagreed, and 13.2 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 14.3 percent agreed, 51.4 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent somewhat disagreed, 11.4 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 16: “In Dallas, being white is an advantage.” Of minority respondents, 55.3 percent strongly agreed, 23.7 percent agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat agreed, 5.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 17.1 percent strongly agreed, 37.1 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 8.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 5.7 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 17: “The history of race relations in the US has an impact on today’s race relations.” Of minority respondents, 63.2 percent strongly agreed, 28.9 percent agreed, 5.3 percent somewhat agreed, 2.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 48.6 percent strongly agreed, 40 percent agreed, 11.4 percent somewhat agreed, 0 percent somewhat disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 18: “Minority voices are well represented at TVC.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 13.2 percent agreed, 34.2 percent somewhat agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 18.4 percent disagreed, and 15.8 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 8.6 percent strongly agreed, 17.1 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent somewhat disagreed, 20 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 19: “The leadership of TVC would greatly benefit from professional diversity training.” Of minority respondents, 34.2 percent strongly agreed, 28.9 percent agreed, 26.3 percent somewhat agreed, 2.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 7.9 percent disagreed, and 2.6 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 37.1 percent agreed, 28.6 percent somewhat agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 8.6 percent disagreed, and 8.6 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 20: “I personally and actively work for racial reconciliation in Dallas.” Of minority respondents, 13.2 percent strongly agreed, 21.1 percent agreed, 26.3 percent somewhat agreed, 21.1 percent somewhat disagreed, 15.8 percent disagreed, and 2.6

percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 20 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 31.4 percent disagreed, and 14.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 21: “Aspects of the way TVC corporately worships make me feel like I might not belong here.” Of minority respondents, 5.3 percent strongly agreed, 15.8 percent agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat agreed, 5.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 31.6 percent disagreed, and 5.3 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 2.9 percent agreed, 11.4 percent somewhat agreed, 2.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 48.6 percent disagreed, and 34.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 22: “The staff and leadership of TVC adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of our church.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 18.4 percent agreed, 23.7 percent somewhat agreed, 26.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 21.1 percent disagreed, and 10.5 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 5.7 percent strongly agreed, 28.6 percent agreed, 25.7 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent somewhat disagreed, 14.3 percent disagreed, and 5.7 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 23: “TVC has a clear, well-known strategy for addressing racial reconciliation.” Of minority respondents, 2.6 percent strongly agreed, 21.1 percent agreed, 31.6 percent somewhat agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 18.4 percent disagreed, and 10.5 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 25.7 percent strongly agreed, 22.9 percent agreed, 25.7 percent somewhat agreed, 17.1 percent somewhat disagreed, 28.6 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 24: “My parents were one of the most significant influences into how I view race.” Of minority respondents, 18.4 percent strongly agreed, 36.8 percent agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat agreed, 13.2 percent somewhat disagreed, 10.5 percent disagreed, and 2.6 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 22.9 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 8.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 20 percent disagreed, and 14.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 25: “TVC staff should speak more often about racial reconciliation from the stage.” Of minority respondents, 10.5 percent strongly agreed, 26.3 percent agreed, 50 percent somewhat agreed, 13.2 percent somewhat disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 22.9 percent agreed, 42.9 percent somewhat agreed, 22.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 2.9 percent disagreed, and 8.6 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 26: “TVC is raising up ethnically diverse leaders to plant churches and lead campuses.” Of minority respondents, 7.9 percent strongly agreed, 21.1 percent agreed, 34.2 percent somewhat agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 5.3 percent disagreed, and 15.8 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 57.1 percent agreed, 28.6 percent somewhat agreed, 5.7 percent somewhat disagreed, 2.9 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 27: “It is better for TVC to provide some organized methods for attendees to form diverse relationships rather than to compel them to happen organically.” Of minority respondents, 5.3 percent strongly agreed, 26.3 percent agreed, 53.3 percent somewhat agreed, 10.5 percent somewhat disagreed, 2.6 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 20 percent agreed, 34.3 percent somewhat agreed, 20 percent somewhat disagreed, 17.1 percent disagreed, and 5.7 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 28: “Following a sermon about racial reconciliation, TVC does a good job of maximizing opportunities for follow through.” Of minority respondents, 2.6 percent strongly agreed, 13.2 percent agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat agreed, 13.2 percent somewhat disagreed, 23.7 percent disagreed, and 10.5 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 11.4 percent agreed, 40 percent somewhat agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 17.1 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 29: “Those who lead on the stage at TVC do not represent adequate diversity.” Of minority respondents, 21.1 percent strongly agreed, 15.8 percent agreed, 34.2 percent somewhat agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 10.5 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 22.9 percent agreed, 28.6 percent somewhat agreed, 17.1 percent somewhat disagreed, 28.6 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 30: “The way TVC encourages its members to talk about sin and share their personal struggles makes me feel like I might not belong here.” Of minority respondents, 2.6 percent (one respondent) strongly agreed, 2.6 percent agreed, 0 percent somewhat agreed, 0 percent somewhat disagreed, 39.5 percent disagreed, and 55.3 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 2.9 percent agreed, 0 percent somewhat agreed, 0 percent somewhat disagreed, 42.9 percent disagreed, and 54.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 31: “TVC should change their worship service ‘welcome’ to incorporate inclusive language like ‘this is a place where it’s ok to not blend in.’” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 7.9 percent agreed, 42.1 percent somewhat agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 26.3 percent disagreed, and 7.9 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 11.4 percent agreed, 28.6 percent somewhat agreed, 17.1 percent somewhat disagreed, 31.4 percent disagreed, and 11.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 32: “The staff and leadership of TVC adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of our city.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 0 percent agreed, 10.5 percent somewhat agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 18.4 percent disagreed, and 34.2 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 2.9 percent strongly agreed, 11.4 percent agreed, 22.9 percent somewhat agreed, 25.7 percent somewhat disagreed, 34.3 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 33: “I contribute to racial bias in Dallas.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 18.4 percent agreed, 26.3 percent somewhat agreed, 28.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 13.2 percent disagreed, and 13.2 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 11.4 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 8.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 40 percent disagreed, and 8.6 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 34: “TVC should tell more ‘stories’ highlighting racial reconciliation.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 39.5 percent agreed, 31.6 percent somewhat agreed, 7.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 2.6 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 54.3 percent agreed, 37.1 percent somewhat agreed, 2.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 35: “The TVC strategy for starting campuses and planting churches displays an obvious commitment to racial reconciliation.” Of minority respondents, 10.5 percent strongly agreed, 34.2 percent agreed, 18.4 percent somewhat agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 10.5 percent disagreed, and 10.5 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 34.3 percent agreed, 25.7 percent somewhat agreed, 17.1 percent somewhat disagreed, 20 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 36: “It is better for TVC to compel members to form diverse relationships organically rather than to programmatically organize them.” Of minority respondents, 0 percent strongly agreed, 13.2 percent agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat agreed, 36.8 percent somewhat disagreed, 13.2 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 5.7 percent strongly agreed, 20 percent agreed, 40 percent somewhat agreed, 22.9 percent somewhat disagreed, 11.4 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 37: “My race is an important aspect of my identity.” Of minority respondents, 28.9 percent strongly agreed, 39.5 percent agreed, 15.8 percent somewhat agreed, 2.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 10.5 percent disagreed, and 2.6 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 5.7 percent strongly agreed, 20 percent agreed, 25.7 percent somewhat agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat disagreed, 11.4 percent disagreed, and 5.7 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 38: “I believe most bias is learned in the home.” Of minority respondents, 18.4 percent strongly agreed, 26.3 percent agreed, 47.4 percent somewhat agreed, 2.6 percent somewhat disagreed, 5.3 percent disagreed, and 0 percent strongly disagreed. Of white respondents, 11.4 percent strongly agreed, 28.6 percent agreed, 31.4 percent somewhat agreed, 14.3 percent somewhat disagreed, 11.4 percent disagreed, and 2.9 percent strongly disagreed.

### **Interpreting the Data**

In the subcategories of questions in the General Perspectives on Racial Reconciliation, there were significant differences between white and minority respondents. Those subcategories are regarding history, home life, personal involvement and general perspectives.

Questions 12 and 17 specifically address the need or applicability of the history of race relations. The response to question 12 had extremely similar responses across the two samples. While one outlier agreed in each sample group, one white and one minority respondent, 60 percent of each population strongly disagreed. Question 17 was similarly unified across racial lines and this time even without the outliers who broke from the trend. These two responses demonstrate that history is an important aspect of this discussion. Therefore, according to the respondents, it will be essential that knowing and understanding our history is part of the strategic plan.

Questions 24 and 38 address the influence of the family and upbringing in forming views on race. In question 24, about 70 percent of minority respondents were on

the “agree” end of the spectrum, saying that their parents were one the most important influences on how they view race. That is compared to only around half of white respondents who answered the same way. Some interesting follow-up questions might have been exploratory questions to see if the parents of respondents currently held different views than the members. However, when asked if bias was learned at home in question 38, over 70 percent of white respondents agreed, so while only half of the white members thought their own home was one of their greatest influences, almost three quarters of them believe that the home is where most bias is learned. Of the minority respondents, 92 percent agreed, at least somewhat, that the home was the primary environment for learning bias. Most members agree that their home, and by extension their parenting, will make a big impact on a child’s view on race, though it seems from these questions that the minority members are more likely to believe that what they teach or learn on this issue in the home will make a difference and therefore would be more likely to be motivated should the church create a home resource.

When it comes to the personal involvement of respondents in initiatives pertaining to racial reconciliation, the survey showed some of the surprising results. While many respondents responded to question 14 and 20 with answers that indicated they were personally pursuing avenues for racial reconciliation, a significant portion of the membership reported not being personally involved, even relationally. About one third of the membership admits they do not have any relationship with someone of another race than them for the sake of working toward racial reconciliation. This is one of the only action steps the church has asked for as a next step from preaching on this topic. Even more alarming is that in a more clearly stated question about this initiative, question 20, about half of respondents disagreed at least somewhat that they are active in addressing racial reconciliation. At the same time, about 60 percent of respondents disagreed, at least somewhat, that they contribute to racial bias in our city (question 33). In other words, about half are not contributing at all to a solution and yet more than half do not even



believe they are part of the problem. That is made even more interesting when one sees that over 80 percent of whites responded to question 16 saying that being white was itself an advantage in the city of Dallas. Many white respondents that believe being white is an advantage also believe that they do not contribute to racial bias and many of them do not contribute to a solution even though all but 1 white respondent at least somewhat agreed that our nation has serious race issues (question 13). Nearly 100 percent of the members believe there is a serious racial division problem, over 60 percent do not believe they are contributing to the problem—this even though nearly 90 percent of white respondents at least somewhat agree that being white is an advantage they have in Dallas, and around 50 percent of all respondents admit that they are also not part of actively seeking a solution.

When it comes to members' perspectives on the current strategy as a church in addressing these issues, there were several interesting disparities to take note of in the responses. The subcategories of this section surrounded the diversity of TVC, comfort level with church practice, communication of this philosophy, and opinions about current practices.

The surprising nature of the members responses to questions 22, 29, and 32 about the diversity of leadership at TVC was not necessarily the disparate responses between races, but more the fact that there was such a range of responses. It was expected that there would be a much clearer feeling from members that they felt TVC did not adequately reflect the diversity hoped for, which certainly was a true feeling for some respondents, but it was also clear that many members from both sample groups feel TVC's leadership is adequately diverse.

Question 21 about the comfort level of members with the way TVC worships brought one of the most disparate responses from the membership. While over 80 percent of white respondents reported disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the way TVC corporately worships makes them feel like they might not belong in this church, just less than half of that percentage of minority respondents felt the same way. One can extrapolate

that if a member is white, then the member is about twice as likely to feel comfortable with worship at TVC than if the member is a minority member. In fact, 40 percent of minority members responded at least somewhat agreeing that worship made them feel like they might not belong. Compare that to around 14 percent of white members and one can see that the way TVC worships is much more appealing or comforting to white members than to minority members.

Question 25 had a similarly fascinating disparity between minority and white members. While 10 percent of minority members strongly agreed that TVC should talk more about racial reconciliation from the stage, 0 white members gave the same response. Where 13 percent of minority members somewhat disagreed with the need for more discussion and 0 disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, more than 33 percent of white respondents at least somewhat disagreed with this sentiment to talk more about this, 8.6 percent of which strongly disagreed. Minority members are much more interested than white members in having increased discussions about racial reconciliation initiated on the stage. Shockingly over 90 percent of white respondents agreed at least somewhat that TVC should tell more stories highlighting racial reconciliation (question 34).

When question 23 stated that TVC has a well known and clear strategy, 2.6 percent of minority members strongly agreed. Comparing that with 25.7 percent of white members and it can be taken by implication that the majority culture of TVC feels much more strongly that the current strategy is clear and well known. Since TVC does not even have a codified, repeatable strategy, it is surprising that anyone agreed with this statement, let alone strongly.

The survey also revealed some interesting differences and similarities between minority member and white member social circles. Question 4, 5, and 6 sought to measure the level of homogeneity members' experience among their closest friends, in their neighborhood, and at work.

While question 5 revealed that whether someone is a minority member or a white member, members work in a wide range of varying levels of diversity, question 6 showed that about 40 percent of the membership, regardless of race, lives in a neighborhood that is at least 60 percent white. What was most surprising in this subcategory was the diversity or lack thereof in the members closest friend group. Question 4 revealed that 74 percent of white respondents have 2 or less of their ten closest friends a different ethnicity than them, while 45 percent of minority respondents have 8 or more of their ten closest friends a different ethnicity than them. Minority members of TVC are more likely to be the minority even among their ten closest friends. Only 1 white member would be in the technical minority if in a room with their ten of their closest friends. Those minority members who attend TVC are generally accustomed to being in the racial minority, even among their closest friends, while their white counterparts are in largely homogenous white friend groups.

### **Survey Conclusion**

The research demonstrated in several ways that there is a disparity between minority and majority ethnic group opinions and experiences at TVC. With the information that has been collected, TVC will be able to address educationally and strategically where the membership lacks understanding or lacks follow through on the directives they have already received. The survey itself demonstrated in and of itself that there is division of viewpoints among the membership along racial lines. This division was amplified by the Local Mission Home Group Survey since, according to the current strategy, local mission, would address neighborhood injustices, divisions, and disparity, falls on the shoulders of home group leaders to implement and pursue.

### **Local Mission Home Group Survey**

TVC's strategy for addressing the needs of neighborhoods, both physical and spiritual, is completed through local mission. Local missions efforts, if they happen at all,

are expected to be organically organized by individual home group leaders within individual communities. The theological and historical context of racial division that was established in chapters 3 and 4 of this project, clearly demonstrates the necessity for racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas. It is logical to expect to see a church that declares concern about racial reconciliation which exists in a city that desperately needs racial reconciliation, give great efforts to confirm that reconciliation is being addressed through local mission. Since local mission happens in the context of home groups, then home groups of TVC should be the front lines of confronting these disparities.

This second survey attempts to answer two questions.<sup>3</sup> First, are the home groups of TVC thinking about, talking about, and active in pursuing racial reconciliation through local mission? Second, do the home group leaders of TVC understand their role in local mission and where it sits in the overall organization and mission of the church?

### **Methodological Design**

To answer these research questions, I surveyed home group leaders of TVC. The participant group came from the database of all home group leaders actively leading a group. This may mean that a home group is represented more than once in the data since some groups are led by couples and many by multiple leaders.

In addition to a few demographic inquiries, questions in the survey came from two main categories. Each category represented one of the research questions. The two categories are (1) the active participation of the leader and group in racial reconciliation and local mission, and (2) the understanding of the vision and expectation of implementing the overall vision of TVC through group ministry.

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<sup>3</sup>See appendix 4.

Table 2. LMHG survey categories

CATEGORIES	QUESTION #
Demographics of respondents	1, 2
Group participation in racial reconciliation and local mission	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
TVC vision and organizational understanding	3, 4, 5, 6, 14

The first category sought to ascertain the level to which the work of racial reconciliation is already understood and taking place at the group level. The results of this section determined if specific training or vision casting needed to be done with the group leaders. In addition, it assisted in determining if the expectations and onus of local mission strategy and implementation is in need of restructuring.

The second category sought to ascertain whether the home group leaders feel like their place in the organization, as well as the mission of their group, is clear. Home group leaders have been given many and various tasks over the years and it has made the structure and expectations of the groups' ministry complicated. The results of this section determined if the staff of the church and its leadership structure was sufficiently and efficiently deployed to accomplish the mission of the church.

The list of home group leaders is kept updated and maintained by the TVC groups staff. One-hundred percent of those leaders received an email invitation to take the survey on October 30, 2017.<sup>4</sup> The total equaled 283 emails sent. In total, 149 leaders responded yielding a 53 percent response rate.

### **Analyzing the Data**

Responses to each question are summarized in this section

“Agreement to Participate.” 100 percent of respondents agreed to participate.

Question 1: “How long have you been a Home Group Leader?” The responses were 58 percent for two years or less, 35 percent for three to five years, and 7.4 percent for five to eight years.

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<sup>4</sup>See appendix 3.

Question 2: “What is your ethnicity?” Of the respondents, 92 percent were white, 4 percent, or 6 leaders, were Hispanic, 3.4 percent, or 4 leaders, were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 leader identified as African/Mexican American.

Question 3: “If you wanted to know more about local missions in Dallas, who would you ask?” Of the respondents, 49 percent said a Groups Minister, 14.4 percent said Groups Coach, 13.7 percent said a Missions Minister, and 23 percent said someone else on staff or an elder or deacon.

Question 4: “TVC has a clear, easily repeatable vision for local mission.” Of the respondents, 8.2 percent strongly agreed, 34.7 percent agreed, 32.7 percent agreed somewhat, 12.2 percent disagreed somewhat, 10.9 percent disagreed, and 1.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 5: “Better local missions would have a huge impact on the life of my Home Group and the community in which we gather.” Of the respondents, 15.4 percent strongly agreed, 43 percent agreed, 32.9 percent agreed somewhat, 3.4 percent disagreed somewhat, 4 percent disagreed, and 1.3 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 6: “Home Group is so busy, personally and/or collectively, that adding local missions to the Group agenda feels overwhelming.” Of the respondents, 6 percent strongly agreed, 20.1 percent agreed, 36.9 percent agreed somewhat, 15.4 percent disagreed somewhat, 18.1 percent disagreed, and 3.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 7: “My Home Group serves together on a regular basis.” Of the respondents, 2 percent strongly agreed, 4 percent agreed, 23.5 percent agreed somewhat, 15.4 percent disagreed somewhat, 39.6 percent disagreed, and 15.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 8: “My Home Group has had conversations about racial reconciliation.” Of the respondents, 16.8 percent strongly agreed, 28.2 percent agreed, 26.8 percent agreed somewhat, 9.4 percent disagreed somewhat, 14.8 percent disagreed, and 4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 9: “My Home group has a good understanding of the history and demographics of the community where the group meets.” Of the respondents, 1.3 percent strongly agreed, 16.1 percent agreed, 26.2 percent agreed somewhat, 4.2 percent disagreed somewhat, 4.8 percent disagreed, and 7.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 10: “The diversity of my Home Group adequately represents the diversity of the neighborhood in which we gather.” Of the respondents, 2 percent strongly agreed, 6.8 percent agreed, 20.1 percent agreed somewhat, 18.8 percent disagreed somewhat, 26.2 percent disagreed, and 16.1 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 11: “It would be unusual for an unbeliever to come to a gathering or event with my Home Group.” Of the respondents, 5.4 percent strongly agreed, 27.5 percent agreed, 22.8 percent agreed somewhat, 18.1 percent disagreed somewhat, 20.8 percent disagreed, and 5.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 12: “My Home Group intentionally pursues racial reconciliation through local missions.” Of the respondents, 1.3 percent strongly agreed, 4.7 percent agreed, 18.8 percent agreed somewhat, 22.1 percent disagreed somewhat, 43.6 percent disagreed, and 9.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 13: “My home group intentionally seeks out and welcomes those who are ethnically different from the majority of our group.” Of the respondents, 7.4 percent strongly agreed, 20.8 percent agreed, 20.1 percent agreed somewhat, 26.8 percent disagreed somewhat, 21.5 percent disagreed, and 3.4 percent strongly disagreed.

Question 14: “It would greatly benefit my Home Group if TVC were to hire a Local Missions Minister.” Of the respondents, 25 percent strongly agreed, 29.1 percent agreed, 37.2 percent agreed somewhat, 10.1 percent disagreed somewhat, 5.4 percent disagreed, and 1.4 percent strongly disagreed.

### **Interpreting the Data**

Several questions portrayed interesting disparate spectrums of understanding across the home group leaders. Though there is a surprising level of diversity of opinion

among the various leaders, there is simultaneously a surprising lack of diversity ethnically among the leaders.

Of the 149 respondents, almost 60 percent have been leaders for less than two years. This means that there has been very little time for assumed mission drift should they have been adequately trained to orchestrate and pursue local missions through their group. If they had been leaders for many years, it would be reasonable to assume that they would have drifted from and neglected doing some of the harder aspects of their position as leaders.

Outside the agreement to participate, the highest unified response to any one question was that of ethnicity of the leaders. Over 90 percent and close to 95 percent of the respondents are white. The congregation at TVC Dallas is majority white and the leadership is even more so, this reflects the 100 percent white eldership mentioned earlier as well. An important aspect of the strategy may be determining whether it is better to diversify staffing and eldership at the top or raise up diverse leaders to lead home groups, or both, as important first steps.

When it comes to having local missions on the agenda for the group, over 60 percent of home group leaders reported, at least somewhat, that it feels overwhelming to add local missions to what they are doing already. This sentiment from question 6 is reflected in the apparent lack of action evident in other questions. In question 7, only 9 percent of groups agreed or agreed strongly that they serve together on a regular basis with over 60 percent disagreeing. These questions leave off the specificity of racial reconciliation, but make it clear that if local missions is a way in which a group of people can address systemic issues in the city of Dallas and home groups is the mechanism by which those local missions will take place, almost no one is doing it. This is despite the fact that 75 percent agree at least somewhat that the vision for local mission at TVC is clear (question 4) and 90 percent of leaders agree at least somewhat that better local



mission would have a huge impact on the home group and the community in which they gather (question 5).

When it comes to racial reconciliation specifically, question 10 reveals that only 20 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that their home group adequately reflects the diversity of the neighborhood in which they gather. Judging by the homogeneity of the leadership of the groups one can take this mean that, more than likely, 80 percent of groups at TVC Dallas self-identify as whiter than the neighborhood in which they gather. Only 18 percent of group leaders report that they either agree or strongly agree that their group understands well the history and demographics of their neighborhood.

That lack of diversity, lack of understanding, and lack of action is especially surprising considering that question 8 shows that more than 70 percent of groups report having talked about racial reconciliation specifically. This is likely a symptom in microcosm of the entire church in which conversation takes place but is seldom coupled with action, action which might take place should the vision be coupled with a strategy. Only 9 percent of group leaders agree or strongly agree that their group has intentionally sought racial reconciliation through local mission together.

When it comes to welcoming the unbeliever and the ethnically different into their group, the leaders are more evenly split. For question 13, about 50 percent report that they at least somewhat seek to invite and welcome those who are ethnically different than the ethnic majority of the group. Similarly, in question 11, leaders report that about half the groups would at least somewhat agree that it is not unusual for an unbeliever to join them at an event.

As it pertains to how TVC oversees and staffs for local missions, the survey reveals a need for a clarity and a potential desire and need for staffing. According to question 3, less than half of the home group leaders would go to a home group minister/pastor in order to know more about local missions in Dallas. Around 85 percent of leaders agreed at least somewhat that it would benefit their group to have a designated staff person overseeing local missions in Dallas.

## **Survey Conclusion**

TVC has obviously been unsuccessful at raising up and deploying diverse leaders to lead home groups as well as to reflect the neighborhoods in which they gather. In a city where housing, schools, and churches have been segregated for so long, it is going to be essential that TVC goes beyond talking about a passion for breaking down divisions and starts to couple that rhetoric with action—for home group ministers to raise up diverse leaders, for home groups to learn their neighborhoods and reach and welcome those from diverse backgrounds. These changes will not happen organically or without intention. The level of change required just to diversify, let alone address systemic injustices we may not even be aware of if we are not hearing diverse perspectives, requires genuine love of all people and intentionality at every level of the institution.

### **A Racial Reconciliation Strategy for Dallas and TVC**

A strategic plan begins with a thorough understanding of TVC's context. The first three and a half chapters have served this purpose. The context that TVC finds itself contextually, historically, and theologically raises the issues and questions that the strategy must address and answer; mainly, how can TVC take practical action steps as an institution and a gathered group of individuals to address the racial divides of the context. Now that the need has been established, there must be a vision for going forward. A team of two Dallas elders and two non-white Dallas deacons evaluated this vision.

The vision that much be cast by TVC is that of a both corporate and personal appeal to institutionally and individually be about the work of racial reconciliation. A lack of negative contributions by individuals to racial division is no substitute for positive contributions to a multifaceted solution. TVC as an institution and its members as individuals must take practical and loving steps, grounded in the gospel, in addressing the historic and present separations and prejudices of their community. It starts with identifying and admitting where injustice, disparities, and separation has happened and where they survive. It involves addressing internal and external biases wherever they

might be found. Lastly, it requires a commitment to fostering harmony and breaking down barriers through strategic actions.

Stemming from that vision, the strategy must have a set of values that guide the action steps. For this strategy, TVC must commit to series of values that are semi-independent but all essential to a well-rounded strategy. For the sake of clarity, the rest of the strategy is recorded in table 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3. Racial reconciliation strategy vision

THE VISION	
The Village Church as an institution and its members as individuals will take practical and loving steps, grounded in the gospel, in addressing the historic and ongoing racial separations, injustices, and prejudices of their community and within themselves hoping to see twofold reconciliation, human and divine.	
THE VALUES	
Listening	TVC must value the diverse perspectives of those underrepresented in leadership at the church and become a church known for its ability to listen and adjust accordingly.
Diversity	TVC must value diversity as a strength of any organization and something worth fighting for.
Repentance	TVC must value identifying and admitting to the sin of partiality and prejudice as well as putting it to death.
Introspection	TVC must value honest self-analysis about the culture it has created and is a part of as well as how its own preferences and practices might be interpreted by others.
Belonging	TVC must value being and communicating that it is a place where you do not have to conform to anything extra-biblical in order to truly belong as part of its ecosystem.
Awareness	TVC must value the history of racial injustice and how it has shaped its context.
Life-Change	TVC must value the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives affected by the prejudice of individuals or abuses of institutions.
Justice	TVC must value addressing injustice and disparity in its community.
Relationships	TVC must value the creation of relationships with those outside the church culturally, ethnically, and philosophically and it will value partnerships with other institutions and individuals that will help it on this endeavor to foster racial harmony.
Home-Life	TVC must value what is fostered in the home around the theology and practice of loving our neighbors as ourselves and seeing the inherent value of every human being.
Local Mission	TVC must value the gathering of smaller communities to serve the needs of a locality as well as address the accessible structural disparities.

The desired outcomes of this strategy will then be logical outcroppings of these values adopted by the church. Each value shapes and develops a desired outcome. The

desired outcomes will be ideals reached by taking action steps based on the values. The left column in table 4 is the same values from the table 3, but with corresponding desired outcomes in the column on the right.

Table 4. Racial reconciliation strategy desired outcomes

THE DESIRED OUTCOMES	
Listening	TVC will have avenues by which minority voices of any kind can be heard and will be a people known for considering diverse perspectives.
Diversity	TVC will become increasingly diverse in its membership and leadership as it takes action in making disciples from diverse backgrounds in the community around us.
Repentance	TVC will be a place where the sin of partiality and prejudice is addressed publicly and privately the same way that other sins like lust, greed, and anger are addressed.
Introspection	TVC will have regular consultations and evaluations internally and externally to address any ways in which bias is affecting its preferences and practices.
Belonging	TVC will be a place where it is ok not to blend in with any dominant extra-biblical culture.
Awareness	TVC will be a people well trained and instructed in the history of their community and fully aware of how injustices of the past have created disparities in the present.
Life-Change	TVC will be a place that prays for and trusts God to forgive and change the lives of those who perpetrate prejudice as well as heal those victims of racial injustices.
Justice	TVC will implement plans to address any injustices within its sphere of influence.
Relationships	TVC will be a church made up of people whose relationships cross traditional social norms and barriers and it will initiate and maintain ongoing, mutually edifying partnerships with likeminded institutions.
Home-Life	TVC will be a church investing in parents and the next generation in order to instill a godly view of humanity and reconciliation in the midst of brokenness.
Local Mission	TVC will be a church whose activity in local missions addresses the roots of issues with transformational strategies.

To achieve each objective, the strategy lays out a series of actionable propositions. Each value has a category for both institutional and individual action steps. It is in following these steps as an institution, TVC, and as individuals, the members, that TVC will strategically address racial reconciliation in its context. While it is not imperative that each and every step be followed, having the long list of actionable propositions at the finger tips creates an achievable momentum that TVC has not codified, clarified, or followed in the past (see appendix 6).

This strategic plan was evaluated by a team of two TVC elders and two non-white deacons during the week of December 11-18, 2017. The evaluation team included elders Matt Younger and Brady Goodwin, and deacons Nick Elizondo and Vonni Gant. The strategy was rated as exemplary by all four evaluators in five of the eight categories. Two categories received a score of “satisfactory” from Elizondo, but no other evaluators. One additional category received a “satisfactory” score from both Goodwin and Elizondo. Even so, 100 percent of the categories were at least “satisfactory” and therefore no extreme changes were made to the categories. However, some of the evaluator’s comments were taken into consideration.

Concerning the realistic and achievable nature of the action steps, Elizondo felt that it could be made clearer on how the member-oriented goals will play out. Unlike the rest of the evaluators, Elizondo believed that the plan was not exceptionally novel, but rather reinforcing what has been implied or communicated previously. Both Goodwin and Elizondo believed more work could be done to make the overall vision clearer and more memorable. Even with those evaluations, there were no proposed amendments, just considerations. Since the strategy was universally approved and judged to be nearly entirely exceptional, the goal of creating a strategy that stands up to evaluation was clearly and satisfactorily achieved.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Designing an effective approach to racial reconciliation is an important strategic endeavor for any gospel believing church. As has been established in this project, reconciliation between people and people groups is the heart of God, part of his will being done on earth as it is in heaven. The city of Dallas presents some unique historical challenges to racial reconciliation that are simultaneously some of the greatest motivations and reasons for a church to be active in this initiative. Since TVC is a multi-site church with locations scattered around the metroplex as well as a church planting church, the opportunities to create a multi-pronged and effective broad approaches to racial division throughout the city in multiple neighborhoods. It is insufficient for TVC to simply preach about the need without providing clear action steps, expectations, and institutional strategies.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to create a plan that would righteously shepherd and bring gospel unity to the people of Dallas. The project sought to design an effective approach to addressing racial reconciliation by understanding TVC's own organizational context and implicit biases as well as providing a new, clear, and practical plan that pursues reconciliatory advances both institutionally and individually. It is significantly easier to create a plan for unity than to actually create unity. In some ways, the easiest work is now done, an actionable plan has been created. The hardest part will be implementing and evaluating the plan for effectiveness in creating unity in the city of Dallas.

The research and the resultant plan are in essence an educated theory and strategy for how unity might be created, *might* being the operative word. Racial division and strife are nothing new in America, let alone Dallas, and it would be naïve to believe that all that has stood between this town and total reconciliation between races is this project. However, if TVC or any other organization truly cares about making an impact in the direction of unity, it will not happen without a clear and communicable plan. This project will serve this purpose, not as a justification that TVC cares, but rather as a blueprint for how it will care.

Asking for the gospel unity of the city was perhaps too lofty of a goal. A better purpose might have stated that the project was to create a trajectory for unity or a plan toward unity rather than to itself create unity. The research and strategic plan has created momentum and has created some direction, but it has yet to create any measurable change in unity between ethnic groups in Dallas. Only following the strategic steps might do that.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

The goals of this project were to determine what should be addressed to strategically advance racial reconciliation by surveying racially diverse attendees of TVC as well as home group leaders who are responsible for local mission. The first goal was to assess the current understanding and condition of TVC's racial reconciliation initiative as it pertains to implicit bias, existing and potential strategy, and an understanding of Dallas's racial context. The second goal was to assess the state of ongoing local missions that address racial reconciliation through TVC home groups. The third goal was to develop a plan that produces actionable steps to advance racial reconciliation in the city of Dallas.

The goals were excellently complementary in the way in which they cascaded from one to the next to create an effective strategy. Assessing the condition and understanding of TVC's racial reconciliation initiative was an appropriate first step in forming a novel and actionable plan. The goals narrowed from a random selection of broad membership to a smaller cross section of leadership to a plan evaluated by those in

the highest places of leadership. This narrowing of the goal and the groups has created a broad ownership with a clear and direct plan.

The goals for this project could easily be repeated in other contexts. Goal 1 in particular could be implemented nearly unchanged in almost any context. Goal 2, though it is suited to TVC's groups structure since that is the area of ministry tasked with local mission, could easily be adjusted to another church context in which a different group or individual was responsible for local mission. Similarly, goal 3 and its results could be easily adapted to any ministry context. Since the strategy revolves around both institutional and individual action steps, it could benefit even one individual despite the level of buy in or lack thereof from an overall organization or church.

All of the goals were achieved with a high level of success. TVC having already developed a passion for and laying the ground work for this initiative certainly contributed to the ownership and desire to contribute of the people of TVC. Both the rate and quality of returns on the surveys implemented for this project were easily assembled and clearly beneficial for use in this project. The evaluation team was made up of leaders who shared the same passion to see TVC make headway in this initiative with an actionable plan, in turn, their investment led to an emotional and intellectual investment in the outcome. The evaluation team did not slack on their review, and they also cared enough about the outcome to make comments if and when necessary.

### **Strengths of the Project**

The greatest strengths of the project are in the results, both the survey results and the resultant strategy. The hope and hypothesis of the surveys were that the research would show a statistically significant difference between white and minority members of TVC when it comes to understanding and opinions on racial reconciliation. Second, it was hypothesized that the home group leaders were not actively pursuing local mission in a way that might effectually address any systemic or local divisions, which in fact, according to the survey, has turned out to be the case. Last, the resultant strategy that



creates pathways for achievable action based on the results of both of those surveys addresses each of the categories that the surveys made evident needed to be addressed.

The strength of the Racial Reconciliation Survey was how clearly it communicated the differences of experiences and perspectives across diverse members. Implicit biases became evident through the responses without directly asking members to self-identify their implicit biases. By simply spending time in the results and answers from that survey, the church could righteously and effectively address many invisibly biased practices.

The strength of the Local Mission Survey was in the clarity it brought to current inaction, ignorance, or apathy that many of the groups have toward local mission. It could even be hypothesized that the 50 or so percent of home group leaders who did not take the time to fill out the survey may be thus communicating even less concern about the issues of racial reconciliation and local mission since the email invitation told them that was what the survey was going to cover and serve for TVC.

The strength of the strategy is that it is new and actionable, and that the division of labor is clear. TVC has not traditionally addressed its initiatives with strategic plans that build from values to objectives to action steps. This plan starts with the underpinning of a church who values change and unity and combines that with a church structure that appreciates clear direction. Last, the plan is achievable. It gives clear next steps that are well within reach to start to implement at TVC.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

The weaknesses of this project lie in its integration from theology to history to research to the plan. What is most likely in the culture of TVC is that leadership will be more interested in the resultant strategic plan and tackling the action steps as implementations without doing the ground work first. A theology of racial reconciliation as drawn out from several passages in chapter 2 is important context to start with. It is similarly and secondarily important to understand the history of the divisions that exist in

the community. Building off the theology and history, the surveys give a perspective of what is happening in the hearts and minds of the people of TVC concerning bias and the racialized culture in which TVC finds itself. Without the theology, history, and research, the strategic plan will not meet an audience that fully comprehends the actually “need” for the plan and therefore may not read the plan with correct lens. Therefore, the strategy does not exist as an appendix. If it did, the tendency of the ignorant reader may be to skip to the end and find the “answers” in the back of the book. Keeping it as part of a contextual chapter communicates that this strategy cannot be separated out from the rest of this project.

In addition to the potential lack of integration, one of the weaknesses of this project is that so much of the surveys and research happen in isolation rather than in discussion. Since the surveys are anonymous, no conversations were initiated by this project about this important topic. For forward momentum to truly serve the goal, TVC will have to gather and foster conversations that have thus far only been happening with very small groups with a wide variety of perspectives. Since the surveys were anonymous, there are even some outliers whose extreme positions will not be easily addressed by the church leadership.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

If I had the chance to do this project over again, there are a few questions I would approach more or differently. Most notably, I would love to explore some of what was revealed about the households of respondents. I did not ask any questions about the opinions that may or may not be shared between one generation and the last. While the survey showed that many people believe that home is formative for opinions, many did not believe it was the largest of contributors to their own formation. I wonder if, and can only hypothesize, this is because the younger church has parents or grandparents that maintain a different approach to race than them. I wish I would have asked a question

about prejudice that respondents were exposed to in their homes or were aware of in their immediate or extended family.

Other than varying questions, the project may have benefitted from interviews with minority members who have since left the church for lack of action being taken to fulfill the vision for racial reconciliation. That, and some gatherings of groups to consider together some of the strategic categories that were created by this project. Having some frank conversations between white and non-white members about the strategy out loud and in a group, might have produced some additional categories that otherwise would not have been explored.

### **Theological Reflection**

While the theological foundation of this project is solid and sufficient, much more work could have been done. Chapter 2 of this project utilizes exegetical principles to interpret what the Lord has communicated through his Word through a few of many verses that apply to this topic. I learned a lot about the general lack of theological underpinning out of which most pastors and members operate, including myself. Doing the hard work of exploring what the Lord says about any one subject in particular is a uniquely spiritual and shaping experience. I feel like I am not only a better pastor, but a better human and friend. A project about a practical theology on racial reconciliation might have been a good complement. Perhaps even a study of how various ethnic groups have interpreted scriptures differently throughout the years could have added something to the theological study and the implicit biases found in various ethnic specific churches.

If time was limitless, the theological direction that could have really served this project and this initiative is the treatment of sins that color the identity of the sinner. For instance, those who struggle with racial prejudice are not likely to reveal that since they could then be identified as a “racist” and that would be a huge stigma. Not unlike those who might struggle with sexual attraction to children would not want to be ostracized as a pedophile and so their sin goes un-confessed and unaddressed. As a result, it is assumed

that few people struggle with these sins and they are relegated to a despised few. This, of course, is not reality. Partial and implicit bias, even regarding race, is common, bordering on universal. If a survey could be created to explore why, theologically, Christians are reticent to confess a struggle with certain sins, likely fear and pride, it would greatly benefit a church's ability to address racism as a sin.

### **Personal Reflection**

In studying the history of Dallas and the heart of God, I discovered much about my own partiality. What I would be quick to dismiss as “not an advantage” or “not a sinful bias” was revealed as truly racist tendencies in my own heart where I made assumptions about individuals because of the way they looked or enjoyed the privilege that comes with being white that I used to neither acknowledge nor confront.

In the process of this project, I have been asked by many white people why a white man was writing about racial reconciliation. In the same stretch of time, I was thanked by many non-white people for writing on this subject. Even in these conversations, implicit biases were clear. White people often assumed that racial reconciliation, a passion for it, and a strategy to achieve it, should only come from a minority member. At the same time, non-white people were glad to see that racial reconciliation strategies had not been relegated only to non-white people. I have learned that in a culture and city where being white is an advantage, there is something to be said for a white person being on the team addressing racial reconciliation and not excusing myself from it because of my white-ness.

### **Conclusion**

What must change about Dallas, the city's structure, and TVC's systems must start with changes in the human heart. Sharing the gospel with those whom one works, plays, and goes to school is the means to see reconciliation between man and God truly take root. That being the case, it does not excuse the church from creating a strategy with

action steps and measurable goals by relegating racial reconciliation to organic and hopeful potential relationships. Without a plan and without intentionality, TVC can expect much of the same as what they have already seen—a clear passion, a clear vision, and ambiguous next steps. While following the strategy laid out by this project does not promise that racial reconciliation will break out at TVC or in the city of Dallas, it is one significant step toward becoming part of the solution, regardless of the magnitude of that change.

## APPENDIX 1

### EMAIL INVITATION TO CHURCH RACIAL RECONCILIATION SURVEY

Good morning!

I'm hoping you'll be willing to lend me a couple minutes of your week to help us with an important survey about our strategy for racial reconciliation in Dallas. You've been randomly selected from our covenant member role (updated 2015) and your responses to this survey will have a huge impact on what our ministry looks like in Dallas going forward.

It will only take a couple minutes and I'd love it if you'd carve out time to do it this week (before Sunday).

Your responses are COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS, but if you email me back and let me know you completed the survey I will enter you (along with anyone else who does the same) into a drawing for a \$50 Starbucks gift card!

**You'll find the brief survey here!**

**<https://goo.gl/forms/m6Htz1sKuuECN3jj2>**

Thank you so much for your time!

**Adam Griffin**  
Spiritual Formation Pastor, Dallas Campus  
**THE VILLAGE CHURCH**  
(972) 537-1223 | [thevillagechurch.net](http://thevillagechurch.net)

## APPENDIX 2

### CHURCH RACIAL RECONCILIATION SURVEY

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to broadly evaluate the current understanding of The Village Church initiative to positively impact racial reconciliation in Dallas. This research is being conducted by Adam Griffin for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project to serve the church. In this research, you will answer a few fill in the blank prompts as well as make selections in several multiple-choice responses. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this Church Racial Reconciliation Survey and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

- I agree to participate
- I do not agree to participate

1. What is your role at TVC?
  - Staff
  - Lay elder/deacon
  - Member/attender but not elder, deacon, or staff
2. What is your ethnicity?
  - White
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Black or African-American
  - Native American or American Indian
  - Asian / Pacific Islander
  - Indian
  - Other
3. How long have you lived in Dallas or the surrounding area? \_\_\_\_\_ year/s.
4. Think of your ten closest friends excluding your family. How many of them are a different ethnicity than you? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Estimate: What percentage of your coworkers are white/non-Hispanic?
  - 0-20%
  - 20-40%
  - 40-60%
  - 60-80%
  - 80-100%

6. Estimate: What percentage of your neighbors are white/non-Hispanic?
- 0-20%
  - 20-40%
  - 40-60%
  - 60-80%
  - 80-100%
7. How did you hear about TVC's heart for racial reconciliation?
- A sermon
  - A blog
  - A friend
  - Conversation with leadership
  - Other
  - I have not heard about this issue from TVC
8. Are you aware of any significant institutional relationships between TVC and other churches that are not majority white?
- Yes
  - No
9. What factors contributed to you living where you do (check all that apply)
- Square footage
  - Safety
  - Cost/price
  - Schools
  - Extended family
  - Network of friends
  - Neighborhood quality
  - Missional opportunity
  - Existing relationships with others nearby
  - Proximity to work/recreation
  - Living near people I'm ethnically comfortable with
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Continue on next page



Using the following scale, circle your agreement with the statements below.

SD = Strongly Disagree                      AS = Agree Somewhat  
 D = Disagree                                      A = Agree  
 DS = Disagree Somewhat                      SA = Strongly Agree

10. Our country has serious race issues.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. In Dallas, being white is an advantage.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. In Dallas, racism is more of an individual issue than an institutional one.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. I have an intentional, growing relationship with someone who is significantly different from me for the sake of the gospel and racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. The history of race relations in the US has an impact on today's race relations.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. It would be best to move on from studying or exploring racial history since it is fraught with racial tensions.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. The staff and leadership of TVC adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of our church.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. The staff and leadership of TVC adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of our city.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. The leadership of TVC would greatly benefit from professional diversity training.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. Those who lead on the stage at TVC do not represent adequate diversity.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. Aspects of the way TVC corporately worships make me feel like I might not belong here.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. The way TVC encourages its members to talk about sin and share their personal struggles makes me feel like I might not belong here.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. TVC cares about racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
23. TVC has a clear, well-known strategy for addressing racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. TVC's current work for racial reconciliation is making a big difference in Dallas.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. TVC staff should speak more often about racial reconciliation from the stage.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

26. Following a sermon about racial reconciliation, TVC does a good job of maximizing opportunities for follow through.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. The TVC strategy for starting campuses and planting churches displays an obvious commitment to racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. TVC is raising up ethnically diverse leaders to plant churches and lead campuses.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. TVC should change their worship service "welcome" to incorporate inclusive language like "this is a place where it's ok to not blend in."	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. TVC should tell more "stories" highlighting racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31. Minority voices are well represented at TVC.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
32. I contribute to racial bias in Dallas.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33. I personally and actively work for racial reconciliation in Dallas.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
34. It is better for TVC to compel members to form diverse relationships organically rather than to programmatically organize them.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
35. It is better for TVC to provide some organized methods for attendees to form diverse relationships rather than to compel them to happen organically.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
36. My race is an important aspect of my identity.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
37. My parents were one of the most significant influences into how I view race.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
38. I believe most bias is learned in the home.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

## APPENDIX 3

### EMAIL INVITATION TO LOCAL MISSION HOME GROUP SURVEY

Good afternoon Dallas Home Group Leaders!

Some of you may already be aware of this, but if you're not let me catch you up, I am in the middle of a research project addressing The Village Church strategy for racial reconciliation and local mission in the city of Dallas.

It would help me and our church out a lot if you could take 2 minutes to confidentially answer [these 14 easy questions](#).

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1faipqlse6iq7wq1fypoupgf2fussq9cl8mea72gyc-xt4jemy60ut7g/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1faipqlse6iq7wq1fypoupgf2fussq9cl8mea72gyc-xt4jemy60ut7g/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Thank you in advance for your help and insight!

**Adam Griffin**

Spiritual Formation Pastor, Dallas Campus

**THE VILLAGE CHURCH**

[\(972\) 537-1223](tel:9725371223) | [thevillagechurch.net](http://thevillagechurch.net)

## APPENDIX 4

### LOCAL MISSION HOME GROUP SURVEY

#### **Participation Agreement**

The survey that you are about to participate in is designed to broadly evaluate the current understanding of The Village Church vision for local mission through Home Groups and the initiative to positively impact racial reconciliation in Dallas. Adam Griffin, Spiritual Formation Pastor, is conducting this research in order to collect data for a ministry project to serve the church. Any information or opinions you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Your participation is completely voluntary. By completing this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

39. How long have you been a Home Group Leader? \_\_\_\_\_ year/s.
40. What is your ethnicity?
- White
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Black or African-American
  - Native American or American Indian
  - Asian / Pacific Islander
  - Indian
  - Other
41. If you wanted to know more about local missions in Dallas, who would you ask?
- Missions Minister
  - Groups Minister
  - Spiritual Formation Pastor
  - Campus Pastor
  - Connections Minister
  - Ministry Admin. Assistant
  - Elder/Deacon
  - Groups Coach

Continue to next page

Using the following scale, circle your agreement on the statements below.

SD = Strongly Disagree

AS = Agree Somewhat

D = Disagree

A = Agree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

SA = Strongly Agree

42. TVC has a clear, easily repeatable vision for local mission.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
43. Better local missions would have a huge impact on the life of my Home Group and the community in which we gather.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
44. Home Group is so busy, personally and/or collectively, that adding local missions to the Group agenda feels overwhelming.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
45. My Home Group serves together on a regular basis.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
46. My Home Group has had conversations about racial reconciliation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
47. My Home group has a good understanding of the history and demographics of the community where the group meets.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
48. The diversity of my Home Group adequately represents the diversity of the neighborhood in which we gather.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
49. It would be unusual for an unbeliever to come to a gathering or event with my Home Group.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
50. My Home Group intentionally pursues racial reconciliation through local missions.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
51. My home group intentionally seeks out and welcomes those who are ethnically different from the majority of our group.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
52. It would greatly benefit my Home Group if TVC were to hire a Local Missions Minister.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 5

STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC

Strategic Plan for Racial Reconciliation Evaluation Rubric					
1=Insufficient 2=Needs Improvement 3=Satisfactory 4=Exemplary					
Standard	1	2	3	4	Comments
The action steps of the plan adhere to TVC's philosophy of ministry.					
The action steps of the plan do not conflict with the mission of TVC.					
The plan adheres to TVC's theological framework.					
The proposed action steps are realistic and achievable.					
The plan is novel and not a rehashing of steps TVC has already attempted.					
The vision presented is clear and memorable.					
The strategy provides clarity and direction for the people of TVC.					
The strategy provides thoughtful proposals for institutional changes that will promote racial reconciliation through TVC.					

APPENDIX 6  
RACIAL RECONCILIATION STRATEGY ACTION STEPS

Table A1. Racial reconciliation strategy action steps

ACTION STEPS		
VALUE	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS	INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will create focus groups of diverse perspectives for the sole purpose of hearing their viewpoint. These groups will have biannual meetings with the campus elders.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will provide recommendations on movies, books, articles and other media that provide a diverse perspective on life.</li> <li>• The Village Church will film, create, and write stories of members and community members whose stories offer a window into diverse cultures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will read books written by diverse authors about diverse contexts and worldview. They will consume music and film which broadens their understanding of the minority experience.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will foster relationship with ethnically different members of their community (who are not already a part of the church).</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will invite a family from another culture who is not already part of The Village Church into their home for a meal.</li> </ul>
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will always consider the potential to diversify when seeking to hire, nominate and elder or deacon, or raise up a leader within a ministry.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will consider creating positions within the organization which would add perspective and perhaps have exponential impact on diversifying the congregation.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will seek to incorporate the genuine diversity of TVC into all outward facing materials.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will seek to deploy the genuine diversity of the staff and congregation to lead in public settings. Including but not limited to worship teams, service leading, prayer and scripture readings.</li> <li>• In leadership rooms where diversity does not genuinely exist, The Village Church leadership will invite diverse perspectives from their membership on various important issues, decisions, and plans.</li> <li>• The Village Church will incorporate songs, rituals, and dress from various cultures into public gatherings of the church.</li> <li>• The Village Church will seek to start Home Groups in diverse neighborhoods.</li> <li>• The Village Church will serve schools in which racial segregation is still prevalent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will consider the diversity or lack thereof as a factor in how they consider education for their kids as well as where they live and work. They will seek to be a part of an already diverse ecosystem or part of diversifying it.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will evaluate their friend group and consider how they might deepen their friendships with those who are ethnically different.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will seek to shop, eat, and play in places in which they can be exposed to various cultures in ways that foster genuine appreciation and friendship.</li> <li>• The Village Church white membership will visit churches where they are not the majority race in order to appreciate the sense a minority member might have in attending TVC.</li> </ul>



Table A1 continued

<p>Repentance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will publicly discuss what has been done to perpetuate prejudice in the name of Christ and as a representative of the true Christian church, apologize and speak the truth in love.</li> <li>• Since racism carries such a harsh social stigma, The Village Church must create a safe space to talk about and confess struggles with partiality, prejudice, and discrimination.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will admit that there are times where we have been ignorant to how their own preferences have not reflected an understanding of diverse perspectives.</li> <li>• The Village Church will preach about, write about, and tell stories about prejudice, bias, partiality, and racism as a sin which is broadly struggled with, common to man, and needs to be put to death in order to reflect Christ. They will call it out wherever they see it - local, national, or global.</li> <li>• The Village Church will address partiality and bias in Recovery and STEPS as sin which can have deep roots and generational ties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will consider how their biases have shaped their worldview and repent of partiality similar to the way they would assess and repent of lust, greed, anger and other besetting sins.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will confront the advantages and disadvantages that they experience based on their race and if there is a way in which they have used their advantages to the disadvantage of others, they will confess and repent.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will hold each other accountable to addressing sins of partiality and their ramifications.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will call to account and rebuke those who they see practicing prejudice and partiality.</li> </ul>
<p>Introspection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will ask “outsiders” to give the elders their perspective of our church and their effectiveness in the area of racial reconciliation. This should produce a list of majority culture preferences whose addressing or uprooting may need to be considered.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will bring in a diverse group of pastors to act as consultants. They will evaluate TVC’s current philosophy, culture and practices for implicit biases and other ways in which majority culture has created any “unwelcoming” or “culturally insensitive” factors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will invite trusted and diverse voices into their life asking to help them self-identify implicit biases and how they might be shaping a narrow worldview.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will meditate on and consider James 2:8-9 asking the Lord to reveal how partiality has sinfully shaped their behavior and assumptions.</li> <li>• The Village Church members should seek to identify what preferences they carry into social and other environments that may be cultural preferences which may preclude the understanding or welcoming of others.</li> </ul>

Table A1 continued

<p>Belonging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will incorporate language into its welcome into public gatherings that compel those who are “different” to feel welcome. TVC will use phrases like, “This is a place where it is ok not to blend in.”</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will significantly bolster its practices of hospitality particularly in the way it welcomes guests, but also how it fosters opportunity for relationships between members.</li> <li>• The Village Church will emphasize hospitality and a value of racial reconciliation in its Home Group and Recovery Group leader training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will practice hospitality with their neighbors from diverse backgrounds by inviting them into their homes, organizing neighborhood gatherings, and attending local events.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will intentionally invite and help assimilate friends from diverse backgrounds into TVC Home Groups and corporate worship.</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will deploy diversity training for its staff and leadership to increase awareness of how different people think and feel differently.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will consider leveraging large scale educational opportunities like a forum or sermon series to increase awareness of historic and surviving racial divides and disparities.</li> <li>• The Village Church will send a group of elders to appropriate conferences on ethnic diversity and racial reconciliation.</li> <li>• The Village Church will not only develop educational pathways for its members to study racial reconciliation, it will create a robust theology of racial harmony based on the foundational premise of the Imago Dei in all people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will read books and articles about ways in which racial disparities still exist.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will access, read and follow local news in order to be more aware of the events and struggles of the communities around them.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will read local and national histories which deal honestly with the issues of prejudice.</li> </ul>
<p>Life-Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will publicly and privately espouse and pursue the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit through prayer for the sake of the nation and the local community.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will beseech the Lord to turn the hearts of the prejudice to hearts of peace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will study those passages of scripture which communicate the abilities of God to change hearts and pray for that reality in their own hearts as well as those in the community around them.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will diligently seek the power of God to change the culture of division and discrimination around them.</li> </ul>

Table A1 continued

Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will address injustices in the city of Dallas through organizations that help overcome educational disparities through mentoring and tutoring, neighborhood disparities through ACT and local politics.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will support the reform of social institutions that systemically disadvantage certain people groups.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will seek transformational<sup>1</sup> means to break cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement in the community.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will study Toxic Charity and When Helping Hurts to both foster a sense of wise generosity and prevent a “white-savior” mentality.</li> <li>• The Village Church will foster an ongoing relationship with local politicians and law enforcement as well as judicial officials so that they are aware of the needs of their community and ways in which the church might assist in or create community programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will address cycles of disadvantage on the small scale and personally by mentoring kids, serving families, and getting to know the victims of this estrangement.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will seek public office (or support someone in public office), when appropriate, to become part of the governing body who can influence schools, gentrification, neighborhoods</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will consider, not only affordability and convenience when deciding where to live, but mission and opportunity for reconciliation as well.</li> </ul>
Home-Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will create and distribute resources on how to talk to kids about race relations, bias, prejudice, and the history of racial segregation.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will design trips and immersive experiences for its NextGen ministry keeping in mind opportunities to expose the people to diverse viewpoints and cultures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will add racial reconciliation to family discipleship times and moments as they consider and teach about the ramifications of the gospel on interpersonal relationships.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will model harmony among people of various backgrounds by demonstrating genuine love and friendship.</li> </ul>

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<sup>1</sup>This is as opposed to transactional methods that may offer a “supply” but do nothing to overcome the situation that created the need for the “supply” in the first place.

Table A1 continued

<p>Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will build a formal partnership with a majority African American Church, a Hispanic Church, and any other ethnic congregations it deems strategically important. Executives will meet regularly.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will consider joint events and ventures in the community with intentionally diverse communities, organizations and churches.</li> <li>• The Village Church Dallas will formally partner with Mercy Street Church and Mercy Street in West Dallas, South Dallas Community Church and Champions of Hope in South Dallas, The Loft in Richardson, Eastside Community Church, refugee ministries, and Forerunners in East Dallas.</li> <li>• The Village Church will formally partner with Buckner who works with the local Hispanic immigrant population.</li> <li>• The Village Church leadership will organize a coalition of like-minded churches of diverse backgrounds in order to plant churches together –The DFW Church Planting Network.</li> <li>• The Village Church will plan a public event and/or private retreat in cooperation and conjunction with other churches of varying ethnic majority populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will serve in various local ministries that work among diverse populations, particularly those who have a partnership with The Village Church.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will intentionally form strategic partnerships with other households in their neighborhood who wish to pursue and address racial reconciliation in their community.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will seek opportunities to lead in local politics, school committees and boards, and HOA's in order to become a leader who can cast a vision for practical racial reconciliation.</li> <li>• To undue or prevent social circle homogeny, The Village Church membership will intentionally foster relationships with those from diverse backgrounds inside and outside the church. The membership must be intentional to be a regular part of a diverse community where these relationships can be formed.</li> </ul>
<p>Local Mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church leadership will hire a Local Missions Pastor and/or designate a deacon or elder team to be held accountable for the churches activities in local mission</li> <li>• The Village Church will cast a vision for our local missions ability and trajectory to address structural disparities and local needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village Church membership will organize themselves into small groups that share a passion for the same geographic area of the city and are willing to address the racial barriers therein.</li> <li>• The Village Church membership will seek to partner or volunteer with other local missions organizations and partnerships whose strategies address the roots of the issues in their neighborhoods.</li> </ul>

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## ABSTRACT

### DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO RACIAL RECONCILIATION IN THE COMMUNITIES OF DALLAS, TEXAS, THROUGH THE VILLAGE CHURCH

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The Lord has given the church the ministry of loving one another. In some cases, that is harder than others. Humanity has found differences in one another to be reasons to create division. Today, there is historic and present tension between races on both an institutional and individual level. Due to the unique racial history of Dallas and how the community has navigated its systemic prejudice, there is a prime opportunity to be about the work of reconciling people groups together in the name of the gospel. The Village Church is passionate about this work but lacks the strategic plan and knowledge to address it on all fronts. This project lays out that missing strategic approach.

Chapter 1 casts an overall vision for the project, including goal setting and tools for implementation. Chapter 2 lays the theological foundation for God's heart and commission for the church's activity in racial reconciliation. Chapter 3 gives a historical framework for understanding racial division in the city of Dallas and relays the present need for the church's activity to address it. Chapter 4 records the results of two surveys given to members of The Village Church regarding racial reconciliation. The first survey was given to a random selection of majority white members and minority members investigating their perspectives on The Village Church's work toward racial reconciliation. The second survey given to The Village Church Dallas's home group leaders regarding their activity or lack thereof in local missions. The results of these surveys, as well as the

theological and historical contexts from chapters 1 and 2, result in a strategic plan that concludes the chapter. Chapter 5 addresses the overall goals and outcomes of the project giving special consideration to what could have been better and the achievement of the project goals.

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