

# Voices: A hope for overcoming racial and ethnic division

November 21, 2016

*God is not going to use the church to fix the race problem. God is going to use race to fix his church.—Mark DeYmaz*



Steve BeznerI recently spoke about God’s desire for racial reconciliation within the church. As part of that sermon, I mentioned some of the steps we hope to take as a church seeking to reflect our city’s racial makeup. I would invite you to listen to that sermon by [clicking here](#), and to consider some of the following:

- If you do not have a friendship with someone of another race, begin praying and seeking one. If you do have a friend of another race, begin asking the “awkward” questions and seeking understanding.
- Pray for and seek to see how God’s image in other cultures might teach us aspects of his character. How does the way the \_\_\_\_\_ culture worships teach us about the character of God? What can I learn from them? How should that affect the practices of my church?
- Pray and invite those who are from different cultures to become part of your life group or Sunday school class.

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- Worship, serve and pray alongside members of other cultures.

We believe that the Lord wants to bring healing to his church by bringing every nation, tribe and tongue together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are praying for the Lord to help us take those next steps in the days that are ahead. I hope all brothers and sisters of all nationalities and races will join us in seeking this healing.

Additionally, some of my brother pastors and I have written a statement regarding much of the division in our nation. This statement is brief, but it reflects or hopes for churches in the United States as we move forward. Here it is ...

*A Declaration in Support of Multi-Ethnic Churches and Racial Healing*  
(presented by the Glocal Family of Churches):

“Over the last several years, a number of public events have taken place across our nation, highlighting the racial divide still haunting many of our cities. These events have sparked protests, riots, divisive social discourse and a spirit of anger among many of our citizens.

“In light of these events, the Glocal Family of Churches publicly declares these events will not divide our congregations. As pastors, we stand in our pulpits this morning—Asian, white, black and Latino—proclaiming that we are one in the Holy Spirit, we are all made in the image of God and we all carry equal worth and value.

“Jesus prayed for the unity of his church. In fact, he proclaimed the identifying mark of his divinity and our relationship as his children would be our unity in him and our love for one another (John 13:35, John 17:21). He did not suggest this unity would happen simply through preaching or programs, but that it would come as we intentionally live and worship together as one.

“Unfortunately, only 14 percent of churches in America are multi-ethnic. By choosing to be mono-ethnic, many churches lose credibility on this divisive issue, even though we unquestionably have the answer.

“We declare: This answer is the good news of Jesus. By his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, God made a way for all people to live in relationship with him. There is no division among people who have experienced this gracious love.

“We further declare: The witness of the church is made credible when we choose to exist as multi-ethnic churches that seek justice for all, radically loving all people. We believe that the church must rise during this time in history by living and worshipping together as one, being unified in our racial and cultural diversity. By doing so, we display the kingdom of heaven.

“We further declare: We will strive not only to live as multi-ethnic churches, but also as churches who strive for justice, strive to celebrate and integrate all ethnicities and cultures, and strive to stand with the oppressed and broken. We do so with the hope that Jesus will be glorified so that the world will see that he is the Son of God, the hope of all people.”

*Steve Bezner is senior pastor of Houston Northwest Church.*