

Biblical Framework for Pursuing Justice and Reconciliation

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(Timothy Kellor, Raleigh Washington, Glen
Kehrin and Christena Cleveland)

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Who does God love?



2 mm



What's the deal with?



CHRISTENA CLEVELAND

Disunity



in Christ

*Uncovering the Hidden
Forces That Keep Us Apart*

Group think

- Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome

Gerald Tritle

- They overestimate their invulnerability or high moral stance.
- They collectively rationalize the decisions they make
- They demonize or stereotype other groups and their leaders
- They have a culture of uniformity wherein individuals censor themselves and others so that the façade of group unanimity is maintained.
- They contain members who take it upon themselves to protect the group leader (usually the pastor) by keeping information – theirs or that of the other group members- from that leader
- Groupthink produces an inability to “work out theological or ministerial unity” within the larger body of Christ and a “narcissism of small [doctrinal] differences.”

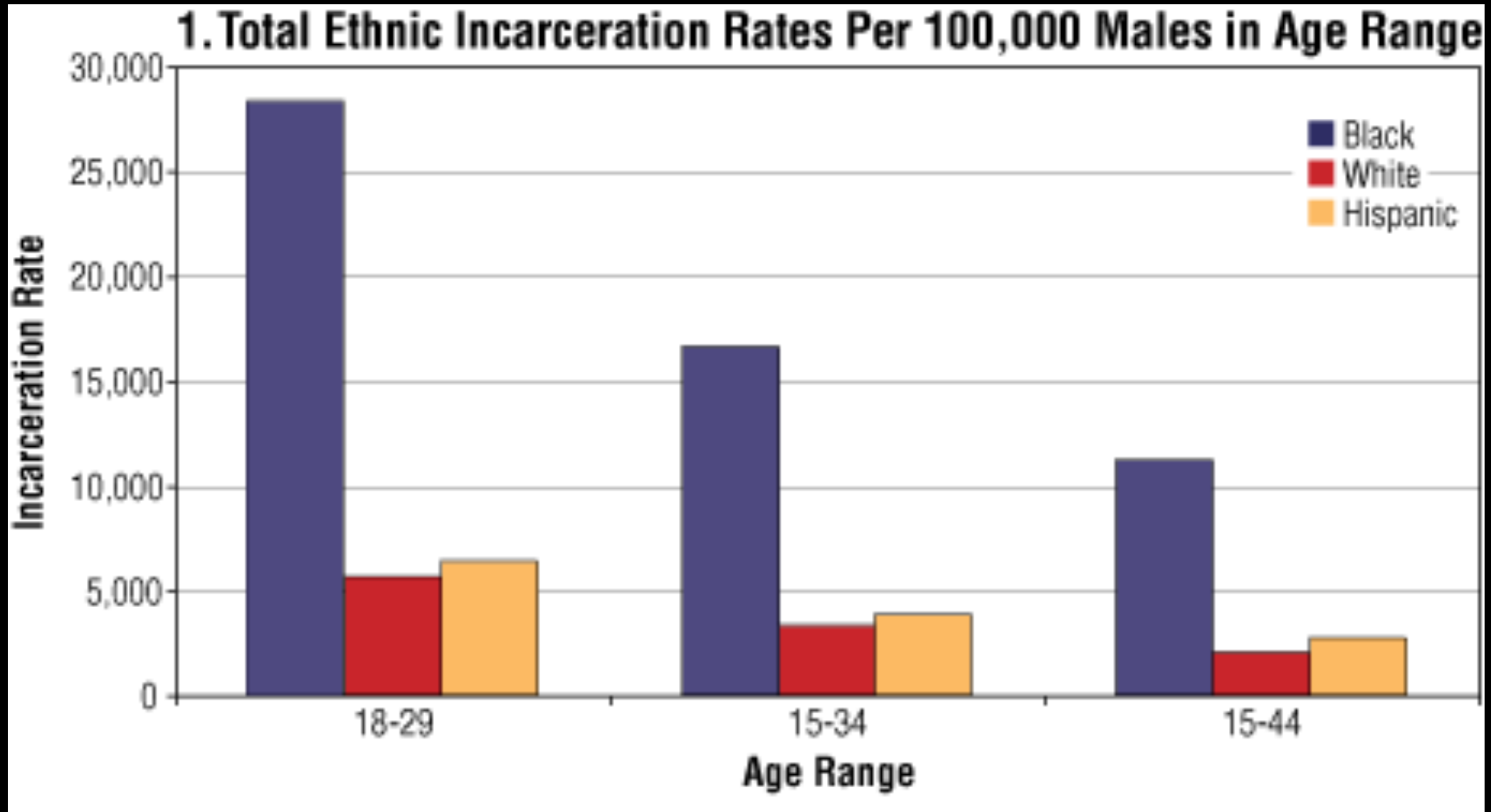
“The body of Christ is a vast, diverse, talented and brimming with resources. I wonder how many real world issues we could tackle if we weren’t so busy bickering about the correct way to define a doctrine or which political party is better equipped to solve the crises in our country and beyond. What if we decided that we were going to use our numbers, our expertise and our (potential) unity to solve real problems?” -

Christena Cleveland

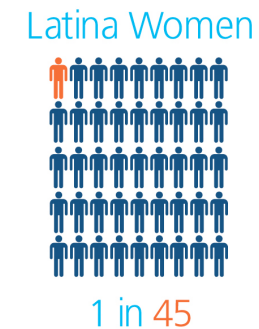
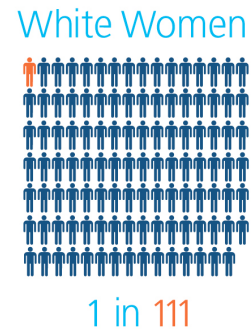
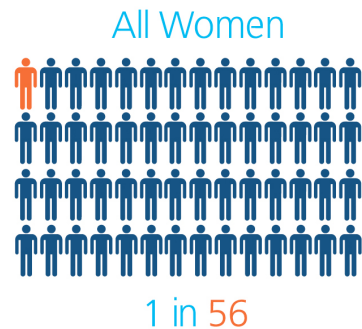
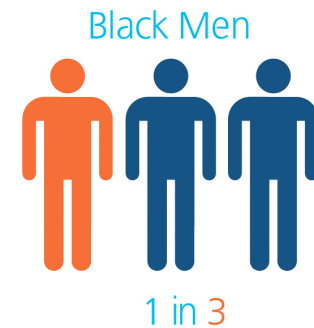
GOSPEL think

- Submitting our entire world view to gospel.
- Putting our class, race, politics et. al under the submission of God's kingdom and will.
- Understanding that the totality of the Gospel has both a vertical justice aspect (being right with God) and a horizontal aspect (being right with one another)

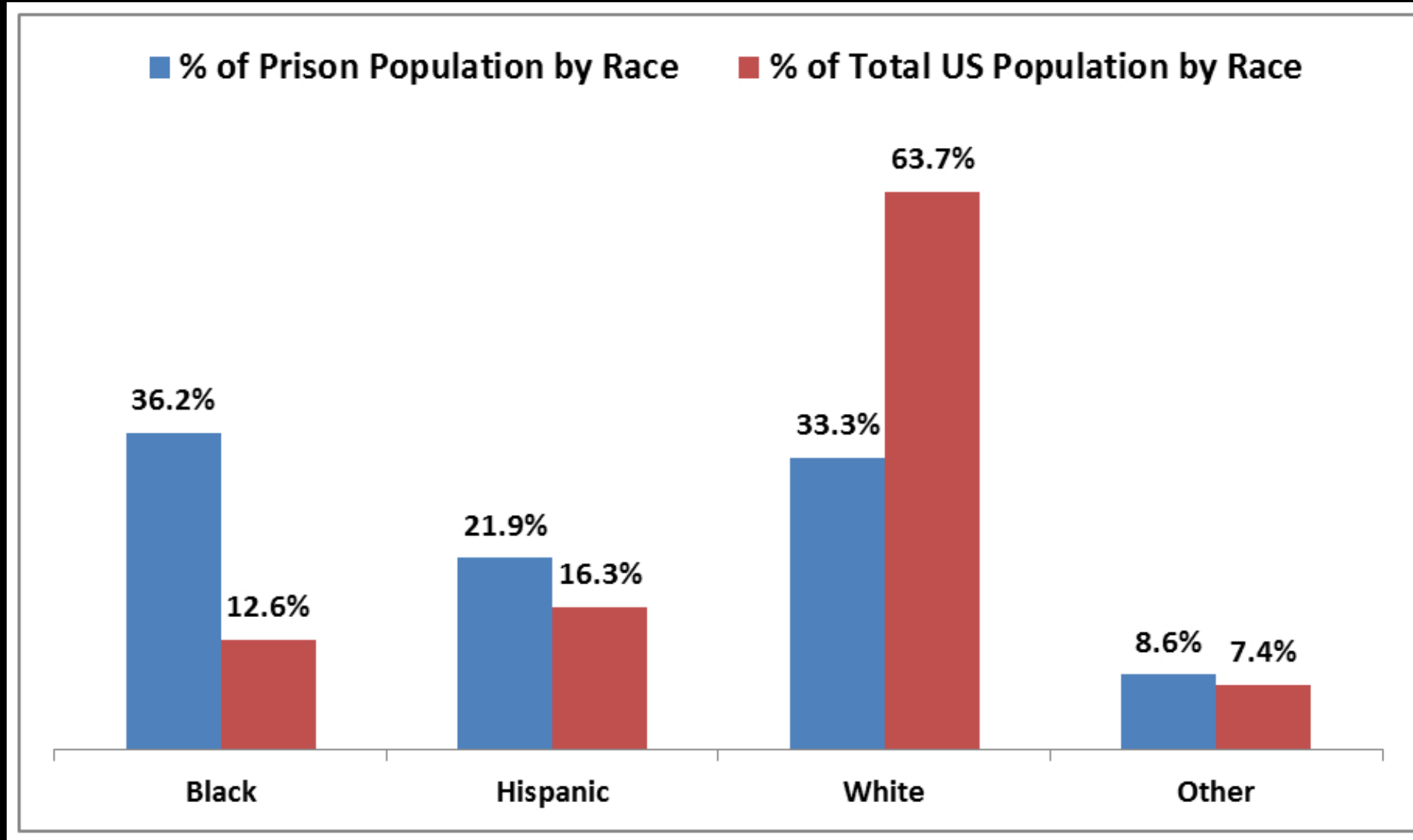
Incarceration



Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment



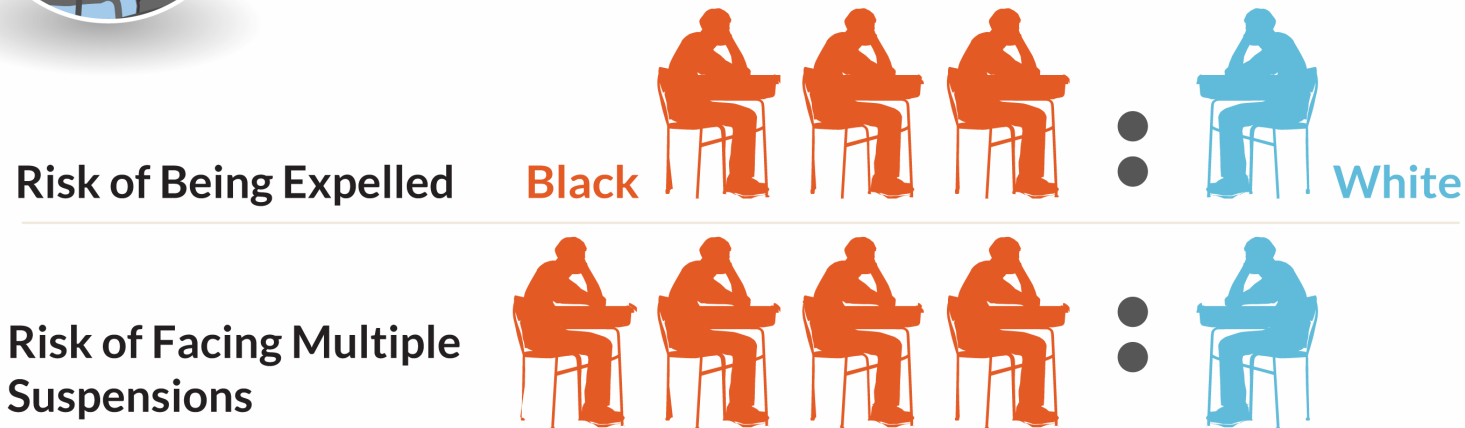
Source: Bonczar, T. (2003). *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974–2001*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics



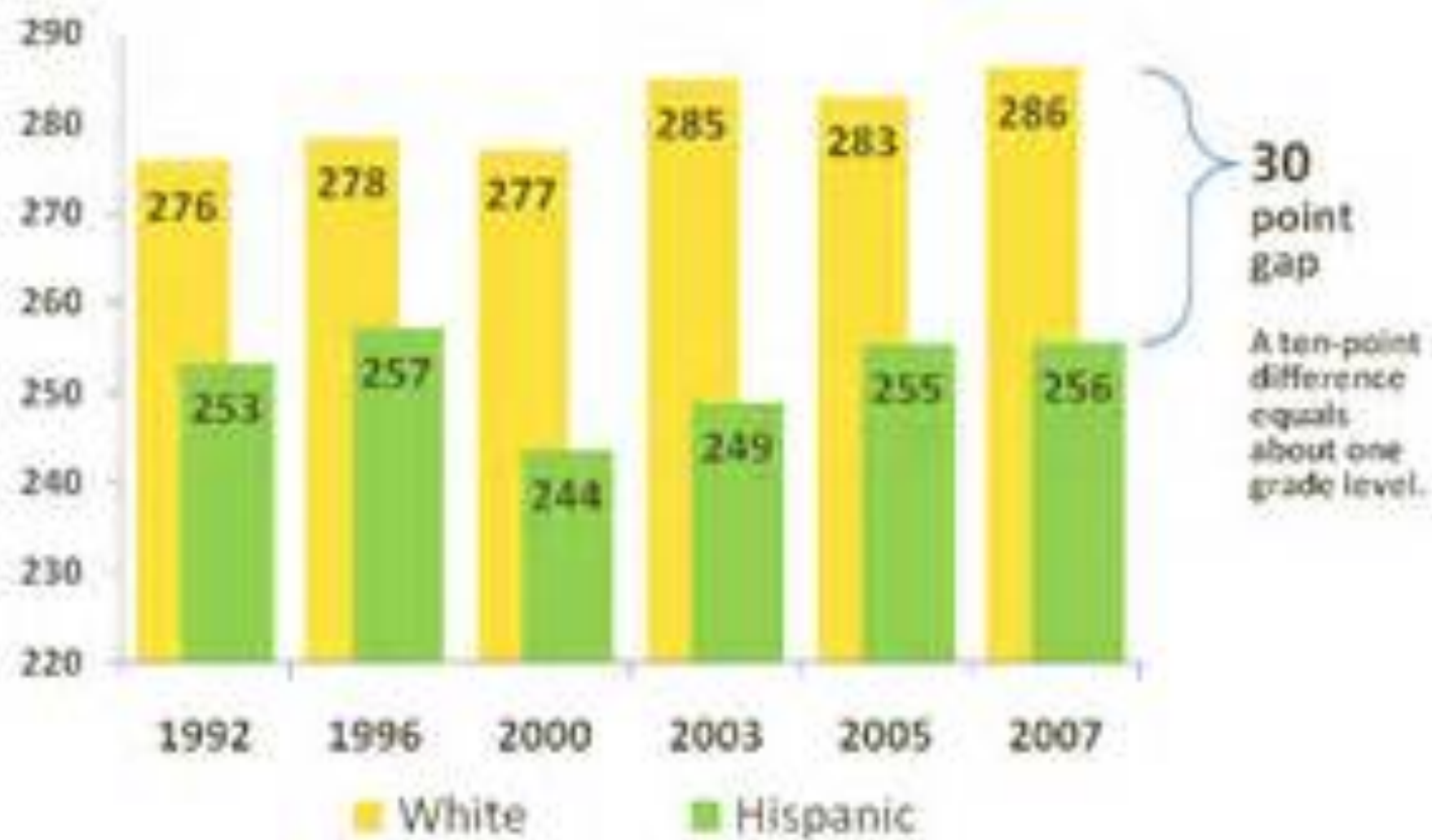


Racial Disparities in School Discipline

Black students are **3-4 times** more likely than their white peers to be expelled or face multiple suspensions from school.



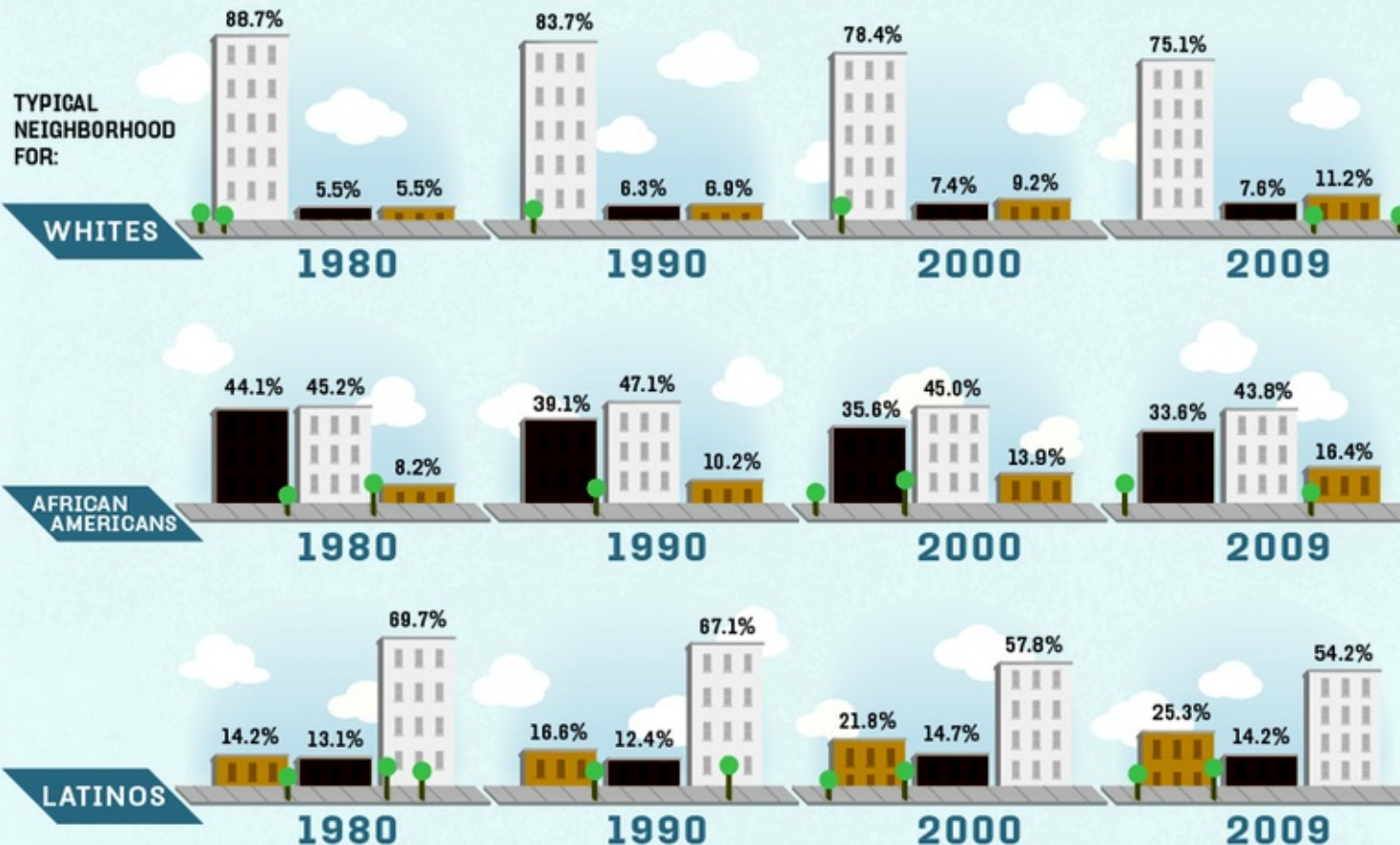
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2009-10



Residential Segregation

STILL TWO AMERICAS

Over the past 30 years, the presence of African Americans in the typical white person's neighborhood has barely changed.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS / SPATIAL STRUCTURES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, BROWN UNIVERSITY

Unity (John
17:22-23)

One Another's

Great Community
Acts 2:42-47, 4:34-35, 6;
James 2:1-12

Compassion for the Vulnerable
Pr. 31:9; Zech. 7:9-10;
Matt. 25:31-46

Racial and Class Reconciliation
Eph. 2:11-22; Rev. 5:9; Acts 6; James 2:1-7

Humility, Justice and Mercy (Micah 6:8)

Great Commandment (Luke 10:27);
Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)

Sin and Salvation (Romans 3:23; John 14:6)

Imago Dei (Gen. 1:27)

Imago Dei – Genesis 1:27

- “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”
- Male/female, Black/white (any color!), rich/poor, male/female, documented/undocumented, straight/gay

Sin Problem and Salvation Solution – Romans 3:23; John 14:6

- “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23
- “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Great Commission – Mathew 28:18-20

- “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Great Commandment – Luke 10:27

- "He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Humility, Justice and Mercy – Micah 6:8

- “He has shown you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God”

Racial Reconciliation – Ephesians 2:13-15

- “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,”

Racial Reconciliation – Revelation 5:9

- “And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

Class Reconciliation – James 2:1-4

- “My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

Compassion for the Vulnerable – Pr. 31:9

- “Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Compassion for the Vulnerable – Zech. 7:9-10

- “This is what the LORD Almighty said:
‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’ ”

Great Community – Acts 2:42-47; 4:34-35; 6; James 2:1-12

- “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.—
Acts 2:42-47

One Another's

- Love
- Respect
- Serve
- Live in Harmony
- Bear with one another
- Submit.....

Unity – John 17:22-23

- “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
- When all parties enjoy the full benefits of God and one another

What Causes Poverty?

Liberal View

- Root causes are always social forces beyond the control of the poor
- Racial prejudice, economic deprivation, joblessness, under employment, government policy – upstream issues

Conservative View

- Breakdown of the family
- Loss of morality, loss of character qualities such as self-discipline and self-control
- Victim mentality
- You have to want to – pick yourself up by your boot straps

What does the Bible say about poverty?

- Oppression (judicial system) (Lev. 19:15)
- Loans with excessive interest (Ex. 22:25-27)
- Prophets blame the rich (Amos 5:11-12; Ez. 22:29; Micah 2:2; Is. 5:8)
- Personal Moral failures (indolence [indisposition to labor, slothful], laziness Pr. 6:6-11)
- Lack of self-discipline (Pr. 23:21)
- The Bible sees poverty as a complex intertwining of systemic and personal causes that all need to be addressed.

What is doing Justice?

**He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.**

Micah 6:8

Walk Humbly

- To Know God
- To be attentive to what He desires and loves

Mercy

- Chesedh= God's unconditional grace and compassion
- Emphasis is on attitude

Justice

- Mishpat = acquitting or punishing every person on the merits of the case regardless of race or social status (Keller)
- Same crime, same punishment
- Also means giving people their rights

To Walk with God means doing justice out of merciful love

- Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." – Proverbs 31:9
- "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. ¹⁰ Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.' – Zech. 7:9-10

The quartet of the vulnerable

- Widows
- Orphans
- Immigrants
- Poor
- God evaluates how we do justice by how we treat the quartet- the helpless and the hopeless
- Neglect is a violation of justice not just a lack of mercy

Justice - mishpat

- Punishing wrong doers
- Caring for the victims of unjust treatment
- Rectifying Justice
 - To set right, remedy
 - To correct by removing errors

Righteous - Tzadeqah

- **Today =private morality, right living, sexual purity, prayer, bible study**
- Tzadeqah = Being justice – often translated being righteous
- “Day to day living in which a person conducts all relationships in family and society with fairness, generosity and equality.” (Keller)
- Primary Justice

Righteous - Tzadeqah

- ... “right with God and therefore committed to putting right all other relationships in life.” – Alex Motyer
- A life of right relationships

Justice and Righteous

- Done individually
- Done Corporately
- Not giving handouts but being deeply involved in the lives of people

But that is the Old Testament

What did Jesus say about justice?

- Did God's character change from the Old to the New Testament?
- Is not Christ called God incarnate and would he not show us who God is, God's character and live a life that exemplified God?

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19

When asked by some of John the Baptist's disciples if he was truly the Messiah Jesus replied:

- Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. – Matthew 11:4-5

- Moved in with the poor- Matt. 9:13
- Showed the greatest respect to the immoral woman who was a social outcast- Luke 7:36ff
- Refused to go along with the racism of the day, making a Samaritan the hero of (who is my neighbor)
- Started a riot when he claimed that God loved Gentiles as much as Jews (Luke 4:25-27)
- Showed concern for children when his disciples thought them a waste of time (Luke 18:15)
- Spoke with a Samaritan woman in public (John 4:27)

- Healed and even touched lepers Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13)
- Called for his disciples to give to the poor in the most strong and startling ways and then praised the poor for their generosity (Mark 12:42-43)
- Christ called for us to care for the poor and not to exclude them (Luke 14:12-13)

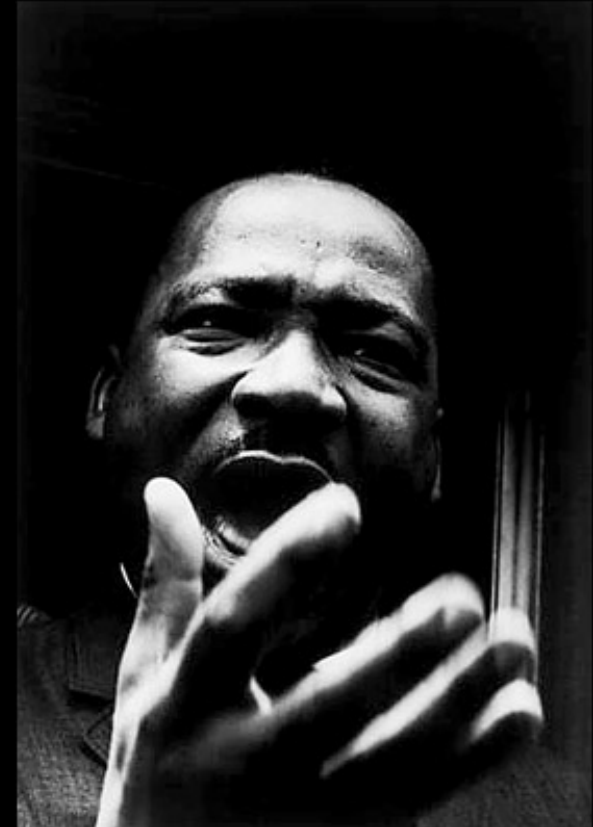
Martin Luther King Jr. Letters from a Birmingham Jail



Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"? Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll to down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"? Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus"? Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God"? And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "Thus this nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremist, but what kind of extremist we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? (*Letter*, p. 14)

There was a time when the church was
very powerful

— in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. . . . But the judgment of God is upon the church [today] as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the 20th century. (*Letter*, p. 17)



Revelation 5:9

- “And they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.’”
- It's not a pc thang it's a blood thang

Reconciliation

- To bring into harmony
- Bring together, harmonize, accord, dictate peace, reunite, make peace between
- Bury the hatchet, patch up, kiss and make up

UNITY

- When all parties enjoy the full benefits of God and one another

Principle 1: Call 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- We are all called to the ministry of reconciliation, and we are all commanded to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters across racial, cultural, gender, socio-economic and denominational barriers.
- All are called to be reconcilers (broader calling)
- Some have a specific calling to be leaders in this area (specific calling)
- Matthew 28:19-20
 - All nations
 - Cross barriers – Samaritans, women, sinners, the poor, the sick, enemies
 - I Peter 3:15

Principle 2: Relationship Ruth 1:16

- Loved by God and adopted into His family, we are called to committed love relationships with our brothers and sisters.
- Racial Reconciliation is built upon the foundation of committed relationships.
- Eph. 2:16 – reconciled = restoration; not only that Jews and Gentiles would be reconciled but that both together would be reconciled to God
 - Idea is that Jews and Gentiles should not simply be reconciled to each other but that both of them together should be reconciled to God.
 - One body = refers back to the new man = the church
- In His church, through the cross, hostility is put to death.

How to's:

- Take Risks
- Discover Opportunities
- Move beyond saying hello

Principle 3: Intentionally John 4:4

- Intentionally is the purposeful, positive and planned activity that facilitate reconciliation.
- Jesus Christ - Eph. 2:13-16
- Intentionally is not color blind
- How do you start a relationship? Be proactive in initiating a relationship with some one of a different race or ethnic or social-economic group

How tos:

- Invite someone who is different from you to dinner, youth group, ie... into your life
- Develop a continuing friendship with a person of a different ethnic or socio-economic group
- Expect and accept pain the early stages

Principle 4: Sincerity *Romans 12:3*

- Sincerity is the willingness to be vulnerable, including the self-disclosure of feelings, attitudes, differences and perceptions with the goal of resolution and building trust.
- 5 Aspects of Sincerity
 - 1. Investing time in relationship (onion vs. a banana)
 - 2. Taking the initiative to share my own life.
 - 3. Being open and honest – fudge ripple meetings
 - 4. Willingness to be vulnerable.
 - 5. Helps establish trust
- Greatest hindrance: WWB/BBW, YYO/OOY, WWM/MMW

How To's:

- Spend time
- Open up
- Shut up
 - Quit talking about one another

Principle 5: Sensitivity Romans 12:9-13

- Sensitivity is the intentional acquisition of knowledge in order to relate empathetically to a person of a different race, culture, class, tradition
- Ask questions – HELP ME UNDERSTAND

How To's:

- Learn – read, study and listen
- Speak out – confront both unintentional and intentional destructive speech and behavior dealing with racism and classism

Principle 6: Sacrifice *Philippians 2:3-4*

- The willingness to relinquish an established status or position to genuinely adopt a lesser position in order to facilitate a cross-cultural relationship
- Developing and empowering leadership
 - Delegate with authority
- Give and take on both sides

How To's:

- Identify the strengths of community and culture, study and listen

Principle 7: Empowerment 2 Corinthians 8:9

- The use of repentance and forgiveness to create complete freedom in a cross-cultural relationship
- Repentance is an abandonment of self and sin

How To's:

- Identify the strengths of community and culture, study and listen
- Give leadership to indigenous leaders in the community

Principle 8: Interdependence 2 Corinthians 8:12-14

- Interdependence recognizes our differences but realizes that we each offer something that the other person needs, resulting in equality in relationship.
- Separate but equal
 - Homogeneous church growth principal
- Mutuality

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9- better return of labor

Greater understanding brings greater success

10- pick each other up

Empowers for cross-cultural ministry

11- encouragement –

partners help us deal with frustration

12- Power in numbers

Unification brings influence and credibility

12- Unified

Differing views of work, life and relationship

How To's:

- Embrace the mess

I rescued the poor who cried for help,
and the fatherless who had no one to
assist him. The man who was dying
blessed; I made the widow's heart sing.
I put on righteousness (tzadeqah) as my
clothing; justice (mishpat) was my robe
and my turban. I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame. I was a father to
the needy; I took up the case of the
immigrant. I broke the fangs of the
wicked and snatched the victims from
their teeth." –Job 29:12-17

Justice

- Took up the case of the immigrant
- Broke the fangs of the wicked
- Confronted people who exploited the vulnerable

Righteousness

- Eyes to the blind and feet to the lame
- A father to the needy (he cared for the needs of the poor as parent meets the needs of his child)

Jesus' New Community

- “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” - Acts 20:35