

TOP 10 WAYS YOUR CHURCH CAN BEGIN RACIAL RECONCILIATION



1. BEFRIEND

Invite an acquaintance of another skin tone to join you for a coffee or a meal. Begin building a healthy friendship by asking thoughtful questions. Learn about their life story and their journey in racial reconciliation. Position your heart to be open to new perspectives, and allow yourself to be vulnerable in how you respond.

2. CELEBRATE

Celebration is a great way to bring people together! Juneteenth (June 19) has been ratified as National Independence Day by the President and Congress. It honors the day that enslaved persons in Texas learned of their free status. Your church could recruit a team of people of color to plan a celebration or picnic.

3. LISTEN

We are surrounded by incessant “noise”. With many conflicting definitions swirling online and on cable news channels about the recent phrase “critical race theory,” including politicians on either side of the aisle, it can be confusing to know what is true. Rather than trusting social media posts by bloggers or pundits, try to listen to academics and theologians who have studied CRT for years before making up your mind on the controversy.

4. READ & REFLECT

The old idiom that urges us to walk a mile in someone else’s shoes speaks great wisdom. But with so many books, where should you start? Leading Christian authors have written a number of outstanding books on matters related to reconciliation and equity matters. Here are titles that believers have responded well to: Latasha Morrison’s *Be the Bridge* (2019) and Jemar Tisby’s *The Color of Compromise* (2019) and *How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice* (2021). In addition, certain theologians and religion scholars have penned books on seeing the Christian message through the eyes of the Black Church experience. Dr. Esau McCaulley, Wheaton College New Testament professor, published *Reading While Black* in 2020. A classic title is the late Dr. James Cone’s *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Don’t simply read these books for knowledge, read them to reflect on their implications.

5. COMMEMORATE

Find creative ways during February (Black History Month) to highlight the legacy of African American faith pioneers such as Sojourner Truth, William Seymour, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Charles Mason. One way a church could commemorate is by creating a video that honors the influential leaders who have paved the way.

6. WATCH

Most of us love a good flick! There are some great classics that tell a hard story, but also send strong messages of racial reconciliation. If you haven’t yet, check out *Remember the Titans*, *Hidden Figures*, *Selma*, and *The Butler*. There are also many eye-opening documentaries to watch, but a great place to start is the four-hour PBS series *The Black Church*, a documentary that debuted in 2020. It shares the 400-year-old story of the Black church in America.

7. INVITE

We can model unity by collaborating and sharing our pulpit. Ask a pastor, missionary, or evangelist of color to speak to your congregation on a Sunday. This should be something considered throughout the year and not just on MLK weekend or during Black History Month.

8. ADVOCATE

The most redeeming quality about social media is its ability to accelerate an honorable message or cause. When certain events occur, use your social media platforms to show support for the Black community. Beyond the most well-known quotations by Dr. King, this pastor had much more to say on the topic of reconciliation that is worth sharing!

9. JOIN

In many larger cities and municipalities, ecumenical meetings of pastors occur that bridge racial and ethnic lines. Try to attend and become involved, broadening your circle of ministry acquaintances and friends. This is a wonderful way to stay focused on the big “C” Church and link arms with other ministries!

10. ATTEND

Online multiracial church services are accessible across many platforms. Learn from and be a part of other communities by streaming services (live or later) from Bible-believing multiracial churches. Some outstanding examples include Peoples Church in Cincinnati, OH, The Potter’s House in Dallas, TX, and Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, TX.

