



Cultivate

A Christ-Centered Way of Life

... as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted, and built up in him and established in the faith... Colossians 2:6-7

PRINCIPLES TO HELP SHARPEN OUR ATTITUDES AGAINST RACISM AND PREJUDICE

By Marius Gradwell

To what extent is RACISM a threat? How polarised is our society? Does the Gospel we preach and live address this disease, this evil?

If we do not break our denial as to our deep racial conditioning and prejudice in our country, we will never address, heal, or be free from the racism in our hearts and minds, in our nation. We must face what is within us to renew our minds and attitudes in the truth of the equality and dignity of every person created as God's image on earth, no matter what people group. Otherwise, given the right situation or incident, our buttons will be pressed, and our unresolved racist conditioning will overflow in words and actions.

If you were born in South Africa, no matter if you are White, Black, Brown, or Indian, you are subconsciously racially conditioned. You need to consciously face it and turn from it daily. If we do not proactively do this, we will continually be reactively dealing with racist outbursts - from within us and around us.

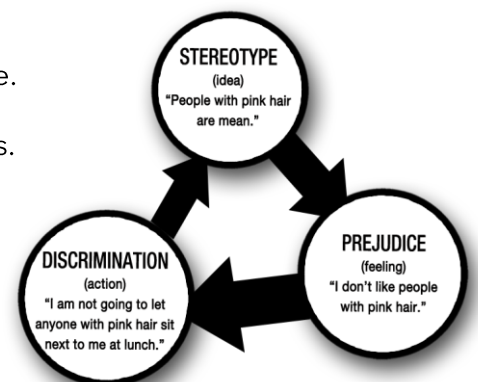
The ministry of reconciliation is part of the Gospel Jesus mandated us to proclaim, to live and to demonstrate. As the church of Jesus Christ, we should be leading this mandate!

Let us talk about this...

The make-up of Racism

The terms **stereotype**, **prejudice**, **discrimination**, and **racism** are often used interchangeably in everyday conversation.

- **Stereotypes** are oversimplified ideas about groups of people.
- **Prejudice** refers to thoughts and feelings about those groups.
- **Discrimination** refers to actions toward them.
- **Racism** is a type of prejudice that involves set beliefs about a specific people group and consequent actions.



What is Racism?

It is the belief that one's own cultural heritage is innately superior to that of others. It is prejudice, discrimination, intolerance, or antagonism directed against someone of a different people

group. It consists of ideologies and practices that seek to justify, or cause, the unequal distribution of privileges or rights.

What is the origin of the races of humanity?

This question starts with a false assumption that there are different human races. But there is only one race, the human race! Genetically speaking, all of humanity is one race. Genetic research shows that humans across the globe are 99.8% genetically identical, most of the differing 0.2% has to do with gender and personalities. Physical differences involve only 0.012% of a person's genes. Even with the variations in skin colour and facial features, humans have only one race.

Why do People from different geographical areas tend to have similar features?

Adam and Eve had the genetic potential to produce a variety of skin tones and features. Noah and his family passed this along. At the Tower of Babel, God separated people into languages and nations (Genesis 10:32, 11:1-9). As people with the same language drew away into relative isolation, recessive genes would have been reinforced within the particular populations. Features would have grown more exaggerated until specific characteristics became easily identifiable.

Racist Polarisation in SA – Four Types of Racists

By Alexander F Venter

1. Confirmed racists are those who are still prejudiced and are open about it.

They resent or even hate people of another race. This includes the growing phenomena of xenophobia, where people fear and reject people of other races, for whatever reason. Some believe more than ever that blacks and whites should be apart. For some whites, blacks are still inferior—'things were better under apartheid' they say. For some blacks, whites are still imperialistic settlers—'go back to Europe' they say. Confirmed racists are more upfront and 'honest' in their racism, often verbally dumping their offensive opinions and actions on those close at hand. The attitudes of this group are hardening.

2. Suppressed racists are those who are still prejudiced but have suppressed it in the name of political correctness, or keeping-the-peace, or fear of reprisal, or because of self-deception and psychological denial.

Many South Africans would protest, 'I am not racist, and never have been. Or if I was, I certainly am not one now'. It just takes a certain event or issue or person to bring out the prejudice, the racist comments, and attitudes. Sometimes it is blatant and other times they are 'blind spots'. We can only suppress things for so long, then it pops out—what is in the heart comes out sooner or later (as Jesus taught in Matt 12:33-37, 15:18-20). This phenomenon can be called 'modern racism' that pays lip service to principles of equality while opposing its implementation with all kinds of rationalisation; that maintains negative stereotypes via selective perception, choosing what one wants to see in various groups (e.g., 'blacks are destroying this country like the rest of Africa').

3. Recovering racists are those who have acknowledged and faced their racial conditioning (racism is inbred if you were raised in SA) and are taking responsibility for it by consciously working on their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and actions.

They have dealt with their guilt and are free. But freedom is relative, like people recovering from an addiction, they are 'in recovery' from racism. They are unlearning old ways and learning new ways of thinking and relating. They are working at inner and outer transformation of their lives (and society).

4. Pre-racists or innocents are those who are in the pre-prejudice stage—our children.

They are the racially innocent people unless their parents or others have already infected them with their prejudice. The post-apartheid generation now growing up has a wonderful opportunity to be free from racism in a way all other South Africans could never be. We are faced with a serious challenge. When and how will they lose their innocence? It will depend on our guidance and modelling, or lack thereof. It will also depend on the choices our children make and how they respond to what happens to them. The extent to which individuals around them change, and how much our society changes, will also affect them. Let us pray that this new generation will enter the new land, taking us with them into the Nation of Good Hope.

Dealing with the sin of racism, prejudice, partiality, favouritism, and hatred.

Layers of Racism and Prejudice – M Gradwell

	Layer	Cause	Remedy
1	Stereotypes	Lack of exposure, information & Experience	Mind Shift Cross Over Listen, Talk, Invite
2	Superiority/ Inferiority	Apartheid Attitude How you grew up	Listen Repent
3	Bitterness/ Hatred	Theft/Land Rape/Abuse Murder	Forgiveness Restitution Healing

Biblical Examples:

- Luke 10:29-37 ESV *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And **who is my neighbour?**" (30) Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. (32) So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. (33) But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. (34) He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. (35) And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' (36) **Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?**" (37) He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."*

- John 4:7-10 ESV A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (8) (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) (9) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (**For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**) (10) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."
- Acts 6:1 NKJV Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there **arose a complaint** against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.
- Gal 2:11-14 NKJV Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I **withstood him to his face**, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also **played the hypocrite** with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel,...
- James 2:1-10 NKJV My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with **partiality**. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown **partiality** among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well; but if **you show partiality, you commit sin**, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

What the Bible says:

The term "race" as applied to people does not appear in the Bible. In fact, the word itself is of uncertain origin and does not occur in any language until about the sixteenth century.

1. All human beings are a single family and have a common origin

Acts 17:24-26 NKJV God, who made the world and everything in it, ... (25) ...since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. (26) And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ...

2. Humanity was created in the image of God and therefore every human is of infinite worth

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female".

3. Jesus Christ died for the redemption of every person regardless of race or nationality

John 3:16 "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life".

Matthew 28:19-20 *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...".*

4. Believers of all people groups are in the family of God, brothers, and sisters together

Malachi 2:10 *"Don't all of us have one Father? Didn't one God create us?"*.

Matthew 6:9 *"...Our Father..."*.

Ephesians 4:4-6 *"There is one body... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..."*.

5. The Christian Faith either abolishes or transcends human barriers which tend to set ethnic group against ethnic group

Galatians 3:26, 28 *"...for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male, or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"*.

6. The power of the Gospel is such as to enable Christians to overcome racial prejudice

Acts 10:28 *"...God has shown me that I must not call any person common or unclean". (Peter)*

Galatians 2:11-13 CEV *When Peter came to Antioch, I told him face to face that he was wrong. (12) He used to eat with Gentile followers of the Lord, until James sent some Jewish followers. Peter was afraid of the Jews and soon stopped eating with Gentiles.*

7. The Scriptures proclaim that God is no respecter of persons

Romans 2:11 *"There is no favoritism with God"*.

Ephesians 6:9 *"...your Master is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him"*.

Acts 10:34,35, NIV. *"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.'"*

8. Christians are admonished not to be respecters of persons

James 2:1 *"My brothers, hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ without showing favoritism"*.

9. We are not to think of ourselves more highly than others

Romans 12:3, NKJV. *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith."*

10. In Heaven, we all will worship the Lord together

Isaiah 66:22, NIV. *"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD."*

The Gospel Mandate of Reconciliation through a transformed identity in Christ

Galatians 3:26-29 NKJV For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- "Neither Jew nor Gentile" – Racial/Cultural mandate: healing racism
- "Neither slave nor free" – Social/Economic mandate: healing classism
- "Neither male nor female" – Gender/Sexual mandate: healing sexism

The Gospel Mandate of Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 NKJV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (18) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, (19) that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The teaching of the Bible in terms of relations may be summed up in Jesus' own summary of the law and the prophets

Matthew 22:37-39 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself"

Are you Struggling with Racism?

- God is not happy with this mentality.
- Love God. Love who He loves.
- Listen and Learn.
- Repent – change your attitude.
- Commit to the Ministry of Reconciliation.