

**Bill Hybels, 4-22-01, #M0116**  
**Bridging the Great Divides, Part 1: The Racial Divide**

In the next few moments I want to bring the sensitivities a little further north. I want to talk to your minds. I want to remind you intellectually of how we got to this place of racial division in this country. I'm not thinking about the world right now. I want to really focus in on the black-white divide, and kind of take a fresh look at "Where did this problem start?" pertaining to our country.

And I'd like to ask for a little umbrella of mercy here because I'm going to go at it a little different way, and I think if you'll indulge me for a few moments there will be a payoff. Think of a European country--and let's just choose France. Many of us have been there and probably enjoyed Paris and other places.

But let's just choose France, and say that France accelerates its space exploration program, pours hundreds of billions of dollars into an effort to establish a space colony on Mars. And suppose once they arrive there, they find human beings there--human beings just exactly like us. Married couples, families with homes, kids, careers, people living happy lives, living peaceably amongst each other.

And suppose the French select a location for their new capital city right in a place that's occupied by native Martians. And suppose rather than sit down and negotiate with these Martians, the French begin a systematic slaughter of men, women and children in order to acquire the land they want. And suppose beyond that, they purposefully contaminate the water supply, inject some bacteria in there so that they'll kill off several million more, and be able to depopulate the area where they want to build their city.

"Depopulation" is just a sophisticated term for genocide. Well, let's say that they get the land finally through the depopulation strategy, and then they begin construction. But it's back-breaking. I mean it's hole digging, cement hauling, it's hard physical labor. It's so hard that the French don't really want to do it themselves.

And then suppose word comes to the French officials that on the back side of Mars, there's a whole different people group living

there quietly, minding their own business, farming and marrying and raising kids. And the idea hatches, "Let's go kidnap able-bodied men and young, strong men and let's break up their families. Let's chain them to one another and haul them all the way around to where we're building our city, beat them into submission, and then force them to do all the menial labor that we don't want to do."

And suppose they do just that. They go around the back side of Mars and transport about ten million people, forcibly, over to the construction sight. They force them to work until they drop from exhaustion. They feed them as little as possible and deny them medical care. Suppose when they want their sexual needs met, they rape the wives and the daughters of these forced workers, and they buy and sell these forced workers at public auctions for whatever price the market will bear.

Now, suppose the French did all this that I'm telling you. What do you suppose we as U.S. citizens would think and feel? What would our reaction to the French be? Wouldn't we call this a human rights travesty and raise the banner of concern? Wouldn't we organize opposition and launch economic boycotts or even suggest that the military get involved to stop these atrocities? And how would you feel about the French from this day forward?

And if you were able, if we were able to stop the French from all that stuff going on, at some point would we expect them to make things right with those native Martians? Would we expect them to make things right, do reparations, and demonstrate the fruits of repentance to those people they forced into the labor market? You all know what I'm driving at here. For the last two or three weeks, I've taken another look at our history--U.S. history.

I've done some reading from authors who are writing about what really happened during the formative days of our country. It's not the kind of stuff most of us read in our elementary schools growing up about the exciting and romantic fights between the good guys--the cowboys, and the bad guys--the Indians. I've been reading about our human rights record dating at the beginning of our country.

Now understand, I love our country. I do. Don't think for a moment that I'm trying to do some U.S. bashing. That is not it. But whether we want to admit it or not, our country planted its major cities on land that first had to be depopulated of its native inhabitants.

Not only did the early colonists systematically annihilate hundreds of thousands of American Indians through guns and cannons and these kinds of things, but did you know that the colonists and the British colluded, and intentionally introduced small pox and other terminal diseases into Indian societies, resulting in the deaths of millions of Native Americans? Did you know that they would sprinkle the virus on blankets and hand them to Indian children, and tell them to go home and sleep on them and introduce small pox virus and decimate entire villages?

Did you know that? What's even more difficult to swallow is that our forefathers didn't stop there. In order to kick-start the economy of our own struggling young nation, we forcibly kidnapped about ten million--think of that number--ten million Africans from the Ivory Coast region of the African continent. We went over there and simply broke up families, and chained people, and walked them, in some cases hundreds of miles, down to waiting areas where then they boarded ships.

Almost ten million were shipped across the Atlantic ocean, a four-month journey. Several million died in the holds of ships on the way over from disease and starvation. Their bodies were pitched over the side for shark-bait. Once they landed on our shores, they were auctioned off like livestock to the highest bidder.

When slave owners wanted to get the slaves to work a little harder, they would beat them. If they didn't work hard enough, they would be starved, often maimed. They'd cut off part of their foot so they wouldn't run away, or make them work with a ball and chain around their other ankle. And if things got bad enough, if the slaves were obstinate enough, they would simply be killed.

When slave owners wanted sexual favors, they regularly abused and raped the wives and daughters of their slaves, sometimes right in the presence of the fathers. In order to justify this inhumane treatment, what our early forefathers did is simply denied the

humanity of slaves, of African-Americans. African-Americans were referred to as subhuman. Here's the quote: "Bodies without souls."

So, if you are dealing with a body without a soul, you can deal with them any way you feel like it. Sadly, most churches and pastors and Christian leaders not only kept silent throughout this whole era, but quite routinely, serious-minded Christians bought and sold slaves like everybody else. It was not uncommon for pastors to own and trade slaves.

This unthinkable evil lasted officially until 1865, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued immediately following the Civil War. The systematic oppression of African-Americans continued for another hundred years, even into our present day society. In my research, it was chilling for me to realize that as recently as 1960, Woolworth's refused to serve blacks at their lunch counters.

Public drinking fountains and restrooms were designated either for whites or blacks, and you all know that if a white got on public transportation, the blacks had to move to the back of the bus. That was 30 years ago. I read some writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., and he wrote about the condition of the blacks in 1967, just a year before he was assassinated.

He writes this about life in 1967, "Of the good things in life, the black person has about one-half of that which the white has. Of the bad things, he has twice those of the white. Half of all blacks live in substandard housing, blacks have half the income of whites, twice as many are unemployed. The rate of infant mortality of blacks is double that of whites."

He continued, "In elementary schools, blacks lag one to three years behind whites, and their segregated schools received substantially less money per student than the white schools." Incidentally, I compared what most U.S. states spend on black schools versus dominantly white schools. There's still a wide gap.

I compared the average amount that is spent on a Barrington student from kindergarten through twelfth grade, compared to what is spent on someone in a dominantly black area in downtown Chicago. The differences were staggering and embarrassing. It's

still going on today. Even today--these statistics are from the last 24 months--the median income of an African-American is 62% that of a white person.

And get hold of this next one: The median net worth of blacks is 8% the median net worth of whites. Let there be no mistake about who has the wealth. Eight percent. The median net worth of blacks is 8% that of whites. Unemployment is still nearly twice as high in the black community compared to whites. Infant mortality is still twice the rate with black babies as white.

African-American mothers are four times more likely to die in childbirth than white mothers because adequate medical care is not available in many black communities still to this day. Now the list of these things could go on and on, but here's what I really found interesting, and we're going to tease this out a little more in the interview I'm going to conduct in a moment. But most whites these days are quite oblivious to the ongoing structural inequalities that still remain in American society.

And therefore, most whites don't really think there is a race problem today. They think all those inequalities ended with the civil rights legislation of the '60s, and so most whites feel the playing field has been leveled, that equal opportunity has been made available to everybody. So most whites think that minorities should just buck up and pull themselves up by the boot straps and stop complaining.

On the other hand, most blacks live with the daily residual effect of four hundred years of unthinkable oppression from whites. Most blacks are keenly aware of the continuing systemic inequities that exist in our society, and most blacks have little enthusiasm for accepting the status quo until the status quo is, in fact, fair and square for people of all colors.

So, we're missing. The whites say there is no problem, except that black people are whining and complaining. And the blacks say, "Whites don't get it. They think there's a level playing field. There has never been a level playing field in this country, not from day one." So hate crimes escalate, the Ku Klux Klan rattles its sabers, cities like Cincinnati boil over now and then, and many of us are left

wondering if there are any solutions. Can we build a bridge across this ever increasing divide?

And that's what we're going to learn about from two extraordinary men. I'd like to ask David Anderson and Brent Zuercher to come up here and join me. David is the pastor of a multi-cultural church in Columbia, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. It's a Willow Creek Association church, and we've had fond partnering experiences with David's church in our ministries out East.

Brent is a CPA and a tax specialist for a European company that does business in 165 countries around the world, and he's been a part of our church here at Willow Creek for a long, long time. Would you welcome these folks? All right, let's just start by asking the question, "How do a black guy and a white guy wind up forging a friendship?" What brought you two guys together in the first place?

Brent Zuercher: Well, it takes some intentionality to get together, and that intentionality came from this church that actually brought David on staff as a pastoral intern. Part of his responsibility was to serve in a leadership capacity in the singles ministry, and I met David at one of those ministry events and joined his small group. We had two years together in a small group setting, and we did all the things that young, Christian, single guys do together--played basketball and a lot of activities like that. And we were roommates for a period of time before David got married.

David Anderson: Yes, actually, as a part of my affirmative action program I needed more white friends, and so Brent fit that description. [Laughter.]

Bill Hybels: But it was pure duty, wasn't it?

David Anderson: Strictly duty. But in this singles group, I told Brent I was going to be going off to start a multi-cultural church in D.C., and I invited him to come out and be my money dude. He said, "Well, I've got some issues with race I need to explore." So I said, "Write me a letter," and for three years, we wrote letters back and forth.

Bill Hybels: Yeah, I neglected to mention the fact that these guys started this letter writing deal, and we're going to get into some of

the letters they wrote to each other to deal with the race issue in their friendship. But unbeknownst to them, later on, it would wind up being published in a book, these letters, and this was part of the research that I did in anticipation for this service.

It's called "Letters Across the Divide," and we had hundreds and hundreds of copies ordered for this week's service, and they've all sold out already. You'll figure out why in just a little while as you listen to this conversation more. But there will be more of these available by our midweek services or by next weekend, and I suggest that you all read this. This was instrumental in sensitizing me to this issue.

So, you decide that even though you're not going to move and transplant your family to the Washington D.C. area, you want to forge and continue the friendship. But you have some issues, and you say, "We've got to talk about these. We've got to communicate about them." What were some of the issues that you had to wrestle with in your friendship with David?

Brent Zuercher: Two of the issues--and I did want to take the friendship deeper. To do that with a black guy, you've got to talk about the race issues. Two of those issues were the growing anger in the black community and affirmative action. David talked about his affirmative action. I wanted to talk about affirmative action, but the growing rage in the black community just baffled me.

I mean this was still fresh in my mind from the L.A. riots and the Rodney King incident, and I could not understand how anyone could be so angry that they would destroy their own community and destroy the stores that they shopped in. It just baffled me. It just seemed like a complete lack of reason, an irrational response to the incident.

Affirmative action--I wanted to talk about equality and I wanted to talk about this notion that my success has been handed to me on a silver platter just because I'm a white guy. That bothered me because I felt like I'd worked hard for potential for success.

Bill Hybels: Did these things bother you a little or did they bother you quite a bit?

Brent Zuercher: They bothered me quite a bit, and I was fortunate that David was willing to listen to me and to tolerate some of that.

Bill Hybels: When I was reading the book, in one of those early letters when you say, "I want to know why blacks are so angry," I was like, "Golly, what are you going to write back?" When you got that letter, what did you say?

David Anderson: Yeah, Brent was ticked! He was ticked, and I had to explain back to Brent, of course, not all blacks are angry, but many are. And we discovered in this process of letter writing that whites are angry too, many of them are, and Brent's frustration was a part of that expression through his letters. But I had to explain to him the pain of the black experience, and what some of us may feel individually when we don't feel validated for some of the pain of our experience.

Bill Hybels: Let me stop you right there. I would bet there are a lot of Caucasians who would not even relate to, it rolls right off your tongue, "the pain of the black experience." Tell us, what is the pain of the black experience?

David Anderson: Well, when you're brought up in America, when you have darker skin, because of the fabric and the history that matters in this country, you do have a pain that comes associated with being an African-American. And I first remember it when I was 10 years old and we moved into a suburban neighborhood, and there were police all on our lawn. I asked Mom when I woke up why the police were there and she said, "Well, last night someone placed a cross on our front yard."

Now I didn't know what all that meant, but that became my introduction into my "differentness" in this culture. A phone call came in and asked my mom and my dad to move out of the neighborhood, and they said we weren't going to move.

Shortly thereafter I got in a fight with a young white kid who kept calling me the "N-word," the "N-word," the "N-word." And finally I couldn't take it anymore, and we ended up wrestling and I said, "Take it back, take it back, take it back." Finally he'd take it back, and then he'd run a block and he'd call me the N-word again, and

I'd run my chubby self down the road trying to catch him, you know.

Finally I'd get him and we'd wrestle some more, and one time I hit him and connected and there was just a tiny little blood there. By the time I got home, he had already been to my house and told my mom that we had been fighting, and so when I walked through the door my mom said, "You've been fighting. You're in trouble."

I said, "Yeah, Mom, but he called me the 'N-word' and that's what we're supposed to do! We're supposed to fight when they call us the 'N-word.'" And she says, "No, that's not what we're supposed to do. You go to that boy's house and apologize to him and his mother." And I'm like, "His mother, too?" You know what I mean?

But that was my introduction at a young age, at 10, and even as I got older and got to this area as a pastoral intern here at Willow Creek Community Church, as much as it was a joy to be here, my introduction to being in this area still is in my memory. Because within a 24-hour period, I was stopped by four different police officers within a mile of this place. Four different times by four different officers just because I was in the neighborhood coming to minister here. So, there's some of that pain.

Bill Hybels: All right, so, in the book you mention not only the pain of the black experience, but the reality of institutional racism.

David Anderson: Yeah, there's not just the individual side, you know, but there is the institutional side, and I think sometimes we don't understand that the wealth and the power is really in the hands of white in this country. And it can be quite defeating for African-Americans who have to work sort of twice as hard to move forward. Let me give you some examples of structures.

For instance, out of all five-hundred Fortune 500 companies, if you looked at all those CEOs, how many of them do you think are black? Ten or twelve? Zero. Not one. And then you go on to the senior management level, and you start looking at their boards, just no representation there. That's power, that's wealth. When you being to look at the dot-com industry that blew up in the last five years, 98% of those who were able to take advantage of the dot-com industry boom were whites.

And then some will say, "Yeah, well, blacks just didn't take advantage of it, you see?" But history matters. You have to be poised to take advantage of something like that. So, for investment capital, for banks to give you loans, you have to be poised so when opportunities come by, you can take advantage of them.

And when you think about the banks in this country, out of thousands upon thousands of banks in America, how many of them do you think are black owned? Thirty-five banks. And when you look at wealth, when you look at power, it's still capsulized in the white community.

Bill Hybels: For what it's worth, all those dot-com deals went broke anyway! Maybe you dodged the bullet there. Anyway, there's another letter that you write, Brent, that again was just shocking to me because of the candor with which you wrote it. But you were kind of upset that black leaders and many black pastors were stirring the racial pot, and in some cases, you thought, maybe they were laying down the race card. Tell us about that.

Brent Zuercher: Yeah, that was one of those things that we identified. I was very angry because that really bothered me. Whenever you look at an incident that happens, you look at it from your different perspectives. I may look at an incident and decide, "Hey, there's absolutely nothing to do with race involving this incident at all," and the African American community may look at it and say, "Of course, the only logical answer is that it's a racial incident."

The O. J. case is a big example of the disparity of our perceptions, if you would. But the O. J. case didn't bother me as much as all the repetitious occurrences, it seemed to me, of black leadership, which is often the black pastors, describing every injustice they experience as being a racial injustice. Playing the race card.

There's just injustice out there--I experience it, you do, everybody experiences some injustice. It has nothing to do with race. But it seemed to me that the black leadership never found an injustice that couldn't be called a racial injustice, and to say that it frustrated me is an understatement.

Bill Hybels: Yeah, I felt that in the book when you were writing these letters. This one got under your skin, and you wrote it, and you went, "Here!"

David Anderson: Just because I happened to be a black minister, you know. I wasn't offended. When Brent wrote that, it made me think of his perspective, and I had to look and say, "Yeah, there is some of that race card playing. We've got to be honest about that. Not a lot, but there's some of it."

But I had to be quick to also educate him on the black minister and the black community. He is the only designated leader that we as black people have designated. That comes from slavery days, when slaves were not allowed to be in church with their white masters, so there was one hour in the week when slaves could actually be on their own to have their own church, and the black male rose up to be the minister. Often uneducated, of course, but he was able to be the minister.

And so it didn't become simply a Bible institute of theological training, but it also became a place of emotion, great emotion, for somebody who had lost a husband or a son. It became a place where people would release all of their pent up pain throughout the week. Thus you see the black church as the hub of our community for social and political advocacy because that is the place where all of that took place--the underground railroad planning and all of that--took place in that hour.

So I had to explain that the black minister is the designated leader to advocate on behalf of the black community, and although sometimes we can't play the race card and have to make sure that we don't do that for ill purposes, in America race is intricately woven into the fabric of our history and of our present day.

Therefore, my question is not, "Is race an issue?" In my mind, race is almost always an issue. The question is, "To what degree is race an issue?" And I think this is some of the problem that Brent had, and I had to help, to understand his perspective that sometimes race may be a very low degree and sometimes we raise it up to a high degree.

Bill Hybels: I thought that interchange in the book was just amazingly honest, and I appreciated it. At one point after you had

been writing these letters back and forth for, I think, over two years as I understand the chronology, you wanted to know if you were making progress, and you very humbly said, "Evaluate me, David. How am I doing?" And you asked him to place you somewhere on the racist continuum.

Brent Zuercher: I think I thought of it more as a continuum of racial reconciliation rather than, "How bad of a racist am I?" Because I knew going into this discussion that it was going to take some time. I wasn't going to have a quick conversation or two with David, and boom, I'm racially reconciled.

I knew it was going to take some time, and I wanted to take the time out. And it had been some time into the conversation, and I just asked him, "How am I doing? Am I making any progress? Are you still the only black guy I like?" It was just a time out. "Let me know, how am I doing?"

Bill Hybels: And you had to, like, grade him.

David Anderson: Stone cold racism, stone cold! You know, if a stone cold racist is far to the left, and a fully devoted reconciler is far to the right, I put Brent right there in the middle, kind of moving toward the right because he really was entering into my world and trying to be a learner. That's why I placed him there.

Bill Hybels: Okay. Define for us, just as honestly as you can, what is a "stone cold racist"?

David Anderson: Racism can be defined as anyone who speaks, acts, or thinks negatively about someone solely based on their color, class or culture. And so if I have a negative thought, or I do a negative act, or say a negative word solely based on the color of your skin or your class or culture, I would define that as racism or stone cold racism.

Bill Hybels: Okay, then what does a "fully devoted reconciler" look like?

David Anderson: Second Corinthians 5 tells us we're to be ambassadors of reconciliation, and so I would say someone's an ambassador of reconciliation when they are being reconciled to

God, but then allowing his love to build a bridge so they can try to learn and cross bridges to reconcile one with another intentionally.

Bill Hybels: Now you're building, by intention, a multi-cultural church. I mean, God's blessing it, it's flourishing, but you just said this is part of what our church stands for. Tell us about that.

David Anderson: Well, it's inherent in our name, Bridgeway Community Church, and we started off with the vision and the core value of being a multi-cultural church. Look, I love a rose when it's red, I love it when it's yellow, I love it when it's white, but when you put all those roses together with a bouquet of flowers like we see on this stage, I really believe that that represents the true beauty of the body of Christ.

And I tell you, it's intoxicating when you're worshiping and walking with and doing small groups with people who are different than you because the common purpose is your love for Jesus.

Bill Hybels: And what's the racial make-up of your church presently?

David Anderson: Our church is about 54% African-American and about 46% Other, and that Other is about 30% Anglo--white--and the balance is Asian, Hispanic and Jewish.

Bill Hybels: Now, I was reading the book and enjoyed all these letters going back and forth, and then I come to this one letter that just blew my mind. And that's one that you wrote pretty late in the process, and you decided to do, kind of, just a heartfelt apology to David. Tell us about that.

Brent Zuercher: Well, after about two, two-and-a-half years of trying to convince David that he was the problem and that African-Americans really had the race issue in the 1990s, and not whites and not me, I was beginning to see that whites did have issues and that I specifically had some issues. We whites, we don't want to believe we're part of the problem. We don't want to believe we have any issues. You know, it's this guy that's got the problem, it's not me. And we'll construct ways to make that logical to us, and it's kind of what I did.

I created a profile, if you will, in my mind of what blacks should be like, and I could be reconciled to blacks who were like that. And everybody else is on the outside, and I thought pretty poorly of everybody else. So I created a box, and David was in that box even going into it, but I had to deal with how I felt about these people. I thought, "Hey, they're lazy, unmotivated. They're prone to violence, maybe prone to violence towards me. They're going to take advantage of the system and they're going to take advantage of my hard work."

Just a whole series of negative thoughts with that. And some of you may be saying, "So what? Big deal. So you had some bad stereotypes." The danger then becomes the next step, what you do with the stereotype, because it's a very easy next step when you are thinking all of these negative things to turn your back on a community in distress, like Cincinnati, and just say, "Hey, you made your bed, sleep in it. You want to destroy it, that's fine. That's your business."

It's an easy next step to not help the truly needy in the inner city because some people are abusing the welfare system. It's a very easy next step to keep quiet when racial comments are being made, whether it's by Christians or non-Christians.

Bill Hybels: So Brent, what broke the back of your denial and your resistance or reluctance to apologize?

Brent Zuercher: I think what I tried to do was I tried to put myself in David's shoes, and I tried to see life from his perspective.

Bill Hybels: Tell us about that.

Brent Zuercher: Specifically, I tried to look at it as if I was a 9-year-old African-American boy, and coming to the realization as that 9-year-old African-American that for the rest of my life, 5 out of 6 people probably just weren't going to like me because of the color of my skin.

Although they may not be a threat to me physically, they wouldn't want anything to do with me. They were going to assume the worst about me. They were going to be afraid of me, assume I was going to be violent. And I also tried to look at it as an adult a little bit,

even in the employment arena. Say, "Hey now how many job interviews would I have to go on if 5 out of 6 interviewers would just write me off for the job because I probably wouldn't be a good team fit?"

Then I put these two concepts together and I realized, going through this, looking at this from this 9-year-old-boy's perspective, I would hate that world. I would not want to live the rest of my life, 60 or 70 years, knowing those types of things.

Put the two together, and I realized my opinions, whether they were right, wrong, factual or completely erroneous, my opinions and the natural next steps to that, helped create the world that hundreds of thousands of 9-year-old African-American boys and girls live in here in Chicago. And for that I apologized to David. For that sin I apologized.

Bill Hybels: I read that, and no kidding, I mean that was one of the most moving pieces of literature I have read. It was just so honest and after I read it, I had to look in the mirror and say, "You know, even though I've had cross-racial friendships most of my life, I've never lifted a finger to end the systemic injustices that still exist in our society today." I mean, I've done a lot of stuff to help churches and church leaders, and to help the poor and stuff like that.

I've never really felt it was my responsibility to address the structural inequalities that keep blacks and other minorities from enjoying a level playing field. And God used your apology letter to David to lead me to a fresh place of repentance and soul searching about what I need to do with what's left of the rest of my life to own my part in this whole thing. And I can only imagine what happened when you read that letter of apology, David.

David Anderson: Yeah, to grow up in this country as an African-American, you have to know the white world. To be a minority, whether Asian or Latino, you have to know the white world in order to survive and to succeed. It's a required course for success. But to be a white person in this world, it's not required to know my world and to know my experience. It's an elective. And what blew me away about Brent's apology is that he took 3 years to really get under the surface, to learn about me and my experience and my culture.

When I read that thing, I felt like he understood. And you know what it feels like when you actually feel like somebody actually understands your pain. Once I got through that letter, I set it down on my desk, and I just began to weep because I actually felt like this man chose an elective to come into my world and thus, now is understanding a little bit about who I am.

Bill Hybels: And then you turned right around and you wrote him an apology letter.

David Anderson: Repentance is powerful because I realized that I'm not just a discipler-leader and I'm going to help my poor little white brother not become a racist anymore. You know, I learned that I still had issues, and I learned that "Mr. Racial Reconciliation" had anger inside of him.

And that I had not stood up when I heard African-Americans talk about white people and glass ceilings and stuff, to remind them that not all people are that way, and these are brothers that I love who are not that way. And so I had to repent for not standing up, and speaking on my brother's behalf when my brother's not there. I also had to repent for the times that the race card has been used, and I had to apologize that two wrongs don't make a right, and resentment and bitterness is not justified even if you've been hurt.

Bill Hybels: Well, we're going to close with a song in just a moment, and I'd like the group to come up and we're going to show you some pictures that I think you're going to remember for a long time. But Brent, pretend like, I mean, you're a member here. This is your church. This is your fellowship and your family attends here. You've grown a lot in the last couple years in this subject matter. Challenge us. As your church, what should we be doing about this issue?

Brent Zuercher: I think there are two things that we can do, and it would go a long ways. First one, get into ministry with someone of another race. Get into a ministry alongside of a black person. When I did that with David, it was a very enriching experience and I cherish that time. And this isn't ministering to another race, this is ministering along with, serving Christ. Second thing, and this one could even be a little bit harder, but to try to look in your everyday

life and identify ways that you can have an impact on improving race relations.

Let me give you one example of an application that I've had recently. I was given a promotion this last January, and I have a new department to head up. One of the individuals in that group was an African-American male. He's pretty much reached the pinnacle of where he's going to go. He's senior staff level, but you look at the positives and negatives of where he's at, and he's stuck.

And I had a choice to make. I could say, "Well, I could let things run their course. Let him do his job and I don't need to do anything about this." But I looked at it and I said, "You know what? I need to try to help this guy." And this isn't, "promote him, he's not deserving of it." But, "What can I do to help him advance beyond what he perceives as a glass ceiling?" That was one way I could apply it. There are probably a thousand other ways that we could apply that in our daily lives.

Bill Hybels: David?

David Anderson: Yeah, I would simply add to inform yourselves, to open books and begin to read them. I'll be glad when this one's available. We never knew our personal letters would be exposed like this, bro, but to be able to inform yourselves. To become a seeker in this arena and begin to read on it. I think your minds and your hearts will be opened in ways that you may not have experienced before.

And then to involve yourselves with other people so this can become a multi-cultural experience for you, because I'm sure on Friday night, if you go over to the AMC-30 movie theater, there are all kinds of people that are there. So, with that kind of intentionality, we can really build a bridge. And one last thing I'd like to say to the minorities in the audience, not just blacks, but Latinos and Koreans and Asians.

I would like to say when white folk begin to read and their hearts begin to open up, and they want to begin to learn and they try to reach out to you, don't slap their hand. They're going to stumble and be a little clumsy sometimes as they're learning this thing.

Be open armed with them and help them to learn and to grow, and accept them, because the temptation sometimes is to say, "Hey, you just can't understand. And it's been way too long and way too late, and now you want to try to know me? Sorry, not going to happen." So I think that we can open our hearts one more time to really try to embrace our white brothers and sisters.

Bill Hybels: Well, friends, as we close, and you listen to this music and you look at the side screens, I want to ask you to also look inside yourself. This is an area where deception and denial runs wild. It really is. Look inside and find out, are there any little pockets of bitterness or stereotyping?

And then I'd like to ask you to think about the heart of God, as Camille sings this song, and think of where your heart is now, and where the heart of God is, and how you can move from current reality to where the heart of God would be on this matter. And afterwards we'll close in prayer.