



UNDIVIDED



ALL CONTENT WRITTEN BY ANDREW WILSON AND MEMBERS OF THE KING'S CHURCH LONDON TEAM.
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THERE IS NEITHER JEW NOR
GREEK, THERE IS NEITHER SLAVE
NOR FREE, THERE IS NO MALE
AND FEMALE, FOR YOU ARE ALL
ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.

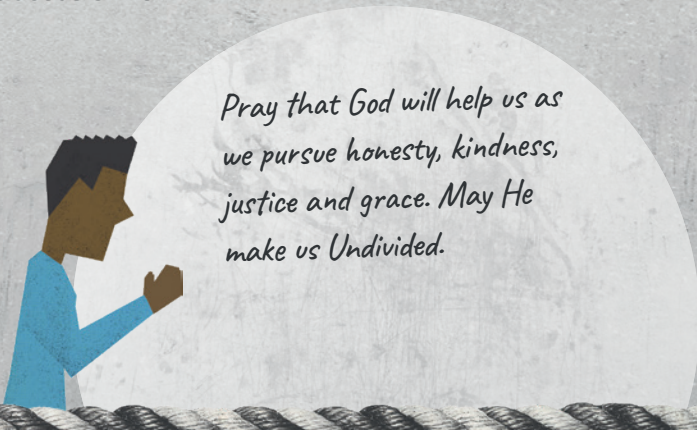
– GALATIANS 3:28



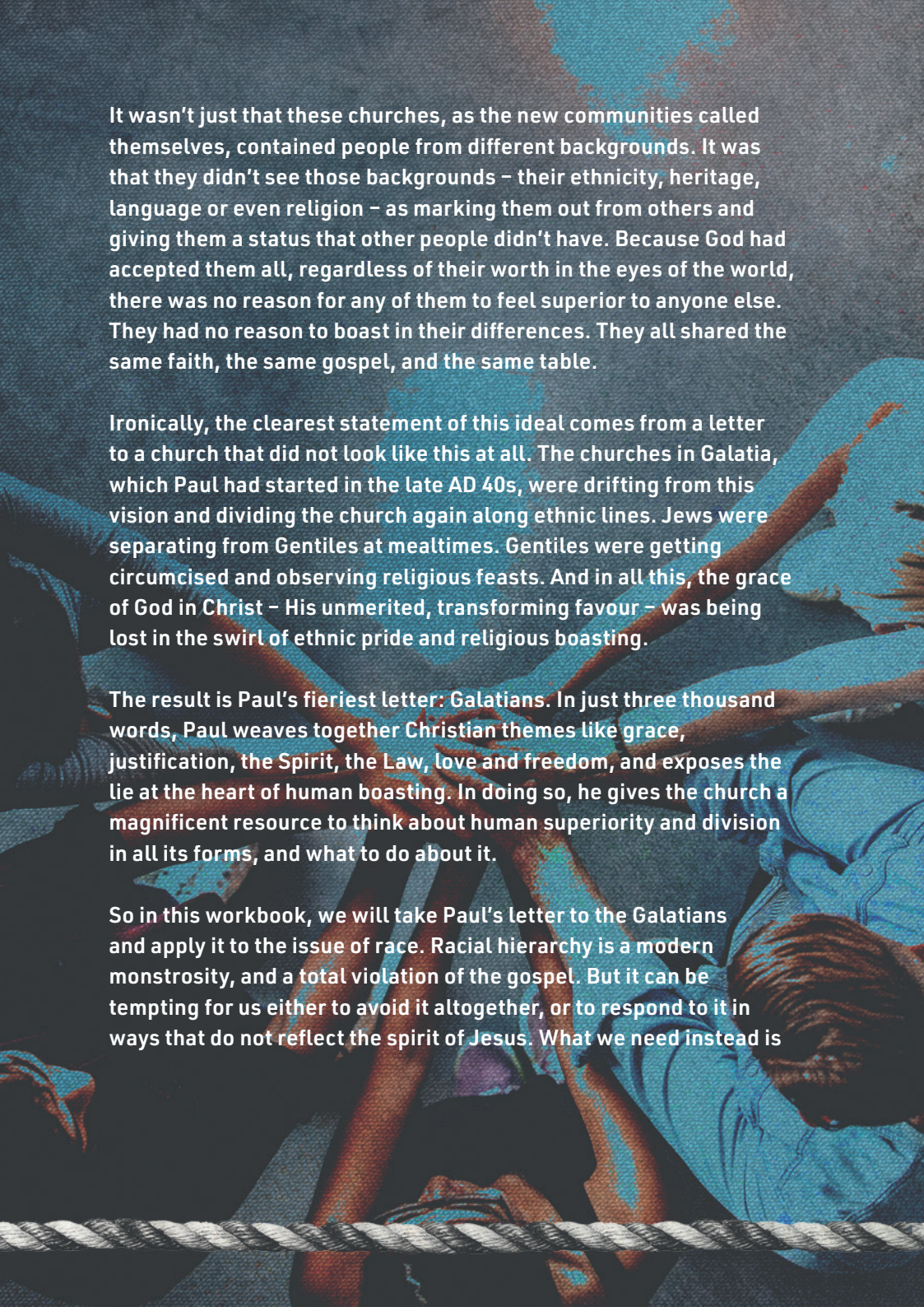
ONE RACE

The idea of race did not really exist in the Bible. In its modern form, it was cooked up by Europeans a few centuries ago. But ethnic superiority and prejudice are as old as the hills. As long as there have been tribes and nations, there have been some who think they are better than everybody else, and who try to justify that superiority through their culture, history and religion.

Then, about two thousand years ago, something remarkable happened. Starting in the Eastern Mediterranean, and quickly spreading into West Asia, North Africa and southern Europe, little communities of people began springing up in which the usual ethnic and social divisions – Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, male and female, slave and free – were swallowed up by a higher allegiance: to Jesus Christ.



Pray that God will help us as we pursue honesty, kindness, justice and grace. May He make us Undivided.



It wasn't just that these churches, as the new communities called themselves, contained people from different backgrounds. It was that they didn't see those backgrounds – their ethnicity, heritage, language or even religion – as marking them out from others and giving them a status that other people didn't have. Because God had accepted them all, regardless of their worth in the eyes of the world, there was no reason for any of them to feel superior to anyone else. They had no reason to boast in their differences. They all shared the same faith, the same gospel, and the same table.

Ironically, the clearest statement of this ideal comes from a letter to a church that did not look like this at all. The churches in Galatia, which Paul had started in the late AD 40s, were drifting from this vision and dividing the church again along ethnic lines. Jews were separating from Gentiles at mealtimes. Gentiles were getting circumcised and observing religious feasts. And in all this, the grace of God in Christ – His unmerited, transforming favour – was being lost in the swirl of ethnic pride and religious boasting.

The result is Paul's fieriest letter: Galatians. In just three thousand words, Paul weaves together Christian themes like grace, justification, the Spirit, the Law, love and freedom, and exposes the lie at the heart of human boasting. In doing so, he gives the church a magnificent resource to think about human superiority and division in all its forms, and what to do about it.

So in this workbook, we will take Paul's letter to the Galatians and apply it to the issue of race. Racial hierarchy is a modern monstrosity, and a total violation of the gospel. But it can be tempting for us either to avoid it altogether, or to respond to it in ways that do not reflect the spirit of Jesus. What we need instead is

to bring it before the cross, seek the wisdom of Scripture together, and ask the Spirit to transform us. By God's grace, we will discover how best to put the uniting, freeing, boundary-destroying love of God on display.

May God help us as we pursue honesty, kindness, justice and grace. And may He make us undivided.

SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

What encouraged and challenged you from Sunday's message?

What stories or illustrations helped you grasp the meaning?



LISTEN

Reflect on the key Bible verse. Read it again. Ask God to help you understand and apply this to your life and jot down your thoughts.

What questions do you have about this passage and/or topic?

If you have children or young people in your family find time to discuss these important topics and how they affect them.

REFLECT

What can you do in response?

What do you need God to help you change in your thinking and acting this week?

RESPOND

Write a brief prayer for: Yourself...

The church...

The world...

PRAY

GROUP DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the sermon and then attending a group where you can share and listen to others will help you grow in understanding about grace, race and Galatians. This acrostic is a good guide for group discussion:



- Grace** (the grace of our Lord Jesus be with your spirit, brothers and sisters)
- Reflect** (be quick to listen and learn)
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REFLECT

What can you or your group do in response?

What do you need God to help you change in your thinking and acting this week?

How can you give or receive grace to each other on this topic?

RESPOND




**GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU
FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO
GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS TO
RESCUE US FROM THE PRESENT
EVIL AGE, ACCORDING TO THE
WILL OF OUR GOD AND FATHER,
TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER
AND EVER. AMEN.**

– GALATIANS 1:3-4

ONE GOSPEL

The good news of God's grace works at three levels. Individually, God restores us to relationship with himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on our behalf, justifying us by faith in His Son and giving us the Holy Spirit to transform us into His likeness. Corporately, God creates a new community – the church – in which the dividing lines between human beings are brought down and replaced with unity, forgiveness, reconciliation and love. And cosmically, God creates a new world, in which creation is delivered from what Paul calls 'this present evil age', and all the evil powers that corrupt it, into freedom and glory. As we study Galatians, we will see how all three levels come together in the letter, expressing the fullness of what God has done in Christ.



Pray that the transforming effects of God's grace would be felt at all three levels: in our lives and the lives of our family and friends, in the local community here at our church, and in the nation and the world as a whole.

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RESPOND

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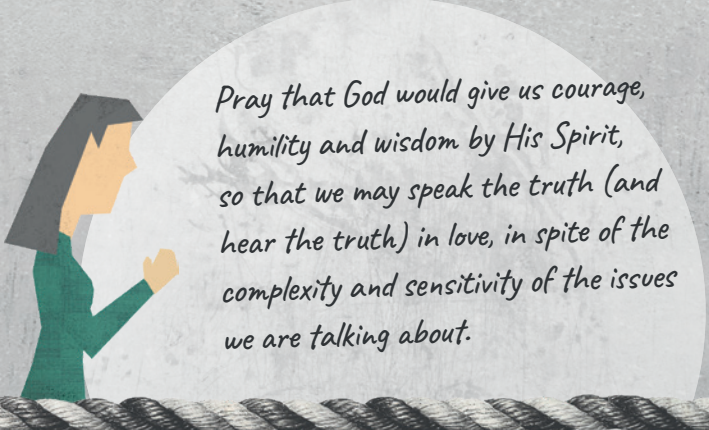
**WE DID NOT GIVE IN TO THEM
FOR A MOMENT, SO THAT THE
TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL MIGHT BE
PRESERVED FOR YOU.**

– GALATIANS 2:5



ONE TABLE

Being part of a family always involves difficult conversations. You love people, so you don't want to hurt them or cause them discomfort, but you also love them enough to tell them the truth. The church is no different. Here in Galatians 2, Paul gives us one of Scripture's most powerful examples: he directly challenges Peter for something he was doing that was damaging Christian unity between people of different ethnic groups and, in the process, was undermining the Gospel. The issues in our day may look different, and we may not need to respond to them in exactly the same way, but there are lessons here for us nevertheless. Ethnic hierarchy, whether in Galatia or in London, needs to be challenged without slavery, without partiality and without fear.

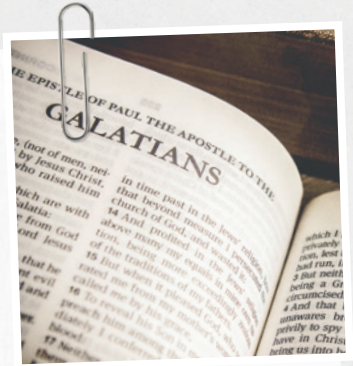


Pray that God would give us courage, humility and wisdom by His Spirit, so that we may speak the truth (and hear the truth) in love, in spite of the complexity and sensitivity of the issues we are talking about.

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The world...

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RESPOND

“


I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST AND I NO LONGER LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME. THE LIFE I NOW LIVE IN THE BODY, I LIVE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.

– GALATIANS 2:20



ONE FAITH

Martin Luther famously referred to justification by faith as 'the article by which the church stands or falls'. The idea that God declares us righteous on the basis of our faith in Christ, and not on the basis of works of the Law, is completely central to our salvation as individuals. But it is also completely central to our unity as a church, because it completely cuts the legs out from any source of human pride, superiority or hierarchy. If everyone has been justified on the basis of faith, not works, then no achievements or status symbols can make one group of people more worthy than another; the only thing that counts is faith. That is why Paul brings it up in a section on table fellowship and unity. He knows that if the church really grasps the reality of justification by faith, it will be far more likely to be undivided.



Pray that God would bring the truths of the Gospel home to us again: that we would see our standing before God as based on His achievement for us rather than our achievements for Him, and that this would humble, delight and unite us.

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RESPOND

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RESPOND




HE REDEEMED US IN ORDER
THAT THE BLESSING GIVEN TO
ABRAHAM MIGHT COME TO THE
GENTILES THROUGH CHRIST
JESUS, SO THAT BY FAITH WE
MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE
OF THE SPIRIT.

– GALATIANS 3:14



ONE SAVIOUR

Right back in Genesis, when God called Abraham and made promises to him, the heart of the covenant was God's commitment to bless Abraham and his 'seed'. In this week's section, Paul makes very clear who the 'seed' is, and why it matters. If God's covenant to bless the nations was made with 'all Abraham's biological descendants', then there would be a basis for saying that those biological descendants – the Jews – had special privileges and rights within the church of Christ (and that Gentiles should be circumcised, or have to observe Jewish food taboos). But, Paul says, Genesis did not say 'seeds' (meaning many Jewish people), but 'seed' (meaning one Jewish person): Jesus Christ. And that means that everyone who trusts in Christ is an heir to God's promise, whatever ethnic group they are from. There is one seed, one Saviour, one covenant, one church, and one God.

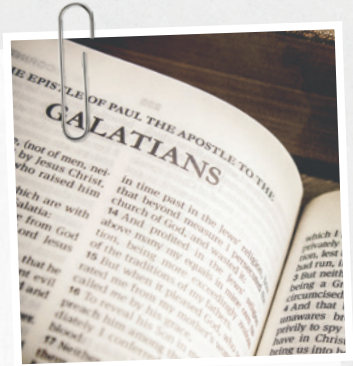


Pray that the church would be able to give thanks for our ancestry and heritage, but without using it as a basis to count ourselves superior to other believers and that the world would see our unity and be blessed through it.

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RESPOND




**BECAUSE YOU ARE HIS SONS,
GOD SENT THE SPIRIT OF HIS
SON INTO OUR HEARTS, THE
SPIRIT WHO CALLS OUT, "ABBA,
FATHER." SO YOU ARE NO LONGER
A SLAVE, BUT GOD'S CHILD; AND
SINCE YOU ARE HIS CHILD, GOD
HAS MADE YOU ALSO AN HEIR.**

– GALATIANS 4:6-7



ONE IN CHRIST

We live in divided times, and everybody has their own ideas about how to fix this. The problem is, most of those ideas revolve around other people becoming more like us. What is really needed goes much deeper. We need to die to ourselves (through faith), be buried (in baptism), and then rise again to a new life in which we are united with others by being united with Christ. When that happens, the barriers that divide people – Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free – are transcended by the unity we have in Jesus Christ. And that transformation is something Paul talks about as freedom from slavery, receiving an inheritance, and being adopted as children of God, in a glorious process that involves every believer and all three members of the Trinity.



Pray that we would know the Spirit at work in our hearts, helping us to experience the joy of adoption as children of God, and leading us into freedom from slavery, and the full enjoyment of our inheritance in Christ.

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RESPOND

//


BUT THE JERUSALEM THAT IS
ABOVE IS FREE, AND SHE IS
OUR MOTHER.

– GALATIANS 4:26



ONE FREEDOM

This is probably the trickiest part of the letter. In the first half of it, Paul expresses his sorrow that the Galatians have been bamboozled by people who want them to become slaves again: to religious festivals, rituals and even spiritual powers that will hold them captive. In the second half, he uses an analogy from the book of Genesis. In a nutshell, there are 'slave' children, like Ishmael (born to his mother Hagar by natural means), and there are 'free' children, like Isaac (born to his mother Sarah by supernatural means). What God has done for us in Christ is supernatural, through the Spirit and based on God's promise, rather than through the flesh. That means we are truly free from the ethnic divisions and markers which the Galatians are getting drawn into, and we should never forget it.



Pray for the worldwide church (the Jerusalem above, our 'mother') that we might be free from the various forces that would divide us and pull us back into spiritual slavery, and would be a place where people who do not yet know Jesus might find freedom in Him.

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RESPOND

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THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST
JESUS HAVE CRUCIFIED THE
FLESH WITH ITS PASSIONS AND
DESIRES. SINCE WE LIVE BY THE
SPIRIT, LET US KEEP IN STEP
WITH THE SPIRIT.

– GALATIANS 5:24-25



ONE WORD

The whole Law is summed up in one word, Paul says: love your neighbour as yourself. In this particular church, that means standing firm in the freedom that Christ has won for you, and refusing to be circumcised, and refusing to live by the flesh, in 'hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy'. (Notice the focus on being undivided in these eight terms.) There is no place for that in the church, because we bear the fruit of the Spirit, in which love for brothers and sisters, and the kindness, gentleness and so forth that come with it, grow as we keep in step with the Spirit. If we live like that, we walk in spiritual freedom, and we fulfil the Law anyway.

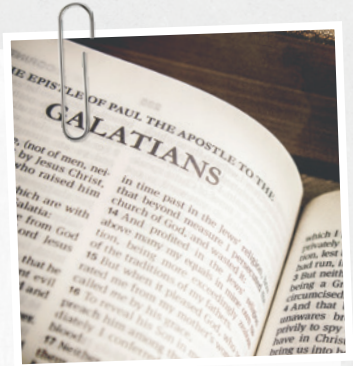


Pray for King's as a local church, that we would keep in step with the Spirit, and that this would lead us away from the divisive, immoral and ungodly acts of the flesh, and towards the loving, joyous, peaceful fruit of the Spirit.

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RESPOND

WEEK 8

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**MAY I NEVER BOAST EXCEPT IN
THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST, THROUGH WHICH THE
WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO
ME, AND I TO THE WORLD.**

– GALATIANS 6:14



ONE BOAST

Everybody boasts in something or someone. Your boast is the thing in which you place your confidence, and we all have one (our family, career, education, ethnic heritage or whatever it is). Much of the problem in Galatia is that people were being drawn to ethnically divisive boasting in the flesh, particularly with respect to circumcision or uncircumcision. But neither of these count for anything, Paul says, and the only reason people are saying that they do is because they want to be able to boast about your allegiance to them. The answer to all this is simple: to boast in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing else. The cross is where the world was crucified to us and we to the world, and if we truly place our confidence there, we will not be able to place it anywhere else.

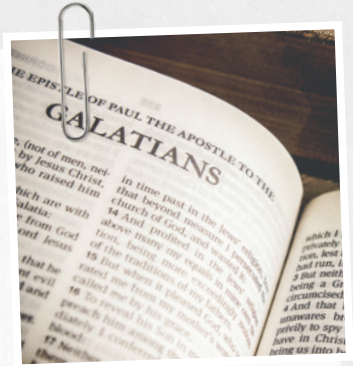


Pray that we would be able to boast in the cross of Christ at all three levels: as individuals following Him in our daily lives, as a local church in our community, and as the worldwide body of Christ, proclaiming the saving power of the cross without compromise.

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RESPOND

HOW SHOULD WE REACT TO INJUSTICE?

One of the most obvious questions we have when we think about themes like diversity and racial reconciliation is this: How should we respond to racial injustice?

How far should we accept persecution as a fact of life in a fallen world, and how far should we campaign and act, using our civic and political power, to secure an end to injustice and a better future for the oppressed? What part does protest play, if any? How do we agitate for change without becoming bitter, angry or even violent? On the other side, how do we pursue reconciliation and harmony without becoming passive, or even colluding in the oppression of others? These are difficult questions, with no easy answers.

Yet the book of Acts can help us. In particular, Paul serves as a great example of someone who both accepted persecution as a painful but necessary reality of a fallen world, and insisted on defending himself and asserting his rights where it helped him. He was beaten many times for his preaching of the gospel (2 Corinthians 11:21-29), but he also escaped flogging by announcing that he was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:22-29). What was his underlying logic? And what can we learn from him about protest? At least three things.

Firstly, we can learn that living a godly life will involve some persecution. Paul's experience was particularly dramatic, of course - few of us will have faced stonings, shipwrecks, the stocks, floggings, the thirtynine lashes and so on - but he frequently used his example to teach other Christians. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God," he explained in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 14:22). "You yourselves know that we are destined for this [affliction]," he says in 1 Thessalonians 3:3. "Everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, he writes to his pastoral trainee (2 Timothy 3:12). Pretty direct stuff.

Taken on its own, however, that could make us passive. So we also need to learn,

secondly, how to assert our civic rights in a respectful yet firm manner.

When governments recognise that their citizens have rights - like the right of Roman citizens not to be flogged, or the right of all children to be treated with dignity, or the right of every human being to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - then those citizens can claim those rights, and insist that their governments do not abuse them. Paul does this brilliantly in Acts 22:25: "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" He is not being rude, or aggressive; notice that the very next day he apologises for accidentally insulting the high priest, on the grounds that we should not speak evil of our rulers (23:5). He is simply pointing out that the Romans are about to break their own laws, and he is not having it. Paul adopts a similar strategy when he appeals to Caesar (25:11): he knows what his rights are, and he politely but firmly asserts them and expects them to be honoured. Modern examples of nonviolent protest have often applied similar principles.

Thirdly, we can learn the importance of bringing injustice into the public eye. Immediately after the famous story of the Philippian jailer being converted, there is a fascinating window into Paul's thinking on civil rights, secrecy and openness. The magistrates who arrested Paul, who feel very awkward about the whole thing, want Paul and Silas to leave in peace (16:36). But Paul will have none of it: "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us in prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out" (16:37). Paul is emphatic that injustice must be brought into the open, not swept under the carpet, so he refuses to go until they admit their mistake. In a very different context, this is the strategy that Martin Luther King employed with his marches: where oppression had been happening in secret, he forced it into the light.

Taken together, those principles can help inform our approach to protest, injustice and racial reconciliation. They do not tell us what to do in every situation, of course. They don't tell us how to use social media, or how to think about #BlackLivesMatter, or whom to vote for, or which marches or campaigns to participate in. But if we apply them carefully, they will help us respond wisely to difficult situations when they arise: defending the oppressed, forgiving our enemies, honouring our leaders, loving our neighbours, and imitating our King.

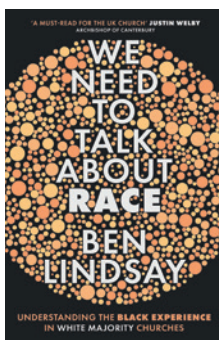
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



BEYOND RACIAL DIVISION

A Unifying Alternative to Colorblindness and Antiracisms

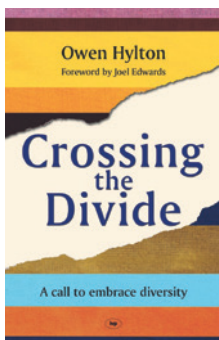
– GEORGE YANCEY



WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT RACE

Understanding the Black Experience in White Majority Churches

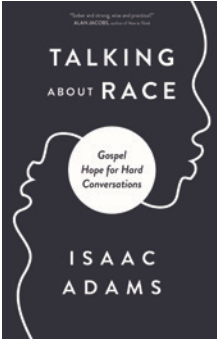
– BEN LINDSAY



CROSSING THE DIVIDE

A Call to Embrace Diversity

– OWEN HYLTON



TALKING ABOUT RACE

**Gospel Hope for Hard
Conversations**

– ISAAC ADAMS



GOD'S VERY GOOD IDEA

**A True Story of God's Delightfully
Different Family (children's book)**

– TRILLIA NEWBELL

