

Conference on  
Apologetics  
and Culture

# ONE

EPHESIANS 2:14

APR 24-25

# WELCOME

Welcome to the 2nd Annual Conference on Apologetics and Culture. This year's event is a collaborative effort between Grace EV Free in La Mirada and Community of Faith Bible Church in South Gate. For a number of years, our churches have enjoyed a warm gospel partnership. In recent years, the five of us have developed a growing personal friendship. So, in gospel solidarity and relational unity, we want to address some of the contemporary challenges that work to weaken these bonds. And we want to address them, as best we can, with you and according to the Bible.

A crucial aspect to the effectiveness of this conference will be your participation. So, be prepared to actively listen and lovingly respond to what you hear this weekend. Some ways to help us do that are found on p 4-6 of this booklet.

We know, as do you, that this topic can be challenging and even discouraging. So, join us in prayerfully and expectantly approaching the weekend. And as we do, may the Lord help us to not only know, but also experience what it means to be

## ONE.

*Darin Early  
Randall Gruendyke  
Anthony Kidd  
Bobby Scott  
Erik Thoennes*

## BIOS

### **Darin Early**

Darin is Director of the Loyola Marymount University Family of Schools. Along with writing student curricula and facilitating teacher development, Darin's passion is bringing together people from diverse backgrounds by way of the gospel. Along with his wife, Sonya, Darin is the father of five children.

### **Randall Gruendyke**

Randall is Elder of Ministry Leadership at Grace EV Free. He has been in pastoral ministry for thirty-five years, twelve of which were as Campus Pastor at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. Over the years, Randall has been involved with a variety of ethnically diverse gospel partnerships. Along with his wife, Nancy, Randall has three adult daughters.

### **Anthony Kidd**

Anthony is Preaching Pastor at Community of Faith Bible Church. He is also a well-traveled speaker who serves on the faculty at Los Angeles Bible Training School. Anthony loves making God's glory known by way of His Word. Anthony is married to Sherry with whom he has five children.

### **Bobby Scott**

Bobby is Pastor of Discipleship at Community of Faith Bible Church where he oversees the teaching ministries, as well as the Elder Team. Bobby's writing can be found on a variety of platforms including The Gospel Coalition and 9 Marks. Along with his wife, Naomi, Bobby is the father of six children.

### **Erik Thoennes**

Erik is Elder of Congregational Life at Grace EV Free. He is also the Chairman of the Undergraduate Theology Department at Biola University and maintains a busy speaking and writing ministry. Erik has been an integral part of the Grace Family since 1999 where he and his wife, Donna, have raised their four children.



# SATURDAY EVENING

**6pm to 8pm**

- Welcome
- Panel Discussion
- “A Radical Rebelliousness” | *Randall Gruendyke*
- Small Group Discussions
- Large Group Wrap-Up

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## NOTES

1. Share your earliest recollection of ethnic differences/tensions. Was it something that you personally experienced, witnessed happening to others, or was it something that you watched on a screen?
2. How did your earliest recollection of ethnic differences/tensions make you feel? How does that kind of tension make you feel today?
3. As a group, come up with at least three examples of the gospel uniting people from different backgrounds. What characteristics do these examples have in common?
4. What keeps you from moving toward people who are not like you? How would the gospel help you begin to change that?

# SUNDAY MORNING

**9am at Grace | 10am at Community of Faith**

- “A Radical New Identity” 1 Peter 2:9
  - Bobby Scott (at Grace | 9am)
  - Erik Thoennes (at Community | 10am)

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## NOTES

# SUNDAY EVENING

6pm to 8pm

- Welcome
- Panel Discussion
- "A Radical Unity" Ephesians 2:14 | *Anthony Kidd*
- Small Group Discussions
- Large Group Wrap-Up

## NOTES

1. If the Gospel is enough to produce true ethnic unity in the Church among believers, share your thoughts as to why you think there is still so much division between believers of different ethnic backgrounds.
2. Given the profound statements made by Paul regarding Gentile and Jew unity in Christ, how can Christians say "Black Lives Matter" in a meaningful way divorced from the teachings of the secular "BLM" movement?
3. Discuss with your group practical ways you can personally "be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
4. In light of the messages you've heard this weekend, please discuss with each other at least two takeaway thoughts the Lord has impressed on your heart.

### 1. Human depravity is real and deep.

Sin has affected everything about everyone including our relationships. Our discussions must be marked by humble and gracious truth-telling, not self-righteousness and sinful anger. Sin starts in the human heart and has an impact on society at every level. We should not be shocked by the sinfulness of sin but should also hate it and go to war with it in our own hearts, the church, and society.

### 2. Jesus is the only answer to our depravity.

Jesus and his glorious gospel are the only ultimate solutions to how messed-up we are. Christ's saving work is our only hope for salvation. His church will one day be perfectly unified and reflect who we are. But the gospel must be worked out in every area of our lives in practical ways so that we are salt and light to a needy and dark world.

### 3. The past is important.

Understanding and appreciating our past (individually and collectively) is important for understanding how we need to redemptively move ahead. But we are never stuck in our past. We want people to help each other know and grow in Jesus.

### 4. God's word is important.

Scripture is our divine, ultimate, sufficient, authoritative, clear, inerrant guide in all areas of life.

### 5. God's word interprets our experience.

Scripture cannot be interpreted according to our experience. Our relationships must be viewed through the lens of God's design and purpose for our lives. We need to appreciate and sympathize the experiences of others, but not see those experiences as necessarily determinative of what is real and true. We cannot fall into the common contemporary instinct to hyper-affirmation of personal, subjective experience as what determines and even creates reality.

## 6. Lament don't whine.

Christians need to be good at grieving and lamenting over our own suffering, as well as that of others. But we can't be whiners since we are people of hope, joy, and gratitude in the midst of the groaning. We need to get beyond that. Grieving immorality, especially in the church, is good and right. But God is always working for his glory and our good – and there's plenty of both.

*"In terms of positive action, lamentation offers little and delivers less. As for the notion of some lost golden age, it is truly very hard for any competent historian to be nostalgic. . . . Every age has its darkness and its dangers. The task of the Christian is not to whine about the moment in which he or she lives but to understand its problems and respond appropriately to them." (Carl Trueman, The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self)*

## 7. Be thoughtful and gracious.

We need to think critically and evaluate ideas and cultural movements from a biblical perspective, but be gracious and sympathetic with individuals who are struggling on life's journey. Grace means we love each other! We speak truth in love and graciously call one another to holiness.

## 8. Evaluate the best examples of ideas we oppose.

*"Try to 'steel man' an opponent's position. A steel-man argument is the opposite of a straw-man argument. When we erect a straw man, we present a weakened caricature of our opponent's position, which makes it easier to knock down. Social media incentivizes this sort of engagement, as we aim for the 'mic drop' moment. It's easy to find plenty of cheerleaders who will applaud when we demolish our opponents (or at least, the straw man that we've attached to their faces). In contrast, a steel-man argument seeks to represent an opponent's*

*position better than he did. We might supply an additional argument for his position — one that he did not advance — in order to present the strongest expression of that position. This sort of exercise is an act of love towards him, and towards those who agree with us. By strengthening views that we eventually reject, we can become aware of limitations or weaknesses in our own arguments." (Joe Rigney)*

## 9. Aim at truth and unity.

We seek unity grounded in truth and truth that seeks unity. We need to be discerning about what issues deserve the most conviction and commitment and which ones are more peripheral.

*"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:1-6)*

### THE FIVE L'S

- LISTEN
- LEARN
- LAMENT
- LOVE
- LEAD

### GLOSSARY

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| ■ JUSTICE | ■ PREJUDICE |
| ■ CHURCH  | ■ RACE      |
| ■ CULTURE | ■ RACISM    |
| ■ GRACE   | ■ TRIBALISM |

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

### God Made Me and You

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B089ZMZV1/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B089ZMZV1/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

### Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

[https://www.amazon.com/Thunder-Puffin-Modern-Classics-Logans-ebook/dp/B00B1FG8RW/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=YBEDOOLD26ZL&dchild=1&keywords=roll+of+thunder+hear+my+cry&qid=1618008938&s=digital-text&sprefix=thunder+cry+%2Cdigital-text%2C198&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Thunder-Puffin-Modern-Classics-Logans-ebook/dp/B00B1FG8RW/ref=sr_1_1?crid=YBEDOOLD26ZL&dchild=1&keywords=roll+of+thunder+hear+my+cry&qid=1618008938&s=digital-text&sprefix=thunder+cry+%2Cdigital-text%2C198&sr=1-1)

## BOOK

### Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08BYYWJ2/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08BYYWJ2/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

## ARTICLES

### “Seeing the World in Black and White”

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seeing-the-world-in-black-and-white>

### Resources on Race, Racism, and Racial Reconciliation

<https://www.nealhardin.com/resources-on-race-racism-and-racial-reconciliation/>

## CRITICAL THEORY

### “Critical Theory, Social Justice, and Christianity: Are They Compatible?” | Neil Shenvi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnmJX5hEenY>

### The Incompatibility of Critical Theory and Christianity

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/incompatibility-critical-theory-christianity/>

### Critical Race Theory Parts 1 & 2

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/critical-race-theory-part-1>  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/critical-race-theory-part-2>

### Social Justice, Critical Race Theory, Marxism, and Biblical Ethics

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2020/june/reflections-from-christian-scholar-on-social-justice-critic.html>

# DEFINITIONS TO HELP TALK ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

Here are a few really loaded words used in our conversation about race. When used, their meanings are easily misunderstood. When that happens even Christians can talk past each other or at each other rather than to and with each other. So let's look for better words and strive to think through what we mean and not simply get stuck on word choice.

## I. TERMS USED IN ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

1. **Intersectionality** (a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw): A framework that examines the complexities of a person with consideration to how a person's identities intersect with one another and how they are experienced in the world. It further provides a metaphor for understanding how disadvantages can compound themselves to create barriers for groups of people in a given society by examining their identities and their place in society (some of us have more privileges to access, power, and opportunity due to our identities than others do). At its basic level of meaning, intersectionality can be helpful.
2. **Privilege**: Having an advantage or immunity by belonging to a particular group. For example, by being a part of the able-bodied group, I have advantages: I have greater access to transportation, buildings, bathrooms, etc. This term can be easily weaponized in conversations about race and can be used in harmful rather than constructive ways.
3. **Critical Race Theory (CRT)**: A theoretical framework in social sciences that examines race, law, and power in society and culture. It assumes that racism is engrained in the fabric and systems of American society. Power is maintained based on race and perpetuates the marginalization of people of color. CRT says that the main cause of social injustice is race. Its goal is to tear down and get rid of power structures that reinforce racism.
4. **Prejudice**: Holding internal negative feelings against a person or group simply because of who they are. This term is also used when the bias is positive for a person or group. We generally think of this as personal racism. Prejudice is expressed by one's words and attitudes.

5. **Discrimination**: When people act out on prejudice in ways that limit the opportunities of person(s) in the group which is looked down upon.
6. **Racism**: As technically defined, racism looks at systems. Racism is an "-ism" so it affects structures, not simply individuals. Racism occurs when a society normalizes prejudice and discrimination, as in Jim Crow America. Adding -ism communicates that structural and systematic issues are in view (i.e., sexism). While the term identifies perpetrators and victims, it shouldn't be assumed that being a victim makes someone morally virtuous (Moses identified with the oppressed Hebrews. In doing so he murdered an Egyptian.). While victims can do evil, perpetrators have power to sway social structures to oppress an entire class of people (Nazi Germany and the Jews, for example).
7. **Structural Racism** (as defined by John Piper): "The cumulative effect of racist feelings, beliefs, and practices that become embodied and expressed in the policies, rules, regulations, procedures, expectations, norms, assumptions, guidelines, plans, strategies, objectives, practices, values, standards, narratives, histories, records, and the like, which accordingly disadvantage the devalued race and privilege the valued race. Implicit in this definition is the important fact that structural racism, therefore, may have its racist effects even if non-racist people now inhabit the institutions where the racist structures still hold sway."
8. **Systemic Institutional Racism**: Occurs in institutions or systems of power, when they routinely practice policies that are discriminatory or create barriers for particular groups, such as redlining, blacks not allowed in certain schools or hired at certain companies, systemic prejudice against Christians or the family unit, etc.
9. **Marxism**: A social, political, and economic framework that examines how all social injustices are caused by classism. People with more resources and financial means utilize societal structures for their advantage and benefit from the work of people with fewer resources. The solution is for a system that is able to distribute resources to ensure equity, and to use anarchy to topple power structures.
10. **Culture** (as defined by Al Mohler): "The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of [a tribe] use to cope with this world and with one another and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning." It's dangerously easy to assume that our perspective and ways are the right ways and perspectives. Assuming that can blind us to the strengths of other cultures and to the problems within our own.

## II. BIBLICAL CONCEPTS: RACE VERSUS ETHNICITY AND TRIBES:

“The idea of race is inescapable in our society. We choose where we live, who we marry, who our friends are, consciously and subconsciously around our modern contrast of race.” (Thabiti Anyabwile) Most of us choose to surround ourselves with people who biologically resemble us.

1. **Race in the Bible:** Race in the Bible encompasses the whole of humanity. Every human is part of the one human race, descendants from Adam (Acts 17:26) and Eve, the mother of all the living (Gen 3:20). Biblically, there are no sub-human groups. In the Bible, the concept of race does not distinguish people into groups. It does just the opposite. Biblically, the word race ontologically identifies those who by virtue of being human reflect God's glory, and designates those who represent Him as being made in His image and likeness. The Bible tells a common story of humanity, all of whom are sinners, all in need of a Savior.
2. **Race in the academy:** An academic use of the word race describes categories assigned to demographic groups based mostly on observable physical characteristics, like skin color, hair texture and eye shape.
3. **Ethnicity in the Bible:** Biblically, this term distinguishes people by social characteristics they may have in common, such as language, religion, regional background, culture, foods, etc. Ethnicity is revealed by the traditions one follows, a person's native language, and so on.
4. **Tribes in the Bible:** Tribes were created by God as an act of His judgment. God separated humanity into people groups to prohibit us from joining forces in a unified mutiny against Him (Genesis 10-11). In a general sense, tribes are groups of people who share a variety of common elements: location, language, family heritage, national identity (Gen 10:5, 20, 31), etc. As a matter of application, people fracture into even more tribes, political groups, phenotypes, urban/suburban, white/black etc. Because of sin, tribes tend to be tribal in the sense that they prefer and defend their tribes over and against other tribes.

## III. JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS (MISHFAT & TZEDEQ) AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Again, we have to distinguish the meaning of these words as they are used in the Bible versus in the academy. Justice and righteousness are biblical terms. They appear together in over 40 verses in the Old Testament: justice 425 times and righteousness 200+ times. They cover a broad range of applications. See the six-minute Gospel Project video on Justice: <https://youtu.be/A14THPoc4-4>.

1. The Retributive meaning of Justice: This is the legal punitive aspect of justice. These are punitive consequences that God requires for the breaking of His laws.
2. The Restorative meaning of Justice (Job 29:7-18; Ps 146:7-9; Prov 31:8-9; Jer 22:3): This aspect of justice looks to make right what has been broken.
3. Personal Righteousness: Doing what you ought to do, what is straight, what is morally right (Micah 6:8).
4. Personal Rights (Isa 10:2): These are rights that all people have because we have been made in the image and likeness of God.
5. Societal Justice: These four aspects of justice come together to inform God's people as to what just and righteous conduct is. They give us the biblical language for being contributors to a just society. Jesus says Christians ought to give great weight to this (Matt 23:23). Influenced by Carl F. H. Henry, the neo-evangelical movement distinguished itself through embracing social justice. Christians built hospitals, orphanages, and adoption agencies, had pro-life ministers, legal services, and other aides for the poor, etc. all around the world, in the name of the love of Christ and restorative justice.

## IV. IN THE ACADEMY “SOCIAL JUSTICE” IS LINKED TO THE LEFT

The term “Social Justice” also has a distinct history among progressives, in particular Marxism. Under a Marxist worldview and political philosophy, social justice speaks of a so-called utopian society which aims for equal outcomes and doesn't oppose violent means to achieve it.

“Social Justice” describes the activist movement towards a socially just world. In this context, social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality and involves a greater degree of economic egalitarianism achieved through progressive taxation, income redistribution, or even property redistribution. These policies aim to achieve what developmental economists refer to as more equality of opportunity than may currently exist in some societies, and to manufacture equality of outcome in cases where incidental inequalities appear in a procedurally just system. **As an economic doctrine, egalitarianism is the driving force behind socialism and communism.** It is economic egalitarianism that seeks to remove the barriers of economic inequality by means of redistribution of wealth. (Adapted from Got Questions)





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