

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another”. (John13:34)

This third week of the anti-racism workshop had the theme : **“Come along together to end racism.”** This was a week where instead of learning about the history of racism we learned more about how to have a conversation with each other and celebrate our different ethnic groups. We have a lot to learn about each other and that is something we need to do in order to understand the things that make us unique. One quote that was given was from Dr. Martin Luther King. He once said,

“People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”

During Saturday’s workshop, we were given a few worksheets to go through and one of them was a list of different scenarios that tend to happen when a white person has a conversation with a person of color. There are simply some conversations and questions that are inappropriate and are even disrespectful to have with African Americans. When I looked through the list of mannerisms, I realize how little we really know about other races. For example, the basic care for the hair of a white person is nothing in comparison to a black individual. The care and appearance of hair to African Americans is very sensitive and it is complicated especially when their hair gets wet.

White people often say things that are meant for simple conversation, but tend to be unacceptable and could be considered racist to anyone of color. Two questions that were on the list surprised me. The first one is, *“Where do you come from?”* The second, *“What do you do?”* or *“Where do you work?”* These types of questions are loaded with insensitivities that can make a person of color uncomfortable.

This third session challenged me once again and it only demonstrates that MLK was right. We really don’t know each other. Building relationships is becoming the theme here. I often preach that it’s all about relationships! The more we connect and love one another the more we can understand one another in this broad and diversified world. If you are interested in looking at these conversational lists, please contact me and I can send you a copy. There still is a lot to learn. I’m looking forward to what next Saturday’s conversation will bring!

Peace!

Pastor Tony Scheer