

Healing Our Broken Humanity

Introduction: Nine Practices that Heal Our Broken Humanity

“We are living in a broken world. Western societies are struggling with the rise of racism, misogyny, nationalism, conflict, violence, and more.”

Many people of color believe that political, judicial, policing, and other systems are stacked against them. Hundreds of thousands of people are displaced globally due to poverty, discrimination, climate change, or political and religious upheaval.

Significant numbers of people feel disenfranchised from the political systems that are supposed to be the vehicles for change but instead seem to support wealthy individuals and institutions over against the majority of the population.

In this context, people feel anxious and worried about what the future holds. They are angry and disoriented. They are searching for others to blame. Unfortunately, many Christian leaders and communities are caught up in these currents and going along with them.

“The church is no longer at the center of culture, power, economics, and politics, as it was in Christendom. Some Christian leaders are anxious about their waning influence. They worry about their loss of power and status.” This has led too many Christian communities to participate in the very actions that are tearing the world apart.

Of course, it doesn't need to be this way. The church is called to speak hope and life into these circumstances as it proclaims and embodies the way of Jesus. To show the world an alternative ethic and way of life that has the power to transform humanity and help change the world.

The way the church embodies this new way of life in the world is through its shared practices. Another word for the development of these practices in the lives of individuals and communities is discipleship. The practice of living a disciplined life in the way of Jesus. “Discipleship involves learning a myriad of skills through personal disciple and by immersion in community. We also learn a language— words such as faith and hope and love take form in our mouths and shape our hearts and minds. And, so, discipleship practices and new ways of conceiving and speaking about God and the world shape our life together.”

Nine Transforming Practices

Reimagine church as the new humanity in Jesus Christ.

Renew lament through corporate expressions of deep regret and sorrow.

Repent together of white cultural captivity, and racial and gender injustice, and of our complicity.

Relinquish power by giving up our own righteousness, status, privilege, selfish ambition, self-interests, vain conceit, and personal gain.

Restore justice to those who have been denied justice.

Reactivate hospitality by rejecting division and exclusion, and welcoming all kinds of people into the household of God.

Reinforce agency by supporting people's ability to make free independent, and unfettered actions and choices.

Reconcile relationships through repentance, forgiveness, justice, and partnership.

Recover life together as a transformed community that lives out the vision of the Sermon on the Mount.

How to Get the Most Out of This Book

Pray for open hearts

Read the chapter

Journal your thoughts

Discuss what you are learning

Act on the suggested practices

Reflect on what you are learning

Encourage each other to change and grow

Grow through further reading

“With God’s help, we can recover our humanity and pursue love, peace, justice, and reconciliation. These nine practices help encourage us to transform the world into God’s world.”

Discussion Questions

The authors offer several examples of the numerous ways in which the humanity is broken. How have you experienced this brokenness? What stories do you have to tell?

The authors also suggest that the church has often been complicit in contributing to the brokenness of the world. Do you agree with them? Why or why not?

In what ways do you think the church needs to be revitalized?

What do you think of the emphasis on practices in the book? What difference can practices make in the life of the church and the world?

What commitments and changes are you prepared to make in your own life to contribute to the revitalization of the church and the renewal of the world?