

Celebrating Unity

February 17, 2019

Six Rhetorical Questions:

1. Do you believe God created, by whatever means, the distinctive ethnic groups that make up humanity?
2. If you said yes, do you think he had a reason for doing it?
3. Do you believe racism exists today in our society?
4. If you said yes, do you believe God wants Christians to do something about it?
5. Do you believe the church is doing a better job of dealing with it than the society at large?
6. If you could do something about it, even take a small step in that direction, would you?

The two-fold task of creating art that endures at St. Isaac's Cathedral: First is the artist must capture his vision on canvas in oil. And that is perfect in and of itself. The art is beautiful to behold but it lasts only a short time. Second, it must also be embodied in another form. So, each painting is remade by means of 1000s of small ceramic pieces, each one insignificant by itself, but together incredible to behold. And, if some of these insignificant tiles are missing it is very noticeable. In fact, their lack is the one thing you would notice.

This is an excellent illustration of what God is up to in redemption:

God first created a work of art - vision that did not last. Now he is recreating his art in an embodied form so that his art will last an eternity.

The First act: Humanity in God's image in the Garden of Eden

1. To reflect God's character, personality and essence
2. To exercise responsibility as God does
3. Like God, to enjoy relationship as "one"

The Fall: Gen. 3; Rom. 1.21-23; Gen. 11.1-9

The Second act: God builds a mosaic of diversity in His image:

- Israel (Ex. 19.5b-6a; Isa. 49.6b)

- Jesus (Heb 1.3)

Unity (Jn. 13.34-35)

The Holy Spirit (Acts 1.7-8)

- The Holy Spirit gathers the church to celebrate in diversity (Acts 2)

The Church is the Mosaic art of God (1 Pet. 2.4-10; 1 Cor. 12.24b-27)

- This is for God's eternal work of art (Rev. 7.9-10)

How is the Liminal Conference taking a step in the right direction?

1. ~~We~~ are going to talk about race without talking about racism.

1. ~~We~~ are going to listen to people and celebrate their story without diminishing our own.

2. ~~We~~ are going to celebrate the diversity that is the image of God in humanity.