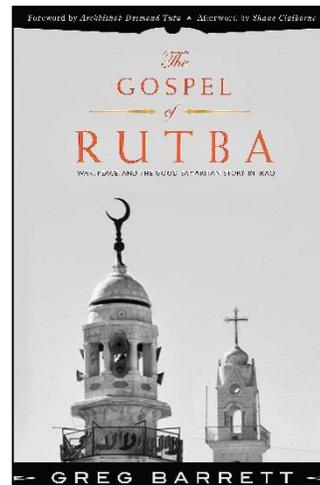


Please mark your calendars so you'll not miss our first Wednesday evening of the fall, which will be next week, September 11. After our usual delicious dinner, we'll hear my friend, journalist Greg Barrett, talk about his book, *The Gospel of Rutba*.

Uncannily relevant as our nation considers yet another attack on an Muslim country, *The Gospel of Rutba* tells the story of three Christian peacemakers who weathered the first terrifying days of "Shock and Awe" a decade ago in Baghdad only to be nearly killed in a car accident. The Americans were rescued by Iraqi Muslims who took them to a clinic in the bombed-out town of Rutba, where they received protection and care.

In sending the Americans on their way, their hosts had only one request—"Please go and tell the world about Rutba." I hope you'll come and hear Greg recount this story of kindness next Wednesday night at 6:30 in room 100.



Then on Sunday, September 15, our preacher will be another of my friends, Mark Wakefield. I forward Mark's newsletter from time to time, and the short version of his story goes like this:

Mark's parents were Southern Baptist missionaries to Mexico, so Mark grew up as an "MK," or "missionary kid." I came to know him as a teen when his parents were doing additional study at Southern Seminary in Louisville, where I taught the psychology of religion.

Mark was later appointed as a Southern Baptist missionary himself, and assigned to the mountains of western Guatemala, where he worked with runaway, orphaned, and street boys. When the International Mission Board later decided to reassign Mark, he felt that God's call was to stay with his work with the "lost boys," and so for the last five or six years, Mark has continued his ministry in Huehuetenango pretty much at his own expense.

Mark lives on an amazingly meager budget, raising more than a dozen boys more or less by himself. He has come to the States this summer to show his new bride, Shenya, his homeland, and they will be with us at dinner on 9/11, bringing the morning message on September 15.

Changing subjects, several of you have sent me articles of various sorts this week that build on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. The first article below is by Tanner Colby, author of the recent book, [*Some of My Best Friends Are Black: The Strange Story of Integration in America*](#). The second article is by David Anderson, the founder and senior pastor of Bridgeway Community Church here in Columbia. The articles present very different but more-or-less complementary perspectives, and both came from www.cnn.com.



TANNER COLBY. "So, how many black friends do you have now?"

"It's a question I get asked a lot, ever since I set out five years ago to find out why I, your typical middle-class white person, had no black friends at all.

"I do have black friends now, actually. Several. But I rarely offer that information when asked, because to ask white people how many black friends they have is to pose the wrong question.

“Recently, a [Reuters poll](#) came out showing that 40% of white Americans have zero nonwhite friends, and only 20% of white Americans have five or more nonwhite friends. People seemed shocked that the numbers were so bad.

“Personally, I was surprised that they were so good. America remains a deeply segregated and divided country. Even accounting for institutional and socioeconomic barriers, in the places we have the opportunity to integrate—the high school cafeteria, for instance—we largely don’t.

“The Reuters survey itself is misleading, lumping all minorities together under the vague heading of ‘nonwhite.’ Depending on what part of the country you live in (e.g., anywhere but Minnesota or Wyoming), it’s not uncommon to have Asian or Hispanic friends.

“But the social divide between whites and those groups is more a function of the slow-rolling, generational process of immigrant assimilation. That is a wholly different phenomenon from the social divide between whites and blacks, which is the product of 400 years of slavery and segregation. That’s the social divide we should worry about, and if the poll had focused on that, the numbers would surely have been much worse.

“The reason why ‘How many black friends do you have?’ is such a terrible question is because it shows how we typically talk when we talk about race. Even when we try to talk about race in a constructive way, we usually make black people the object of the sentence, rarely the subject.

“Black friends are the things to be acquired to prove one is not racist. The way the question is asked accords black people no agency, nor does it reveal anything about the real character of the white person being queried.

“What you really want to know is not ‘How many black friends do I have?’ but rather, **‘Have I become the type of individual that a black person might choose to be friends with?’** That’s a real question. Poll a couple thousand white people with that and you might start to get some interesting answers, or at least some confused and befuddled looks.

“White people are products of their own whitewashed, sanitized environment. Black people have been systematically excluded from white neighborhoods. Black stories rarely surface in popular culture. The history of race in high school textbooks has been boiled down to a handful of bedtime stories about Jackie Robinson and Rosa Parks. Try to tap into the average white person’s feelings on race and you won’t necessarily find feelings of hate and antipathy. You just won’t find much of anything, no fully formed or well-considered thoughts about race of any kind. There’s nothing really there. Even white people who want black friends don’t know where to start.

“America’s lack of integration wouldn’t be such a big deal except for the fact that relationships and social networks are vital to economic advancement. Even when programs like school busing and affirmative action give black people access to white spaces, when those people go to climb the social ladder there’s nothing there for them to grab onto, because there’s very little reciprocal effort coming from the other direction. It’s high effort and low reward.

“The result is that black people end up with integration fatigue. Many black writers responded to the Reuters poll with essays on why they didn’t want white friends, and didn’t need them. White friends weren’t worth the bother.

“This is their prerogative, but ultimately, it’s to society’s disadvantage because white people control the access to, well, just about everything. If you don’t have white friends, you might have a decent job and a comfortable life, but all the doors of opportunity in this country are not open to

you. 'I may do well in a desegregated society,' the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'but I can never know what my total capacity is until I live in an integrated society.'

"Interracial friendships, social bonds across the color line, are a key factor in putting the sins of America's past behind us. But it's not something that's accomplished by white people knowing lots of black people. It helps if white people know how to be better white people.

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/19/opinion/colby-black-friends>



DAVID ANDERSON. "While on a television program several years ago, I recounted a story about moving with my family into a new home in the suburbs of Washington.

"As a black family, we were welcomed to the neighborhood with a shocking sight. My mother and I looked out the kitchen window the morning after we moved in to notice that someone had driven across our new lawn, skidding over mom's cute dogwood tree, and placed a cross there to intimidate us. Not being wanted in this neighborhood based on the color of our skin made a fearful and lasting impression on me as a 9-year old.

"About a week after the show a letter came to my office. Penned by a man who identified himself as a 'White Fundamentalist Supremacist Christian,' the letter was a fiery missal responding to my television appearance and underscoring his disdain for black people and his glee over the fact that I had a 'burning cross' (I never said it was burning) in my front yard.

"I have this letter posted on the back of my office door with a note I wrote across it with a black sharpie: 'This is why God has called us to be gracists and ambassadors of reconciliation!'

"As whites become minorities in America, traditional minority groups like mine will be called upon to graciously build bridges to help whites adjust to their new minority status without malice or vengeance.

"Diversity is an ever-evolving, rotating movement of new people and new perspectives in America. While the term may have been largely about blacks at one time, and more recently, Latinos, we find Koreans, Chinese and Filipinos filling up the melting pot. In some areas of the country, as in Michigan, it's the burgeoning Muslim population, or in Minnesota and Ohio, the growing populations of Somalis. Diversity is here to stay. Welcome to the realization of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream.

"Yet, when King gave his 'I Have a Dream' speech, I wonder if he ever envisioned a day when whites in America would actually be the minority. Judging people by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin is altogether as important as it is for blacks. This will become increasingly the case in the decades to come.

"Integrating whites into the mosaic of American society is an important ideal to embrace, because integration has always been construed as mixing other minorities into a white-dominated world.

"Whites will become a minority [within three decades](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. If this happens as predicted, within little more than one generation, whites will be the largest minority group in America. In the United States we are in for a new age of diversity that all Americans should be aware of with eyes wide open.

“For the first time in U.S. history, the majority rule of whites will be threatened, which means the concept of rugged individualism that worked so well for whites in America in centuries past may be threatened. The rules of personal responsibility and relational networking (some call it the ‘good old boy’ network) as an avenue for success will no longer be sufficient in a multicultural and global society.

“I predict the new minority whites will break into at least two groups: diverse whites, those who are culturally aware and multiculturally proficient, and reverse whites, those who will fight doggedly to hold on to whatever superior status they can.

“Other minorities, especially blacks, have a choice to be what I call ‘gracists,’ people who extend favor, kindness, forgiveness and grace to others regardless of, and sometimes because of, color, class or culture.

“Whites will have the choice of retreating into fear and loathing or embracing their new status with understanding and grace. The integration of whites is not their sole responsibility. Gracism is the powerful assertion that each group should extend grace toward other groups, including minorities extending it to their former oppressor and whites extending it to others rather than protectionism out of fear.

“The more perfect union will become a reality if that union of gracists will realize that the dream of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. extends to all multicultural configurations and presupposes the coming together of all people as equally human. The factional system of dysfunctional diversity, where power structures are reserved for a majority race to dominate others, is being dismantled one generation at a time.

“The mosaic of more Americans sharing power beyond one or two dominating racial groups will demand new partnerships based on sociological-political ideas that will drive robust debates, giving birth to innovation and collaboration.

“The ugly beast of race baiting and power hoarding will not easily die, at least not without a vitriolic fight. In the not-so-distant future, we can expect that diverse whites and reverse whites will be at odds. Gracists must be present to step into the divide and integrate them both. Reverse whites who want to go back to the way things were will still write letters applauding fear mongering. White interest groups may subversively advocate for sustaining institutional structures that perpetuate inequality. The fear of loss of racial dominance may give birth to a growing number of whites feeling cultural disequilibrium. But diversity is here to stay.

“Immigration is our history. Unity has a chance at being our destiny. If we enter into this brave new world with a spirit of grace, our success as a multicultural, multi-ethnic nation will be a dream realized.

www.cnn.com/2013/08/22/opinion/anderson-white-minority/index.html

After reading these essays, I realize once more how MUCH we have to be thankful for at CBF . . . and how much MORE there is to do, so that God’s Kingdom will come in Columbia, as it is in heaven.

Dave

P.S. Several people have asked for another copy of the “stewardship improvement chart” that I’ve used in the past, so it appears on the next page.

#

WEEKLY INCOME	BEYOND A TITHE		TITHE	UPPER RANGE GIVING			MIDDLE RANGE GIVING			LOWER RANGE GIVING		
	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$18	\$16	\$14	\$12	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$27	\$24	\$21	\$18	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$3
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$45	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$54	\$48	\$42	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$63	\$56	\$49	\$42	\$35	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$72	\$64	\$56	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$81	\$72	\$63	\$54	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$99	\$88	\$77	\$66	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30

1. Find out where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE% would be for you.

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