



2006 Theme:

Human Rights,
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Leading the Way or Dragging Their Feet: The Problem of Segregation in Christian Churches

By: [Prof. Eric Hartman](#)

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The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once noted/lamented that Sunday morning was the most segregated time in America. Those words still ring true. In what I anticipate being a paper dealing with both theory and practice, I intend to ask and answer why that is. However, part of my investigation has to do with why Christian churches have not progressed in this area while so many other institutions have made, at least official, strides. I will contend, first, that diversity (particularly ethnic) needs to be valued, but it is not. I will contend that there are practices in churches that are counterproductive to diversity, which should cease, and that there are practices which need to implement. I will attempt to ask and answer how diversity efforts can/should be similar to those in other institutions and how/why they may be different. [I've selected 60 minute workshop as I anticipate nice interaction, but I'm happy enough to do a 30 minute presentation instead.]

Keywords: Diversity in Christian Churches, Segregation in Christian Congregations, Diversity as a Value in Christian Churches, Christians Churches Far Behind in Diversity Efforts

Stream: Organisations

Presentation Type: 60 minute Workshop Presentation in English

Paper: *A paper has not yet been submitted.*



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I teach preaching (effective communication) to future pastors in two seminaries in the Dallas/Fort. Worth area. I also serve as the senior pastor of a Southern Baptist church. I am a PhD candidate in Rhetoric at The University of Texas at Arlington. My interests are in effective preaching in a postmodern context and in racial segregation/diversity in Christian

churches. In particular, I'm exploring why churches are lagging far behind (in comparison with institutions and sports, etc.) in the area of ethnic diversity. My assessment is that, if Christianity is to be true to its biblical roots, it should actually be leading the way in this regard and local churches should reflect racial harmony and congregations that ethnically represent the local community. I have been involved in trying to create such congregations, beginning with my own.

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