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Fearless – E92 – Monique Duson
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00:00:00 Racial reconciliation: Is the church having the right conversations?

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:05 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:26 Welcome back to *Fearless*. With this episode, I've been debating if I put this in the "Elephant in the Room" series or if I don't, but I think I am. Although many churches are talking about this issue and then some churches are ignoring it altogether. But I believe for the churches that are talking about it, they might not be doing it in the correct way. And on today's episode, we're gonna talk about racial reconciliation in the church and how do we do that in a Biblical way, with a Biblical worldview. And I have asked Monique Duson to join me here on *Fearless*. Monique was a believer in the critical race theory for more than 20 years. And it was with a special relationship with a dear friend and their conversations that they would have back and forth where God began to change Monique's heart. And now God is using the both of them in a mighty way and how to have these conversations in a Biblical way. These are very sensitive and tough issues for many of us. And so I'm so thankful to have Monique Duson join me today on *Fearless*.

MUSIC FADES

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:01:32 Monique, welcome to *Fearless*. I've been wanting to have you as a guest here a long time. One of my colleagues is one of your biggest fans, and he sent me a video of you years ago I think talking about critical race theory, and we have addressed critical race theory here before on *Fearless* with the "Just Thinking" guys, you know, Virgil and Darrell. Anyway, I'm so thankful to finally have you here on *Fearless*.

Monique Duson:

00:02:00 Well, thank you for having me. It is good to be here. I do know Virgil and Darrell. I know Virgil. I've heard of Darrell—we haven't actually had a conversation—but I do love them and appreciate their work, especially around critical race theory.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:02:12 Yeah, we had them here I think like last year or so—or maybe even longer than that; time goes by so fast. But I'm just grateful, I'm grateful for your voice on talking about race, and unity, reconciliation, but all of it through a Biblical lens and a Biblical worldview, that you never steer away from Scripture. So I'm so grateful for that. But for

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those who don't know you, who are not aware, tell us a little bit who you are, how you grew up, and kind of what brought you to where you are now.

Monique Duson:

00:02:47 Yes. The short version, I am Monique Duson. I am from Los Angeles, California, from an area known as South Central Los Angeles, and was born and spent the first about 15 years of my life there before moving to a suburb just outside of LA. I grew up with a single mom and I have three other siblings. I went to Biola University, a private Christian university out here and studied sociology, and then spent, goodness, almost 20 years doing social service—anything from case management to program management to creating programs and things like that. And then in 2014, I moved overseas to South Africa to serve as a missionary in Cape Town, and I came back in 2018. Now, all of that said, I grew up with an understanding of how the world was. My worldview in regards to people overall was that there were whites and blacks, and everybody else was pretty much just on the sidelines.

White people—there was a very distinct view of whites that whites thought that they could treat blacks any kind of way that—you know, most whites upheld racism. They were all Republican. They all, you know, had a certain way of thinking. Now, that view was also shaped by the fact that I grew up in Los Angeles during the time of the Rodney King riots. The riots happened right down my block—no, it was several streets—but things like Reginald Denny being beaten, that happened on the main street of my house, just a few blocks up from where I lived. And so the conversation of race was just a constant conversation. It was just what we did. And so, I grew up and lived from a position that was very steeped in critical race theory, even without realizing it was critical race theory.

Now, when I went away to school, I learned a lot more about critical race theory. I learned more about being a sociology major, you know, what did it mean to be a minority in America? How had America failed minorities? And again, this was, you know, the view of my teachers. I wouldn't say that every teacher at Biola, you know, held that view. And when I went to South Africa, I also upheld that view. When I came back home in 2018, a friend and I started having conversations just about life—and I have always been one to talk about race, to talk about justice, to talk about the poor, and how do we help the poor or orphans—and she, also being a Biola grad, thought that my worldview was very peculiar, and she began to dig deep and ask tough questions.

From there, my world—between the Lord and Krista, my now ministry partner at the Center for Biblical Unity—my world, my paradigm began to basically just collapse: The way that I thought about humans and how God thought about humans. Really shifted the idea that some people were born racist, that racism kind of just, you know, flowed through them; that, you know, the poor people should be helped in a specific way; you know, that even without maybe basic things like autonomy, you know; or the right, the

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ability to work, if you can work, you know. There were just certain ways that I viewed the world that didn't align with Scripture that Krista challenged me on, that I feel like the Holy Spirit challenged me on when I would pray about it, and I would say by the end of 2019, I was pretty certain that what I thought about race and justice and unity were completely wrong.

Of course I moved back in 2018 and America was very entrenched in racial conversations. And so by the time—around the time of the beginning of 2020, we were asked—Krista and I—were asked to talk about critical race theory at a conference. And at that point, I knew that this would be something that would turn into an actual organization. And so, I started the Center for Biblical Unity in 2020, in February of 2020, shortly after talking about critical race theory at our conference. And so that's how it all started. It's a long process. It was definitely a long journey, but 2020—and it was before everything.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:07:25 I love the story of you and Krista. I love watching the two of you and listening to the two of you. You have this such a relationship and y'all are dealing with tough topics, but you started not with other people listening or watching, it was just between the two of you, and you just kind of touched on that, that she would challenge. How did those conversations kind of evolve with you?

Because I think a lot of people don't know how to have those conversations with people inside their church in a Biblical way, in a loving way. And y'all addressed this with joy and fun as well, you know, maybe not all the conversations were full of joy—these are tough subjects. They're not fun subjects to discuss. But, discuss that relationship or maybe of how she approached you or you approached her, because I don't think a lot of people know how to have those conversations with friends. They might have disagreements or worry for their friend that they might not be seeing it through a Biblical lens.

Monique Duson:

00:08:23 Well, I generally don't do small talk. So I remember on—you know, one of our first conversations, I was like, "So, are you a Republican?" [laughter]. You know, or, "Did you vote for Trump?" You know? She was like, "Oh my gosh," you could just see the fear [laughter]. Like, what am I doing with this? And so one, she was honest, and I remember the first time when I asked her, "Well, did you vote for Trump? Are you a Republican?" She was like, "You know, I really don't feel comfortable talking about politics." And there was just clarity and I had to respect that clarity. And I was like, okay, you know, that's fine. But of course, me being me, I just continued to ask more questions, and she eventually met me with, "Well, where do you find that idea in Scripture?"

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or, “That’s an interesting perspective that you have. Can you help me understand your position in light of this verse?” or, “If that is true, what do you think about this?” And so she would push back on me with Scripture. And if, you know, I was understanding the Scripture in context, which I was not, I was not understanding it in context, but if I did understand it in context, it would make sense that, you know, the way you’re thinking about it isn’t actually correct. An example of that would be like, Micah 6:8, “... *Do justice, ...*” um, you know, “... *walk humbly with your God ...*” fine. You know, you can do that all day. That verse is often put out by a lot of social justice warriors for all of the social justice campaigns.

But Krista asked me, “Well, do you understand what Micah 3 is about? Or, Micah 1?” I didn’t understand it in context. So it was a lot of discipleship, a lot of Bible study, a lot of patience, walking away, not being afraid to say, “Hey, look, I think I need a timeout.” There were times when we both were very upset, like, I can’t lie and be like, “Oh no, it was just all flowers.” No, there were times when we cried. There were times when we yelled. It was rough, but we were committed to each other. Number one, we knew that we wanted our friendship to survive, and I think having that as the foundation—and actually the foremost foundation is Jesus, like we both love Jesus. I just didn’t have a clear understanding of Scripture. I hadn’t studied the Word truly to understand what the Word actually said, but I believe that both of us wanting to uphold Scripture and both of us being committed to each other really helped as we did have hard conversations. But then from her perspective too, really just getting in and challenging me, and it wasn’t “You must be dumb because you think this,” it was, “Well, how do you uphold this in light of this Scripture?” So it was a lot of Scripture conversation.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:11:21 Well, I think it’s something we can all learn from because after these heated few years, just from politics to COVID to race, everybody’s very tense and they’re very sensitive that I feel like a lot of friendships and relationships have been broken or severed over that. I know I’ve lost people; people walked outta my life because of politics, Monique [laugh]. I love politics, but I lost that. So I’m thankful that you two have stuck that out. It’s amazing to see how God’s using both of you. I wanna get her on here one day or both of you—that would be awesome to have both of you. Krista’s wonderful and a sweet friendship that the two each need. Probably all of us need a Monique and a Krista in our lives. Y’all got a sweet friendship. But I do wanna talk about racial reconciliation.

You know, of course, critical race theory, kind of—it sounds like God’s perfect timing as y’all started this right before—February of 2020—and then of course that summer of 2020 with George Floyd, so much racial conversation happened. And now—it’s like people were scrambling. They didn’t know how to have this conversation, especially when I’m looking at the church. You didn’t see all the church to have this conversation. I remember just people scrambling of what to do because the world was telling ’em you gotta address this, you address this. Well now, you know, three years later, almost three

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years later, I still feel like for an example—I won't say names to protect people. I saw this pastor I follow—I don't always agree with this pastor when they talk about race or social justice versus a Biblical justice—but he's getting ready to have a conference about racial reconciliation. So I wanna get in how we're gonna as a church, how do we discuss that? But first off, you are always based on Scripture when it comes to reconciliation, and you and Krista always go to the Scriptures to see what it says. What are some Scriptures that you use to talk about—I know I've heard you talk about Matthew 28 and the Great Commission—what are the basis of Scripture when we look at reconciliation that we should be looking at?

Monique Duson:

00:13:29 2 Corinthians 5. Start there, because truly, racial reconciliation isn't a thing. So we talked about—I call him Uncle Virgil—Virgil Walker from “Just Thinking”—Mm-hmm. [Cissie Graham Lynch: affirmative]—he once told me racists don't reconcile, hearts do.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:13:44 Hmm.

Monique Duson:

00:13:45 When we think about racial reconciliation, many people will look at the verse in 2 Corinthians 5, “I have now given you the ministry of reconciliation.” Or, “We have now been given the ministry of reconciliation,” and then they insert that word, “racial” reconciliation. Now you have this racial reconciliation that we're all as Christians supposed to do, but that's not what the text is talking about. When the text talks about reconciliation, it's, “We have been given the ministry of reconciliation, comma, reconciling sinful hearts to a holy God.” That is the ministry of reconciliation. The ministry of *racial* reconciliation is a man-made concept that somebody had made up. In the Scriptures, this idea of race is not something that we see. We see people being talked about in as in forms of like being a people group, a nation, a ethnic group.

But the way that we talk about race today is not how race would've been thought about in the first century church. They would've thought as well, where is this person from? “He's from Ur of the Chaldees.” Like, “This person is from Syria.” It's not, “This person is black. This is a black American.” Like we don't have those categories of black and white in the Scriptures. And so when people now talk about this idea of racial reconciliation, what they're doing, in my personal opinion, is putting an extra weight on Christians. The idea of racial reconciliation is to get all the people to the table. You'll hear this a lot when we do racial reconciliation, we are going to bring all the people together to the table to have the bigger conversations. Well, those bigger conversations are usually black and brown people being able to air all of their grievances, the grievances throughout history to white people. What white people are supposed to do once they've heard all of these grievances is to lament with people of color, to repent of their whiteness, to divest themselves of their privilege. These are cultural concepts.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:16:04 Mm-hmm. [affirmative],

Monique Duson:

00:16:05 When you read Ephesians 4, it's clearly lined out how we're supposed to maintain our unity. The fact that we're maintaining something lets us know that we already have it. I can't maintain something that I don't have. I can't maintain a home if I don't have it. And so when Paul encourages us to maintain the unity, he then gives us a whole chapter on what that means to maintain the unity. The unity that we have when we look in John 17 is the unity that Christ prayed for. How do we have that unity? Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And so when people talk about this concept of racial reconciliation, it usually involves many secular books. You need to, especially if you're white, you need to read the new social justice canon. So you have to read like *Stamped from the Beginning* or *White Fragility* or *How to Be an Antiracist*. There's a whole litany of sociological texts that have become the new canon that many white people are supposed to read. There's an entire work that white people need to do. This can be seen even before the inception of critical race theory, going back to black liberation theology in James Cone. But that's not how God the Father or Jesus reveals how we should walk out our unity. And so when I hear people say "racial reconciliation," it already kind of tips me off to know that there's been some secular or some social justice influence into what they're presenting because racial reconciliation truly must include the tenants that I've talked about. White people doing this—you know, reading these books, lamenting all of it.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:17:53 Yeah, I think a lot of church leaders, they went to those books, and then encouraged their church cuz maybe they didn't have the resources, which we're gonna talk about your curriculum and your resource coming up in a little bit that you have. Cuz that is exciting and that people—we need to create those resources cuz these aren't conversations that we can ignore—Yeah. [Monique Duson: affirmative]. To say they're not doing it right, we gotta talk about 'em. They're here and we gotta come face to face with the culture. First off, I wanted to go back to 2 Corinthians 5. I wanted to read it for those who are listening. 2 Corinthians 5:16, I'm gonna start in 16. It says, "*Therefore from now on we recognize no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things [have] passed away; behold, [the] new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*"

Monique Duson:

00:19:07 There you go.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:19:10 And it is, I mean, when we look at this through that “for all have sinned and fall short the glory of God.” We have been separated from a holy God. But He Himself, through His Son Jesus Christ, reconciled us to Him. And I just—that’s when I start looking at this because it’s hard to have some of these conversations when you see what’s happening on the news or what somebody else has said or you were talking about everybody’s gotta come to the table.

You know, I went to—I don’t do too many women’s conferences—I went to one [laugh] Yeah. This was a couple years ago, of many years ago, and they all had to come to the table to have these conversations. And it’s just as what you just said, everybody had their grievances and people were crying and—people have heard, people got their stories—but the people that were coming to the table, you could tell had not been healed. They were coming still hurt. They were still coming mad to the table. It was Christians, right? They’re—it’s like Jesus—or they had not allowed God to heal them. They had not fully surrendered it to the Lord yet. And I see that even now with Christian leaders speaking out black Christian leaders that many, not all, of course not all, but there’s so many of ’em that come to the table that are used for speaking stuff. They’re angry. They’re so angry at the world and they—God hasn’t—or they haven’t allowed God to heal their hearts.

Monique Duson:

00:20:41 Yes! And, you know, hurt happens. It does. Racism happens. Like I’m not here to deny racism. I’m not a racism denier. And, I believe that racism can happen to anyone. So the thought that because I’m black, I can’t be racist—that’s not true. So if we’re going to create a space—your church wants to create a space to talk about racism, create a space to talk about—I would advise against it. But, you know, create your space to talk about racism, but don’t do it through this lens of partiality, where now white people can never have any kind of racial hurt—that’s only for the blacks. You know what I mean? Like, this is what happens when you participate with racial reconciliation. You begin to enter into partiality from the beginning.

Cuz there’s a latent assumption in racial reconciliation that there is a work that one group must do and a work that another group must do, but when we read the Scripture, you can’t tell me any place where we break down what people must do based on their ethnic makeup.

That isn’t how God participates with us. Like—believe it’s in James where it says that we shouldn’t have favoritism. We don’t play by partiality when it comes to us as family. Now should a wife be partial to her husband? Sure. But that’s, it’s a different type of partiality than what we’re talking about when we talk about this idea of all God’s children and the concept of race as we see it today.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:22:26 Yeah. You're talking about that—one of my colleague who once I said was one of your biggest fans was at Wilberforce Conference and there that weekend—and which is led by The Colson Center for Christian worldview—and you expressed, you know, that we're all capable of racism. It's not just whites or blacks. And I think when we look at that—you had said, I think a quote you said that was so profound, that all of us are on the hook.

[Voices overlap]: Oh. Do you remember saying that? I'm reminding—I think that we reminded ... I think that had to be ... something that be 2021.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:23:03 OK. That all of us are on the hook. Explain that Biblical reality, maybe how much you get pushed back from that, that we're all on the hook. Yeah. Because you just—yeah, go ahead.

Monique Duson:

00:23:14 So when you hear like certain, I don't know about you, but when I hear certain conversations, it just feels like white people are on the hook for racism. Like, white people invented racism because white people invented it—and I'm not, this isn't my view. I'm just putting that out there for everybody—but white people invented it. Now they need to fix it. There would be no racism in the world if there wasn't white people. So white people are on the hook for racism. What? We are all on the hook. We are all on the hook as God's children. We are to stand as a light in our culture. We are on the hook. The world is watching us. We are to shine brightly. And I'm also on the hook for you because you're my sister, and so because you're my sister, I'm going to be one, I'm hooked to you familiarly. Like we have this supernatural bond because we are sisters, because we are both believers. We are now sisters. Read Ephesians 1, read Ephesians 2.

But in addition to that—there if you wanna say, well, we're on the—all white people are on the hook. No. As Christians, we're on the hook. We have the responsibility to shine brightly in culture. And this is where I think often times my heart gets saddened when I hear about pastors who wanna promote racial reconciliation versus Biblical unity because it's like you're on the hook. Like the Lord—you have an opportunity to really bring truth. You're on the hook for truth. And instead, you offer them just what the culture is giving them, which will lead to nowhere.

James Cone is the father of black liberation theology, and in one of his books, he writes, “Until white people,” and I'm paraphrasing, but, “until white people can understand the black struggle, can understand they are like babies who should not speak”—that is a direct quote—“until they understand that it is the black people who basically approve of their right to participate within the black community, they have no place within the black community. Until they come to the table understanding their position at the table, they

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shouldn't be at the table.” Who am I to tell you if you can be in the family or not? Just because you have less melanin than I do?

That isn't the way our Father participates with us. We have to understand the familial rules, because if we don't, we'll end up devouring each other. We'll end up dividing and separating and treating each other horribly.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:25:49 Yeah. And I think you said you lived in South Africa for a time, so you probably saw how just, you know, racism—it's hatred, you know, just towards different ethnic groups. You can look at the history in Rwanda. You know, Samaritan's Purse, of course we work in a hundred countries around the world, so you see this isn't just an American white versus black. You know, actually I live here in Fort Myers, Florida, and one of my best friends taught in the public school system. And she says, “Cissie, the biggest racial issue we had were Haitians versus black.” I'm like, what [laugh], you know, that doesn't make any sense to me—but it was the cultural differences that they had that they could not stand one another, and in the public schools it was a very dangerous relationship between the two.

For me it's just to remind the world that man, it is hate. It's when hatred is in your heart.—Yeah. [**Monique Duson:** affirmative]—Hatred towards one another. And so when we—I've struggled, you know, as a white woman having this conversation if I was to be honest with you because it—first off, I feel like I'm not allowed to bring things to the table because I can't understand, or you and I grew up completely different. You grew up in LA in California. I grew up in a small town, mountain town, in Boone, North Carolina. And we just have different stories and different upbringings. So I felt like I wasn't allowed to bring it to the table, but when I look at just—but I didn't grow up seeing that because I traveled the world and I saw what sin and the hate in people's heart, the sin in people's heart, and what that could do to neighbors.

Like, I'll just never forget as a young child, my dad went straight into Rwanda right after the genocide and just like seeing the pictures of it, and those are like instilled in my mind. So when I look at it in America, it's really not hard to have that conversation because it's just so much deeper than that. We're looking at the heart of man and only God can heal the heart of man. The healing of a heart is a miracle and only God's in the miracle business. I always say, “Only God can truly change a man's heart to love a brother or a sister when all those barriers are there, and they've been taught so many different things.”

Monique Duson:

00:28:10 Yeah. We see it from the beginning, like you have partiality. I mean, so you said racism is hatred, and I would expound that just a bit and say, yes, racism is hatred. It's partiality. It is slander. You know, we never, we don't see the word racism in the Bible, and so if we're gonna look at it Biblically, these are the words that we see that,

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you know, we can piece together to make up racism today, but you see those things in Genesis. And so to believe that, well, you know, racism was invented when the first black slave was picked up, you know, by an American slave ship and brought through the transatlantic slave trade—it's just not true. And we have to remove this, or get away from this, you know, small view of what we think, you know, racism is, and understand that racism is not *technically* a skin problem. It's a sin problem, and I know that that's very cliché and things like that, but it's so true. Racism is a heart issue because the heart of man can be wicked.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:29:24 Mm-hmm [Affirmative]. Yeah. As we've said, many churches are trying to address the race and the racial tension, the racial reconciliation, and I think so many of 'em have the best intentions behind it, right? They have good hearts, not here to attack that. But how has the church, and you've already touched on this, but how's it gotten it wrong? And give those listeners maybe some red flags that they might hear, some things they might hear if they're attending a church that are attempting these conversations. What are some red flags for those listeners?

Monique Duson:

00:30:01 Gosh, the push for the sociological textbooks, I would say that one would be first. Or the conversations, the talks from the pulpit that divide us, that continue to perpetuate victim narrative and victim mentality toward blacks that take big ideas without data. And so in 2020, I heard a lot of our black brothers and sisters are, you know, just marginalized and oppressed by the institutions, or they're marginalized and oppressed and downtrodden by police and things like that, but that doesn't actually match the data. So I would say conversations that continue to perpetuate division. I would say many pastors in 2020 and 2021 and '22 promoted BLM. If your church is promoting BLM, I would say run. That's a serious problem ...

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:31:07 ... Did a podcast on that.

Monique Duson:

00:31:08 Yes.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:31:09 Mm-hmm [Affirmative]. Let me ask you a question: Do you think diversity would be a red flag? Like when they're trying to push diversity? I can remember just, I was attending this church and there was a couple of our, a friend, that almost made me feel guilty that my church wasn't diverse. So I started asking myself questions. Was there something wrong with me? Like then, like now I'm going to church and I'm starting to count heads, like looking at things, is that, I just—

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Monique Duson:

00:31:34 Girl, try being the black person. [laughter] You be like, I know everybody's trying to count and see if there's any up. Anybody else with me? [laugh]

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:31:42 I'm sure. So now, because our culture's taught us that, you know, it's in the back of your mind. But I love how you have mentioned one time—and I can't remember—you said somebody had taught you that the church should reflect the community around you.—Mm-hmm. [**Monique Duson:** affirmative].—Yeah, and I loved that. That always kind of stuck with me.

Monique Duson:

00:32:01 So when we think about diversity, normally, people immediately run to this idea of ethnic diversity, and there's just not that many black people. I mean ...

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:32:13 [laugh] I told you I grew up in the mountains of North Carolina.

Monique Duson:

00:32:17 ... You know what I'm saying? It's like, if you have to have at least two black people in every church, we, we not gonna make it, y'all. Like it's not gonna work, but that's the error in that it's the assumption that diversity has to be skin-color diversity. What about diversity of gifts? What about—and this is something Krista my ministry partner always talks about is diversity of gifts, diversity of age, diversity of socioeconomic status, diversity of background. Like why are we so focused on this one idea of diversity that there can be no other type of diversity? If you don't have a black person, then you're racist. That's a lot of pressure on me, people. I can't come to everybody's church.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:33:06 So I always think that's a red flag.

Monique Duson:

00:33:07 Yeah.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:33:08 I do think like when they address that, I feel like they're addressing just the white church, right?

Monique Duson:

00:33:15 Yes.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:33:16 Like when talking about diversity, I don't see them going to a black church and say, you need to have some more white people in your church. Or you go to the Korean church, they're not telling people they gotta reach out to more black communities or to the white community. And when I look at the church on a world scale, Christ's, God's church *is* diverse.

Monique Duson:

00:33:38 It is diverse. It is. It is completely diverse. And, you know, and then you put forth all these—we have a diversity campaign, we're gonna go down the hill, and we're gonna bus in the other people, and it's like, well, you wanna go 30 miles down the bus station, send some black people, cool if they wanna come, but how are you ministering to your neighborhood? How are you ministering to the five miles right around you? Or, are you missing those people who might be struggling with addiction or porn or poverty or whatever, simply because the skin color is white?—Mhmm. [**Cissie Graham Lynch:** affirmative].—To me, that's sad. If you do evangelism and discipleship ...

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:34:19 Yes.

Monique Duson:

00:34:20 ... your church will grow and it will be diverse, but you can't get a black person where a black person isn't. But that doesn't mean that your church isn't diverse.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:34:32 You said just two words: evangelism and discipleship. I feel like the church has neglected much of—Mmhmm [**Monique Duson:** affirmative]—those two words. Instead, they are focusing on things like diversity, which we have just said should not be a goal of the church. I always think that's a red flag because I've got caught up into that in my mind, counting heads one time. [laugh].

Monique Duson:

00:34:52 Yes. And I mean, here's another way to think about it though: Let's say your mono-ethnic church in, you know, an all-Hispanic area or in all-Asian area, but there's no reflection of your community within your church. Or let's say you are an all-black church in an all-white area, and there's no reflection of your community within your church. Well that one, that doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with your church. Everybody else could be going somewhere else. You could be in a community of pagans, you know, and so nobody wants to go anyway. But you can ask the question of, Hey, I wonder if we're having impact within our community. I don't have to go into a self-condemnation: Our church is racist. We're not doing the Gospel. No. You can ask the question and you can evangelize and watch what the Lord brings in. But I think all of these diversity measures and all of that to get—and I mean if we're honest, it is black people, to get blacks into the church, I think it is steering us off course very quickly.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:36:00 Yeah. Monique, Disney+ just had a reboot of “The Proud Family” and this cartoon, and I was really shocked when I saw it because it is critical race theory in its purest to form, for children's audience. And when it was on, my children were in the room and their heads kind of cocked and they're like, looking at what, what's going on, Mom? And they had the KKK on there and they had this rap. And I'm gonna kind of quote part of this song that these children in this episode, these black children, are singing and it said, “This country was built on slavery, which means slaves built this country.”

It goes on and says, “The descendants of slaves continue to build it. ...” Um, “Slaves built this country, and we, the descendants of slaves in America, have earned reparations for their suffering. And continue to earn [the reparations] every moment we spend submerged in a systemic prejudice, racism, and white supremacy that America was founded with and still has not atoned for [it].” That's very heavy for our child, a children's audience.

Monique Duson:

00:37:14 Mhmm. [Affirmative].

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:37:15 It also continues, it said, “We made your families rich from the southern plantation heirs to the northern bankers to the New England shipowners, the Founding Fathers, former presidents, current senators, the Illuminati, [and] the New World Order.” That's a lot of stuff to unpack. We don't have to unpack it. Let me—a couple of things you can address that. First off, as a mom, I'm raising white children [laugh] that just saw this on TV, that—and they're always clicking on Disney+, which they have now have a lot more rules when it comes to Disney+, even before this. I told 'em they had to stick to the ones only Mom has approved when they watch, for many other issues, not just this—when it comes to like the LGBTQ issues—but when I look at this and I don't know how to address it to my white son at that point when they're showing the KKK. And, I have tough conversations with my children and I don't back down from those tough conversations.

Of course I do it in a way that they can understand it, but I always encourage my audience to go ahead and have those tough conversations on their level and address it with grace and truth. But my question is, what is the end goal here, when we have these messaging to our children? Is there end goal? I don't know. What is it?

Because Jesus Christ paid our debt and we're being told right now that my generation has to pay a debt to you because of what my ancestors did. And when we start doing that, is that I think Jesus Christ paid our debt. And, I just look at it as I don't know how to

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have that conversation because I don't understand the end goal that they're trying to attempt.

Monique Duson:

00:39:00 Yes. So. Sorry, I wanted to take down a couple things as, a couple notes, as it came to me. The first thing I would say is to realize where culture is. So right now, culture is definitely on the attack. And when I say culture, I'm talking about media influencers, those in entertainment who are, you know, content creators and creating things like "The Proud Family." There is what I would call an agenda, and I say an "agenda," I'm thinking of things like "The Proud Family" or that new cartoon that's on HBO Max. It's an adult cartoon, but it's a spinoff of Scooby Do called "Velma." "Velma" has similar language where it's the agenda is an attack on white men, and when I say "white men," I mean like white male, straight Christian men.

And it is no longer, you know, just kind of a looming question. You know, in 2020, I think a lot of it was looming questions like, Hmm, I wonder if, you know, people are just mad at white people or if they're just mad at white men. And then, you know, we see Dan with the patriarchy, but I mean, who's really trying to, you know, dismiss the patriarchy completely? Well, no, let's be honest. This is what the attack is. When you think of—and I know you guys have talked about critical race theory; within critical race theory, you have the matrix of oppression. It looks at who are those with power and who are those who have none. Those with power are your white Christian heterosexual men who are adults. Like, this is what society is deeming as wicked right now in our society.

So when you see something like "The Proud Family" that is denigrating whites and having a target toward white boys, or when you see something like "Velma" where Velma said, well, you know, he's just a white man, you know, or, I would expect nothing less from a white man. You know, there's this idea that white people are dumb, that white men aren't needed, that Christians—and I honestly think that this is all pointing toward an attack on Christianity in the end, but you know—that white Christian men aren't needed. This is something that as believers, regardless of your skin color, you have the opportunity to speak truth into, because it is real. It is not something that people are making up or, you know, making too much of. Now the end goal with critical race theory, the end goal of critical race theory, when you look at the definition, the end goal is embedded within the definition, especially when you look at Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado's book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.

It says that critical race theory is a collection of activists and scholars focused on transforming our relationship between race, racism, and power. The goal is transformation, societal transformation. What is the transformation that they are looking to have happen? Our relationship between race, racism, and power. That power dynamic is what people are very focused on, who has the power within our society. This is why white people need to divest themselves of their power, divest themselves of their privilege, because there needs to be a transformation. And it starts—the people aren't

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dumb, they're starting with your kids.—Mm-hmm. [**Cissie Graham Lynch:** affirmative].—They're starting this conversation at a very early age, whether it's regarding race or LGBTQ+ or even ability and disability. To say, if you look like this, then you are part of a group that has power. Because you have power, you need to share that power. You need to divest yourself of that power. You are bad because of that power. It's coming for little kids first so that they can raise up a generation.

Cissie Graham Lynch:
00:43:19 Yeah.

Monique Duson:

00:43:20 That when they become grown, this is the way that they automatically think. This is why talking to your kids about worldview is so important. You know, how do you combat some of these things? Well, first of all, it's helping your children to understand that, look, culture is going to cult. Now, I know you not gonna say that to a 7-year-old, but it's the overall idea. We are either in Christ or we are in Adam—Mm-hmm [**Cissie Graham Lynch:** affirmative]—and those who are living in Adam believe a certain way. They act a certain way, they speak a certain way. We are in Christ.

What does that mean for you who is in Christ? It could mean persecution. It could mean being treated differently. It could mean living as a minority, a religious minority. And so these are tough conversations. I don't have kids, but I couldn't imagine having to sit down with my 6-, 7-, 8-year-old because they saw, you know, the KKK on a cartoon that's supposed to be meant for all kids.

Cissie Graham Lynch:
00:44:17 Yeah.

Monique Duson:

00:44:18 But it's not meant for all kids. It's meant for a certain group of kids, and it's also meant to put down another group of kids.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:44:25 And I think it's just such a good reminder, it can make you angry, right, on all aspects of all the conversations we're having with our children right now, from racial issues to the LGBT, to politics, whatever it is, it can just make you angry when you look at it through a world. And I want to encourage people that in your response, don't get angry. Honestly, you know, my first reaction is to get mad when I see it, but then I just sat back and I said, "OK, well, how can I have this conversation with my kids?" And not to be angry because it stirs up that anger that turns into hate and, you know, of what we've all been talking about this whole episode. So always make, as Christians, our response is not to respond in anger, but to stay calm. I just think when you look at their agenda and they're trying to plant these seeds, and even here you're talking about their agenda. The producer of the show did say, she says, our leadership over there has

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been so welcoming to my not-at-all secret gay agenda. So she's very open about her agenda.

Monique Duson:

00:45:39 Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And I think I know who the agenda, who the producer is when you say that, cuz the other show I think has the same producer and—yes, it is. She's been very, very clear about her agenda. And I think there's a part of people who want to say, well, you know, it's not that bad, or, well, they didn't do it in this episode. Or, well, you know, they're just like, it's almost so compassionate that we excuse certain behaviors or we excuse certain entertainment outlets. And it's like you can't; you have to understand that the goal always is for your child. Always.—Mm-hmm. [**Cissie Graham Lynch:** affirmative].—There's not an episode that's being created currently on some platforms and with some cartoons that isn't targeting your child.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:46:41 Yeah. It's even commercials now. It's everything. So, when we're talking about this, cuz I wanna, before we end, talk about your curriculum. But you know, we're looking, you know, some in our nation, they want a national apology or whether a debt to be paid. First off, I kinda have a hard time cuz I look—I don't have numbers in front of me—but I think how many people have immigrated to this nation in the last 150 years, who didn't even have ancestors in this country, right? Whether you're white or black, you came here and you didn't even have ancestors in this country cuz you just—maybe you're first generation, second generation. But as we're looking at this conversation, at what point does our nation have to reach from a world point of view where they would be healed, where it would be right, the debt would be paid?

And I don't personally think, because we're looking at it in a world point of view, it would ever get there. Right? You could never pay that debt enough. Then there's gonna be something else we have to pay or we haven't done anything yet. That's the reminder where Jesus Christ, if Jesus Christ is not in the center of all these conversations, if it's not God's Word as the foundation here, now I'm talking to Christians and churches, we'll never get there.—Mm-hmm. [**Monique Duson:** affirmative].—There will never be true healing. There will never be true forgiveness. Monique, I have had a person in my life who I truly hated. They treated me so wrong and so bad that, after a while, I couldn't put up with it. And in my heart there was this true hatred in my heart, to where it changed who I was.

It changed how I was treating people and changing my actions, where then I was wrong in my actions. And I mean, I surrendered it to the Lord over and over and over. And it was like He wouldn't answer my prayers like, “Lord, I hate this person. They have treated me ...” and I thought I was justified in my hatred. And I had all these reasons, and *finally* where that person and I, we came together, we had this conversation, we prayed together, there was a true forgiveness. It was a 180 in my heart. It's the time I truly have recognized it where, in that moment, God took it away, the hatred was gone,

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wiped my heart clean of it. And to this day, years and years later, I've never had a negative thought since.

Monique Duson:

00:49:07 Hmm.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:49:08 Only God can do that.

Monique Duson:

00:49:09 Yep.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:49:10 And of course I haven't dealt with the hurt and the pain that so many others have, but only God—it's a burden to carry hatred in your heart. It is such a burden that I don't wish upon anybody. When you can experience true forgiveness in your heart, just as God has forgiven us for all of our transgressions and wipes that and takes that weight off, but only God can do that in this nation.

Monique Duson:

00:49:33 Yep.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:49:34 So as we're continuing to have these conversations, cuz we have to have these conversations, because this is where our culture is, this is what's on our televisions, it's what's being fed to our children. So we can't ignore what's happening in our culture and we're gonna have to talk about it in the church, but we didn't have great curriculum. So that's where you've stepped in. [laugh]

Monique Duson:

00:49:53 Yes. Yes.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:49:54 Tell us a little bit about your curriculum called *Reconciled*, which is a Biblical approach to racial unity.

Monique Duson:

00:50:02 Yes. So it's definitely for believers. *Reconciled* is six-week curriculum, looking at believers' unity. It looks at, you know, what is the ministry of racial reconciliation and you know, or Biblical unity. You know, which one do we do? I'll give you, you know, a cheat sheet on that one: it's Biblical unity. But then how do we know that we are reconciled? See, the world proclamation to everyone is that we're so disunified; we're so disjointed. We are, you know, there's no unity available until all of these things happen. But that isn't true for believers. We live by a different standard. We live by a different

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culture set of rules. And so believers are reconciled. Now, how do we walk out the reconciliation that's been made available to us? And so that's what *Reconciled* is. It's six weeks of looking at our reconciliation as believers and what do we do to walk this out.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:51:00 Now, what is it? What does it include and what's kind of the format of the curriculum?

Monique Duson:

00:51:07 Yes, so it's a six-week study. It's a video and Bible study guide and Krista and I wrote it together. So what happens is that you will go through with—you can do it by yourself or you can do it in a small group—and you'll go through like the Scriptures, you know, what does the Bible actually say. Now, the video components: I do a little bit of teaching and just sharing from my heart, but it's usually about 10 minutes. The goal is to get people in the Word, to read not just a passage of Scripture but to read multiple passages of Scripture to understand what the Word of God is saying in context about who we are as united reconciled believers. And there are also study guide questions and, you know, ways to help you engage with the text and with the video. And each one just builds upon the next, until you get to week six. And we look at, you know, this is how we maintain our unity as believers. We have something different. Now let's go and participate with what we have.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:52:17 That's awesome. And so we will definitely put a link to that in the show notes, and on my website, we'll link to your curriculum. Monique, I just wanna say thank you. Thank you for just having your voice. You and Krista tackling some of these very sensitive and tough topics that are not always fun. And I'm sure you get a lot of pushback. No, are there ever days where you wake up with, "Lord, I don't wanna talk about that today. That is just too heavy, too tough." Is there ...? [laugh]

Monique Duson:

00:52:47 Yes. And that's when I feel like that's when the topic comes out, is at the point where I'm like, I really don't wanna talk about this, but here we go.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:52:57 Well, thank you for your obedience to that. Yes. It's awesome to see where God's calling the both of you. I hope to meet you in person one day.

Monique Duson:

00:53:07 Yes.

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Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:53:08 Since we have a lot of common friends and so we're just so thankful for you and your voice and for the Center for Biblical Unity.

Monique Duson:

00:53:14 Thank you.

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:53:15 Thank you for being here on *Fearless*.

Monique Duson:

00:53:16 Thank you.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:53:21 Thank you for joining me on this episode of *Fearless*. I know those were some tough conversations and tough subjects to cover. I'm so thankful for Monique and the Center for Biblical Unity. I will put a link to her curriculum in our show notes, and I encourage you, follow her and Krista on their social media. They're doing mighty things for God's kingdom. But once again, thank you for joining me. And as always, I encourage you to follow me on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and check out latest episodes on CissieGrahamLynch.com.

CLOSING MUSIC

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