



## LEADER GUIDE: EPISODE #13

### TALKING DIVERSITY WITHOUT CREATING DIVISION

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH CHANGER:

It's time to rip the lid off your leadership and push past organizational pain points holding you and your church back. **Church Changer** is designed to equip church leaders with practical tools, proven strategies, and best practices to help you reach more people for Christ and shatter growth barriers in your ministry. Listen today, and put key takeaways into practice tomorrow! We're here to collaborate with you and cheerlead for you. Join Co-hosts Pastor Tim Lucas and Lauren Bercarich, along with special guests, as they outline a clear path forward so you can increase your impact, and let's have some fun in the process! New episodes drop the first Tuesday of each month.

#### EPISODE NOTES:

##### Overview

Too often conversations about race and diversity only happen on the heels of tragedy. As churches, our goal must be to make the pursuit of diversity a part of our culture. To keep the conversation ongoing. To keep hands open and hearts filled with empathy. Wayne Francis, Lead Pastor of The Life Church in New York provides practical steps for you and your church to become a part of the solution as agents of reconciliation and change.

##### About Wayne Francis

Wayne has been involved in executive leadership for over twenty years, gaining valuable experience in leading people in corporate, non-profit, academic and local/national church environments. Entrepreneurial by nature, Wayne and his wife started Authentic Church in 2010 and recently merged with [The Life Church](#), a multi-site and multi-national church based in Tennessee and founded by Senior Pastors [John + Leslie Siebeling](#). Wayne now serves as The Lead Pastor of [its New York Location](#). Mid-life started with a bout of depression and a lack of traction that birthed a passion to help others, and it's the primary reason Wayne founded The King's Cellar- an organization committed to helping people leverage all of the season of their lives for greeted leadership. Especially the season of dark times and obscurity.

He is the co-author of the book, "[God and Race: A Guide for Moving Beyond Black Fists and White Knuckles](#)," published by Harper Collins/ Harper One, and he is also the co-host of the weekly podcast called, "[Leadership in Black and White](#)." Wayne resides in Westchester County, NY, a suburb of NYC, has been married 22 years and has two teenage daughters. He's a cyclist, but is most proud of being in his mid-forties and still well able to drop it like it's hot on any dance floor!



## Something Free - Article From Wayne

In partnership with the release of his book, "[God and Race: A Guide for Moving Beyond Black Fists and White Knuckles](#)," Wayne and his co-author release a 5-day devotional available via the [YouVersion Bible App](#), which is 100% free. In this plan, Wayne encourages us to start a dialogue about the important issue of race and diversity. The "God and Race" devotional probes the meaning of racial reconciliation and helps you to be a positive force to move beyond hate and injustice, to equality and love.

Search for "Wayne Francis" or "God And Race" within your YouVersion Bible App to start the plan today!

## Churches Making Waves

Wayne recommends looking at two churches for inspiration when it comes to those truly pursuing diversity. First up is [Shoreline City](#), which he singles out because this church is pastored by a black couple and they lead a diverse, but predominantly white church in Texas. That's a big deal! Something to check out... their huddles on Sunday morning will give you a shot of adrenaline.

Up next, Wayne recommends [Redemption Church](#) in Arizona, which is leaning into creating an atmosphere of diversity after experiencing a lot of pain, including a church split back in 2020. They are showcasing what it looks like to build a diverse church.

## A Handful Of Key Takeaways From Our Time With Wayne Francis

We had a lot of fun with Wayne while leaning into a very powerful conversation. Wayne takes something very complex and makes it practical, so that we can each pursue diversity without creating division!

- Most churches are open to the CONCEPT of diversity, but not the CONVERSATION of diversity. We can fear the conversations that will actually move the ball down the field, because they could be triggering or traumatic for some. But, if you know the state of your flock, then you can craft the right message. People need to lead well in this arena. The solution isn't to avoid these conversations. It's to lean in and lead with excellence and care.
- So how do you pursue diversity? The default knee-jerk reaction to most pastors would be to preach a sermon or an entire sermon series on race and diversity - maybe even during Black History Month! While the intention is noble, this isn't the answer. Good discipleship around diversity is like a drip campaign and not a fire hydrant. Your messages always have to have that call to diversity.
- To truly pursue diversity, start by looking at your organizational values. If diversity is not in a value statement, you'll never be able to track it against anything else that you do.



Because there's nothing guiding it. It's just an intention. At Wayne's church, the value statement is "We're building a house that looks like heaven." With that diversity ethic in mind, they can measure everything they do. Does our sermon series, does our staffing, does our hiring practices all align with our value statement? If they do, then we will be able to see the fruit of our efforts in building a diverse church.

- There are specific hiring practices you can adopt to help you actively pursue diversity. We encourage you to listen to the podcast for the full flavor or these! But here's a few great takeaways. **#1)** Set measurable, achievable diversity goals and sometimes that means feeling the tension and the pain of waiting for the candidate you don't have yet. Otherwise you end up patching urgency instead of pursuing diversity. You may have to delay some things to get to where you want to go. **#2)** Stuff your pipeline with diverse people before you need to tap your pipeline, so you can build a diverse staff. When your church becomes a friendship factory, this becomes natural. **#3)** Make hiring for diversity a beautiful challenge and not an obligatory checklist. **#4)** Invite your diverse staff members to be in partnership with you when it comes to recruiting. They will want to help so you have more representation! Diverse employees should be your best recruiting tool **#5)** Start a diversity internship program. Bring diverse voices to the table - almost like a think tank to help shape your hiring practices.
- Wayne challenges us to take a look at our personal friend circles. Who do you go to dinner with? Work out with? What are your social media follows like? Is there anyone diverse in your friend group or your experience? We need to elevate a theology of friendship that includes diversity. And you **MUST** have a meaningful friend in your life that is different from you in race. If that's not happening, you lose the moral authority to move the ball down the field when it comes to the conversation of diversity.

### Follow / Contact The Church Changer Team

- Email us at [Info@ChurchChanger.com](mailto:Info@ChurchChanger.com)
- Follow us on Instagram [@ChurchChangers](https://www.instagram.com/ChurchChangers)
- Check out our website at [ChurchChanger.com](https://ChurchChanger.com)
- [Listen to this episode on Apple Podcasts](#)



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Continue the conversation! Here are questions to ask yourself and your team to help your church thrive. We hope Church Changer will inspire you to put into practice what we discuss each month!

1. Wayne proposes that “Diversity can’t just be a sermon or a series, but has to become a system.” He notes that church leaders have systems for first time guests, family ministry, assimilation and so on, but we often don’t have systems to ensure that diversity is reflected in our churches. Do you have a system for this? If not - what steps will you take to systematize this (e.g., establishing Diversity Groups)?

---

---

---

2. Wayne points out that having a diverse stage is different than having a diverse staff. He says the church often camouflages its lack of diversity this way. Is this true of your church? Does the diversity you showcase on stage represent the reality of your staff, your leadership, your board of directors / elders? What does your answer reveal about your church?

---

---

---

3. “Don’t wait for headlines and hashtags to get honest.” That’s the counsel from Wayne who suggests that we have to build authenticity in our church culture so that we can speak to issues of diversity all the time, not just when something heinous happens. What can you do in 2023 to elevate the conversation about diversity and make it a part of your church culture?

---

---

---



CHURCH  
CHANGER

4. Wayne proclaims that “Diversity will be an outflow of your personal life.” He suggests that we need to elevate a theology of friendship and he shares a hard truth: A lot of times we want our congregations to be diverse, but our lives are not diverse. How diverse is your current friendship circle? What can you do to pursue friendship with those who look and think differently than you do?

---

---

---

5. “Unless we make a solid, intentional choice to repent, understand each other and love one another, we will remain divided.” What do you need to repent for? As a person and as a leader?

---

---

---

**We are rooting for you! May this be the year you shatter growth barriers in your ministry!**

