



Inspire

A word of hope, support, and encouragement

Milton Harding
Pastoral Relations Associate
mharding@sbcv.org

BEYOND THE FACES OF RACISM



God commanded His Church to let the peace of Christ “rule” in our hearts and the Word of God to “richly dwell”
~ Colossians 3:13-4

What love, peace, and comfort our Heavenly Father bestows on us in these culturally dark and contentious times! The loud, roaring voice of racism pummels the hearing of the unsuspecting and unprotected souls who are void of truth—God’s truth. Satan loves fanning the flames of human ignorance with deception, division, and destruction. In contrast, to be steadfast, God commanded His Church to let the peace of Christ “rule” in our hearts and the Word of God to “richly dwell” (Col. 3:13-4). To attempt to reconcile human relationships with a darkened understanding using skin color as a measure is pure foolishness to God. As shepherds, we should not only know this but live and teach it (Hebrews 13:7). If we don’t, then our families, churches, and communities will not “see” God (Matt. 5:13-16). Believers everywhere would agree that we are one “race”—the human race.

If, then, we are all human beings, how can we reconcile that which is already one? The phrase “racial reconciliation” remains humorous to God, especially when that terminology almost always defaults to a black and white conflict. To my Latino, Asian, and all other blood-bought brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, I personally apologize on behalf of all Christendom and the world for anyone who intentionally or unintentionally tries to build relationship equity without you and God. You, too, my friends, are created in the image of our God. God’s plan for preserving the culture with righteousness (salt) and providing the clear path (light) for relationally walking (Matt. 5:13-14) in harmony is His Church, and we need to walk in true godly love with our neighbors and even with our enemies (Matt. 22:38).

True affection for Jesus’ work on the cross and the Gospel entrusted to us should compel us to be living testimonies—with truth oozing from our mouths as we invest our lives to help rescue those who are prisoners to racist thinking. Unfortunately, according to many, God’s Church seems as confused, misguided, and as ethnically prejudiced as the world. Racism masquerading as anything other than sin is an abomination to God! Anytime we are respecters of persons in our thinking or behaviors, for any reason, including for skin color, we’re being sinners (Rom. 2:11). To expect humans to act responsibly (verbally and physically) in the ethnic clashes in our culture is not going to happen apart from God. God already stated, “...a man’s way is not in himself nor can he direct his own steps...” (Jer. 10:23). Brothers, whenever a

body of people (church or nation) chooses not to acknowledge God in their thinking, God gives them over to debase thinking (Rom. 1:21, 28, 30) and thus, we find that racism has no conscience, social manners, or ethnic choice.

So in the cultural narrative of racial reconciliation, what is God’s biblical mandate to us about relating to all peoples? First, we must agree with God that any practice of partiality in our own hearts or with those we shepherd and with whom we fellowship is sin, and we should be held accountable for it! We must repent personally and walk in unity, bearing the fruit of repentance (Matt. 3:8). Let’s stop conducting community events or swapping pulpits, etc., attempting to show we have harmony in the Church in words but not in lifestyles. Right relationships with God and man are lifestyles sustained by the desire to live out God’s Word in intimate relationships with Him and each other. Our lives, not t-shirts or bumper stickers, should reflect the Gospel that points all people to Jesus! Jesus’ prayer for unity (John 17:21) is not based upon an outward production of man’s ideas, but the inward residency of God’s love in our hearts that anchors us in the faith while engaging the cultural confusion of racism.

Finally, brothers, let us be reminded that Jesus is the exact image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). If invisible, then what “supreme” skin color should we assign to God Almighty, God of the universe, Creator of heaven and earth and everything in it?! We are created in the image (likeness) of God—His character, not His color (Gen. 1:26). God is Spirit (John 4:24), and our lives in the face of racism should be human temples of worship, reflecting our love for God and man. In Genesis 1:31, when God completed His work, He said it was very good! Ethnic diversity and harmony, innate to God’s plan, was deemed pleasing to Him.

Brothers, may the Lord God give us the boldness to tear down the high places of racism, being obedient to His command to know, live, and teach truth. Let us hold ourselves and all of Christendom accountable to the standard of His love and let us be conduits of relational, harmonic love amidst constant ethnic unrest. As Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35, NASB).

Love you all!