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Race and The Local Church

"A racialized society is a society where race matters profoundly for difference in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships….. A racialized society can also be said to be a society that allocates differential economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines." (Michael Emerson; Christian Smith. Divided By Faith, pp. 7)

"At the central core of racism we find the sinful hearts of men living in a fallen world. This fundamental problem has no earthly cure. There is no speech that can be given, no law that can be passed, and no publicity campaign that can solve it. Only the truth of God's Word combined with the strength of God's Holy Spirit living within us can bring us victory over this sin."(Charles Ware; Ken Ham. One Race One Blood, pp. 38)

"Because of our culture's racist roots, because of the way the world thinks, because of the influence of Darwinian thinking, we have been programmed to look at the exterior rather than the interior of a person, and to make broad judgments based on what we see. Had you not been programmed that way in this culture, you wouldn't see the differences as you do. Different cultures are programmed in different ways. Our biases and prejudice show themselves in different ways, but in every case it is the world and our sinfulness (rather than science and the Bible) that drives our personal racism…….Whatever feature we may look at, no people group has anything that is uniquely different from that possessed by another. Sure, there might be variations in size and color or shape, but they are all essentially the very same features. With a proper understanding of what is happening beneath the skin, all of our so-called "racial differences" start to look very trivial, don't they?" (Charles Ware; Ken Ham. One Race One Blood pp. 100, 116)

"The sad yet irrefutable fact is that the theology of Western Christianity, dominated by white males, has had scant if any direct answers to the evils of racism and the detrimental effect of institutionalized discrimination. The major contributors to conservative theological thought over the centuries have consciously or not, spoken predominantly to and for white people. In fact, the unfortunate reality is that the ideologies of racism and elitism that have marred the landscape of Western civilization have had a uniquely conservative Christian flavor. Those who advocated a caste system of slavery and racial superiority in places such as United States, England, South Africa and India have often done so with the consent of a church defined by conservative theologians. And even through many white theologians have refuted these erroneous positions, very few have sought to positively set forth God and his providential hand in the life and struggle of African Americans." (Anthony Carter. On Being Black and Reformed, pp. 6-7)

"…..To be a member of the Body of Christ means that preferences based on class, culture, or race are totally unacceptable to God, and people who make such preferences are candidates for His judgement (James 2:9-13)." (Tony Evans. Oneness Embraced, pp. 94)

"Openness and brokenness are required to become representatives of Christ in both word and deed. We need to confess and correct past misapplications of certain texts in relation to certain ethnic groups and/or cultural references (Prov. 18:19; 28:13;Acts 10:34-35; James 2:1-9). We must uncompromisingly and unashamedly adhere to proper interpretation of and obedience to the verbally inspired, inerrant Word of God, the Holy Bible (Prov. 23:23; Gal. 2; 3:27-29; Eph 4:1-7,11-16)…… If the church is to move forward as a cohesive body across racial lines, we must be freed to love. Divine love is the glue that holds the body together, a critical building block in committed relationships." (Charles Ware. Prejudice and the People of God, pp.13,32)

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I. The Premise

A. We all come through one man Adam and one woman Eve. (1 Corinthians 15:45, Genesis 3:20)
B. Therefore, we are all descendants from the first family Adam and Eve. (Acts 17:26)
C. Even though we all descendants from one family, we are multi-ethic in our existence. (Revelation 7:9)

II. The Problem

A. One ethnic group is not better than any other ethnic group. (Romans 3:9)
B. To think your ethnic group is better than any other group is to walk in contradiction to Scripture which is to walk in ignorance and sin. (Romans 3:9, Romans 10:12)
C. Regardless of whatever ethnic group a person belongs to, he has a sin condition and is in need of salvation. (Romans 3:9-23, 5:12, 6:23)

III. The Path

A. As one puts his faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, he becomes part of the Body of Christ which is his central identity above the ethnic group he belongs to. (Romans 10:12-13, Colossians 3:10-11)
B. As one becomes a part of the Body of Christ his ethnicity is not to be highlighted above his relationship to the Body of Christ or belittled in his relationship to the body of Christ; He is to be of the same mind towards others in the Body of Christ. (Romans 12:16)
C. One does not ignore his ethnicity as part of the body of Christ, he is to be sober in his assessment about himself in relation to God and others; he just does not allow his ethnicity to become a priority over his relationship to the Body of Christ; His love is to be without hypocrisy towards others. (Romans 12:3, Galatians 2:11-14, Romans 12:9)

IV. The Practice

A. We are to are focus on accomplishing God's mission and living according to that mission across ethnic lines as members of the Body of Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, John 13:34-35)
B. The world should see how various ethnic groups operate in harmony as these various ethnic groups love one another and fulfill God's purpose together as members of the Body of Christ. (Philippians 2:1-16, 1 Corinthians 1:10)
C. Social injustices, disrespect, and demeaning of various ethnic groups displayed within the culture should not be promoted or practiced within the Body of Christ. (Proverbs 24:23, 1John 2:9-11, Malachi 2:10)

" As the love of Christ begins to stir inside your soul, God will show you what to do. You will make the choice and you will act, but it will actually be Christ loving them through you. Whether it is in small steps or large leaps, God can use you to bridge the so-called "racial barriers" that have been fabricated in our minds through both worldly thinking and evolutionary theory. What a difference it will make in the lives around you as you begin to think and act that way! What a difference it will make in the world as more and more of us take up this cause! We are reclaiming Darwin's garden for Christ. By choosing to act, we are pulling out the weeds of evolutionary thought and replanting with seeds of truth, love, understanding, and compassion. That's what it's all about." (Charles Ware; Ken Ham. One Race One Blood. pp. 122)

Key Point: We may be different in cultures but we are one in Christ.