

PREJUDICE AND GOD'S KINGDOM

Originally the human family consisted of one race and one class. As differences emerged, fallen men and women began to mistreat each other based on those differences. Hatred, envy and pride are the real culprits, and they do not need different skin colors for an excuse. In former Yugoslavia, white Bosnians and Serbs killed each other without mercy, as do white extremists in Northern Ireland. Across Africa, black ethnic leaders massacre other tribes, perpetuating ancient hostilities that continue without logic or purpose. White people practiced slavery in America, and black Africans sometimes sold the slaves to the traders in the first place.

Racial bias is ignorant, immoral and anti-Christian, and so is prejudice of class (James 2:1-13). In the spiritual body of Jesus Christ, God is tearing down all dividing walls which separate fallen human beings (Eph. 2:11-22). The segregation of Christian churches based on race, class or gender contradicts the gospel's message and its meaning (Gal. 3:26-28). Interracial churches composed of people from all strata of society powerfully demonstrate the power of God's coming Kingdom to a torn and sinful society.

I read a true story about a gospel preacher at a rural Southern church nearly 30 years ago, invited a visiting black brother to lead a closing prayer, and a prominent member of the church was furious. When he confronted him about it, he said, "They have their churches. Let them go to those." The preacher asked him what he would do when he got to heaven, since blacks will be there. He said, "if they go there, God better have a separate place for me!" The preacher suggested that with his attitude, he probably wouldn't have to worry about it. Shortly after that, he was fired as preacher. Praise God that he loves us in spite of our sins!

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