

THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION

(2 Cor 5:18 KJV) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (2 Cor 5:19 KJV) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

1. OUR NATION IS DIVIDED AND NEEDS RECONCILIATION.
 1. *The polarization of our nation around racial lines*
 1. O. J. Simpson trial and verdict.
 2. Louis Farrakan and the Islam Nation.
 3. White supremacist groups.
 2. *The polarization of our nation around ideological views.*
 1. Liberals vs. Conservatives.
 2. Democrats vs. Republicans.
 3. Militia vs. Government interference.

2. IT MUST FIRST HAPPEN IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.
 1. *The Body of Christ is divided.*
 2. *Unity.*
 1. That they may be one...(John 17:20 KJV) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (John 17:21 KJV) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
 2. How beautify to dwell in unity. "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*" (Ps. 133:1).
 3. *One body.*
 1. I Cor. 12:12-13 - "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles,*

whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

2. Gal. 3:28 - *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."*
3. (Col 3:10 KJV) And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:
(Col 3:11 KJV) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

3. WE ARE GIVEN A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

1. *Reconciliation.*

1. (2 Cor 5:18 KJV) And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (2 Cor 5:19 KJV) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

2. (Col 1:20 KJV) And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

2. ***KJV.*** (Eph 2:13 KJV) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Eph 2:14 KJV) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; (Eph 2:15 KJV) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; (Eph 2:16 KJV) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (Eph 2:17 KJV) And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (Eph 2:18 KJV) For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Eph 2:19 KJV) Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

3. ***The Living Bible.*** (Eph. 2:13-19). But now you belong to Christ Jesus, and though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought very near to him because of what Jesus Christ has done for you with his blood. For Christ himself is our way of peace. He has made peace between us Jews and you Gentiles by making us all one family, breaking down the wall of contempt that used to separate us. By his death he ended the angry resentment between us, caused by the Jewish laws which favored the Jews and excluded the Gentiles, for he died to annul that whole system of Jewish laws. Then he took the two groups that had been opposed to each other and made them parts of himself; thus he fused us together to become one new person, and at last there was peace. As parts of the same body, our anger against each other has disappeared, for both of us

have been reconciled to God. And so the feud ended at last at the cross. And he has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were very far away from him, and to us Jews who were near. Now all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, may come to God the Father with the Holy Spirit's help because of what Christ has done for us. Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian.

4. WHAT IS THE STATE OF TODAY'S CHURCH?
 1. *Out of touch? Not relevant? Outdated?*
 2. *Are we losing our generation?*
 3. *How does the world see the church?*
 1. Saying one thing, doing another
 2. Are we consistent with our testimony?
 3. Does our walk measure up to our talk?
 4. *A museum for the righteous instead of a hospital for the sick?*
 5. *What are people looking for in the church?*
 6. *What is the church?*
 1. An institution that is isolated, ineffective, and cold?
 2. It is people.
 1. People who need people.
 2. People loving People and serving one another.
 3. People who are willing to give of themselves.
 4. People who are willing to make a difference.
 - (1) Touching one another's lives.
 - (2) Impacting one another
 - (3) Making a difference in the community
 7. *Together we become what the church ought to be.*
 1. The light of the world; the salt of the earth.
 2. You help me be what I ought to be
 3. I help you be what you ought to be

5. THE CHURCH AS AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION.
 1. *No respecter of persons.*

1. (Acts 10:34 KJV) Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
 1. (Acts 10:11 KJV) And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: (Acts 10:12 KJV) Wherein were all manner of four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. (Acts 10:13 KJV) And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. (Acts 10:14 KJV) But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.
 2. (Acts 10:15 KJV) And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.
2. (James 2:1 KJV) My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. (James 2:2 KJV) For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; (James 2:3 KJV) And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: (James 2:4 KJV) Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?
 2. ***Destroying walls of prejudice.***
 1. Racial.
 1. Not meet to give bread to dogs.
 2. Gentiles.
 3. Samaritans.
 2. Religious.
 1. I thank God I'm not like this publican.
 2. Except for the grace of God, there goes I.
 3. Socio-economic.
 4. Generation gaps.
 5. Social outcasts.
 3. ***Balancing conviction with love.***
 1. Abortion.
 2. Homosexuality.
 4. ***Mercy and not sacrifice.***
 1. (Mat 9:13 KJV) But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

2. Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:36 KJV) Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? (Luke 10:37 KJV) And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.
3. Best to err on side of mercy; don=t know when you=ll need it.
5. *No condemnation.*
 1. (John 8:7 KJV) So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.
 2. (John 8:10 KJV) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?
 3. (John 8:11 KJV) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.
6. WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR.
 1. *They=re looking for the real thing.*
 2. *They=re looking for love and compassion.*
 3. *They=re looking for a gospel that meets their needs.*
 4. *The church must be ready to meet special needs.*
 1. Addictions.
 1. Drugs.
 2. Other addictions.
 2. Sexual problems.
 1. Sexual promiscuity.
 2. Sexual perversion.
 3. Family breakups.
 1. Divorce.
 2. Single parenting.
 4. Young people who don=t know who they are.

1. Battle of hopelessness.
 2. Sense of no worth.
5. *Restoring a brother or sister who has fallen.*
1. (Gal 6:1 KJV) Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
 2. (Gal 6:2 KJV) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
7. GOD WANTS THE CHURCH TO BECOME A HEALING COMMUNITY.