

WHAT COLOR OF CHURCH DO YOU WANT TO ATTEND?

(by George Battey)



If we are all God's creatures, why are we divided?

Someone once said, "Sunday is the most segregated day of the week." What this means is that on Sundays people separate themselves from all others to worship with people of their own race. Is this what God wanted?

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* (Mt. 6:10). Ask yourself this question: Will people be divided in heaven according to race? Will there be a group of white people in one corner of heaven separated from a group of black people in another corner of heaven? Of course not. Since we will not be divided in heaven according to race, we should not be divided here on earth according to race. Remember, the will of God should be done "on earth as it is in heaven." It is wrong to divide because of race.

Read the words of this prayer which Jesus prayed to His Father: *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me"* (Jn. 17:20-21). The Lord did not want division among His people. He wanted unity. One of the apostles wrote this: *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"* (Eph. 4:3-6). Since there is only "one body" (verse 4), Christians should try to maintain "the unity of the Spirit" (verse 3).

RACIAL DIVISIONS

In the days of the apostles there were racial problems – just like we experience today. Their problems were not between "blacks and whites" or "whites and hispanics" or "blacks and hispanics." Their problems involved "Jews and Gentiles." (A "gentile" is anyone who is not a Jew.) In those days, the Jews didn't like gentiles (Gal. 2:11-16). Jews didn't like Samaritans (Jn. 4:9). Jews didn't like anyone except a fellow Jew and sometimes they didn't even like all their fellow Jews. On the other hand, gentiles didn't really like Jews either.

When the apostles preached the gospel, both Jews and gentiles would "obey the gospel" (2 Thess. 1:8) by being baptized in water "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; 22:16). By being baptized the Lord Himself added these Jews and gentiles to His one church (Acts 2:41, 47). Before long there was strife – racial strife. The Jews didn't want to worship with the gentiles and the gentiles didn't want to worship with the Jews. What was the solution?

Notice carefully: The Lord's apostles, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-8; 1 Cor. 2:14-16), did not instruct the Jews to divide themselves away from the gentiles and start their own church. Nor did they instruct the gentiles to divide themselves away from the Jews and begin their own church. They were instructed to "*endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:3). The word "endeavor" means "work hard." They were to work hard at keeping unity.

Unity doesn't come naturally or easily. Unity is something people have to work hard at. In marriage, both the husband and the wife must "work hard" at having unity or the marriage will end in divorce. If only one partner wants unity, there will not be unity. Both the husband and the wife must want unity and both must work hard to achieve unity.

Likewise, in a congregation of "blacks," "whites," and "hispanics," there must be a conscious effort and diligent effort on the part of everyone in order to have unity. If only one person wants unity, there will not be unity. Everyone involved in the congregation must want to have unity and peace.

*For **He Himself** is our peace, who has **made both one**, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one new man** from the two, thus making peace, and that **He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity**. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (Eph. 2:14-18).*

Look at the highlighted words in this passage. *"He Himself"* refers to Jesus. *"Made both one"* means Jesus is the Savior of both Jews and gentiles and He does not recognize one as superior over the other. *"One new man"* means that God wants all races (Jews and gentiles) to be as "one man" – not divided over race, but united together, working together, worshipping together. *"He might reconcile them both to God in one body"* means there is only one church and if anyone is going to be saved, they must come into that one church which Jesus built and be "reconciled" (made friends) to God. No one can become a friend of God without being in the "one body" – the church (Eph. 1:22-23). *"Thereby putting to death the enmity"* means that Jews and gentiles use to be enemies to each other, but in the church they must learn to "get along" with one another.

Listen to these words of the prophet Isaiah. This prophet lived 600 years before Christ, but he prophesied about the Lord's church in the following way:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:6-9).

A "wolf" and a "lamb" are not ordinarily friends with one another. Neither would you expect a "leopard" to lie down peacefully beside a young "goat." These animals are natural enemies of one another. What is the purpose of this prophetic scripture? What point is the Lord trying to make through His prophet? This is a picture of the church. When men obey the gospel and become Christians, they become members of the Lord's church and must now learn to live peacefully with other members of the church who are from different ethnic backgrounds. To put this in modern language, you would not expect to see black people worshipping with white people, nor would you expect to see hispanic people worshipping with either blacks or whites. But when men and women obey the gospel and become members of the Lord's church, the Lord expects the ferocious spirit, which fed on hate, to be replaced with a loving, friendly spirit. In the Lord's church ("My holy mountain") none of the members should "hurt nor destroy" (verse 9).

[NO RACISM IN THE LORD'S CHURCH](#)

There should be no racism in the Lord's church. It is wrong and sinful. God does not show favoritism to anyone based on race and neither should Christians show favoritism based on race. *"Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is*

accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34-35). According to this passage, God accepts anyone from any race as long as (a) they reverence Him and (b) obey what He commanded. Again, notice this passage: *"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters"* (1 Cor. 7:19). The word "circumcision" refers to Jews – because they were commanded in Old Testament times to be circumcised (Lev. 12:1-3). The word "uncircumcision" refers to gentiles. The passages is teaching that it doesn't matter whether someone is a Jew or a gentile. The only thing that matters is "keeping the commandments of God."

We want you to know you are welcome to worship at the Fielder Road Church of Christ. All races are welcome.

[KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD](#)

Please look at 1 Cor. 7:19 again: *"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters."* Although race does not matter, there is something that **does** matter to God: ***keeping God's commandments*** – that certainly does matter.

Many times people say, "It doesn't matter where you go to church and it doesn't matter how you worship God." That simply is not true. There is no Bible passage that teaches "it does not matter." It does matter to God. When you make the choice of which church to attend, you should be concerned about whether that congregation is teaching the truth found in the scriptures.

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:32)

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (Jn. 17:17)

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." (Mt. 7:15)

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him." (1 Jn. 2:3-5)

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the

temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

It is wrong to divide because of race, but it is also wrong to unite with error.

We at the Fielder Road Church of Christ invite you to come and be part of the Lord's church which you can read about in the Bible (Mt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16). We stand for the truth of God's word. We welcome all people from all races who reverence God and wish to keep His commandments. We stand opposed to teachings and practices which contradict the scriptures. We invite you to become a part of this congregation – **the Lord's church.**

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

To be saved from past sins, God requires the following steps:

- 1) **Belief** in Christ as the only begotten Son of God (Jn 3:16).
- 2) **Repentance** of sins ("turning away from") (Acts 17:30).
- 3) **Verbal Confession** of faith in Christ (Rom 10:10).
- 4) **Baptism** (immersion) into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

*38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.***

Acts 22:16 (NKJV)

*16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and **be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**'*

Romans 6:3-4 (NKJV)

*3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?***

*4 Therefore we were **buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.***

Baptism is the “*point in time*” that God applies the blood of Christ to the sinner’s life. The sinner is baptized into the death of Christ (Rom 6:3-4). Sinners were never told to “*pray the sinner’s prayer*” as is commonly believed today (see Jn 9:31). Only Christians have the privilege of praying for forgiveness of sins (1 Jn 1:9; 2:1 – notice these verses were written to Christians, not sinners). Those who have not been baptized correctly must be rebaptized (see Acts 19:1-5) in order to be saved (1 Pet 3:20-21).

While it *may* be true that the “thief on the cross” was never baptized (perhaps he may have been—see Mt 3:5), it must be remembered he was saved while the Old Testament law was still in force (Heb 9:16-17). This is exactly what the controversy over the Sabbath day revolves around—which law applies today and what does the Lord require of men today. The Lord’s requirement of baptism “*for the remission of sins*” came after His death and resurrection (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16).

After baptism, we must continue in “*all things*” which the Lord “commanded” (Mt 28:20). We must be careful “*lest we fall*” (1 Cor 10:12). Even saved Christians can “*fall away*” (Gal 5:4), have their name removed from the “*book of life*” (Rev 22:19), and suffer a worse fate than “*death without mercy*” (Heb 10:26-29). Christians must “*make their calling and election sure*” by “*giving all diligence*” (2 Pet 1:5-11).