

# Racial Unity

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During the past year and especially in recent months, we have heard and read much in regard to the question of rights and treatment of certain racial groups. On the international scene this has found expression in such areas as south Africa and Indo-China in the Far East where these racial groups have been fighting for their independence from European control. While at home in America this question has been given the spotlight by the recent decrees of the United States Supreme Court requiring all public schools to discontinue segregation in education.

Specifically, in this later incident, the daily news we receive brings us many new developments in the problem, especially in our southern states. The attempt of these states to avoid compliance with court decree, individual incidents in schools attempting desegregation, the cry of social reformers against injustices to the southern Negro are only a few of the news items we receive daily.

The question must arise, what has this to do with us as Protestant Reformed young people? What direct relation do these incidents have to our life as the children of God? In most cases we as a group are isolated from the problems involved in these events and they are not of direct concern to us in our daily life, although we should take note of them as historical facts and their place in the plan of God.

In this article I would rather not dwell on the problems and principles concerned in these events, but rather use them as a stepping stone to the question of our racial and national relationships as members of the body of Christ.

Accompanying all these struggles on the question of racial equality and rights are the various arguments and solutions for the problem. Many appeals have been made to the right of all men in a democratic society as a basis for this racial equality. The cry of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all men have been used by many of the reformers. With respect to these arguments we do not wish to concern ourselves at this time, because this would involve some evaluation of the basic principles behind such arguments which really are the philosophies of this age.

In a recent national publication, the churches of America have been criticized for their actions when confronted with a problem of racial mixture among their congregations. In this criticism the churches were confronted with their profession of championing truth and justice in words and not living up to these standards in deeds. This certainly is not a commendable situation, not because it is a denial of democratic principles, but for other reasons that will become apparent in this discussion.

The present world division on lines of race and nationality can be seen as a division founded at the time of the building of the tower of Babel when God confounded the common language, forcing the people to scatter abroad because of linguistic barriers. (Gen. 11:1-9). This was done, according to verse six, to restrain them in the fulfillment of their imaginations. Until our present day we can see the results of this; the world has not been united, which will be necessary for the coming of Antichrist.

We must not stop here and merely say that these racial differences are come by the will of God and we are not to concern ourselves with it any further. As I mentioned before, we as a denomination are not directly concerned with this problem because of our small number and the absence of different racial groups. At the same time, this should not excuse us from facing the

issue. What I think is the real answer to this question is a confession that each of us makes every Sabbath when we affirm, "I believe the communion of saints." In our church life this certainly must be our answer to the problem.

As believers we confess that we are in common partakers of Christ, and as a result of this common partaking of Christ and His benefits, we know it to be our duty to employ these gifts of Christ to the advantage and salvation of other members of the Body of Christ. On the basis of this confession we can have no problem of racial differences in our church because we are no different but are joint members of a common body. We cannot exclude a part of that body or try to exist separate from that body since our life is dependent on being a part of that whole; apart from the body there cannot be spiritual life, just as a part of our body cannot have life separate from the body as a whole.

This should be the relationship that exists in the Church in all differences among the members: educational, economic status, talents, etc. These differences should not bring divisions in the Church, but these different characteristics should be superseded by the unity of the Church in Christ. In this sense racial difference also is one characteristic that cannot come before the principle of unity. Just as in the body all parts are not the same but all have their various characteristics, yet they are all necessary in the total body.

One can see this unity in our churches. We don't have any problems of racial difference, but in other differences that tend to make separation among people of the world (such as wealth, education, nationality) we find that in the Church these differences become unimportant and are replaced by a commonness among the members. That is why I said earlier that the churches in America that practice segregation, and yet claim that they are partakers of Christ, are not to be commended, for they are not living in the communion of saints.

But one may ask, "We can see this to be and ought to be the case in the Church, but what about our daily life in the world when we meet these problems?" Here I must admit that I can come with no ready-made answer as to what to do, and what not to do. This essentially is a problem that one must settle in his own conscience, remembering that in all things we are called to live that new life that is within us, and flee the old man of sin. We can certainly do well to call to mind the parable of the good Samaritan, and ask ourselves also, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25-37)

Originally Published in:  
Vol. 16 No. 2 March 1956