

Reconciliation the Way to Unity

The Reconciled Church

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‘Good to Great’ book by Jim Collins

“This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.” To this day, I carry a mental image of Stockdale admonishing the optimists: “We’re not getting out by Christmas; deal with it!”

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John 17:20-23 NIVUK

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”



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Jesus prayed for us

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Jesus Prayed for us

- *My prayer is not for them alone (Deuteronomy 29:14-15).*
- *I pray for those who will believe in me, through their message (Matt 28, Acts 1)*
- *That they may be one as we are one.*
- *Brought to complete unity.*
- *So that the world may believe that you have sent me*
- *You loved them even as you loved me*

**Why do we need to be
reconciled before we can be
united?**

Current Context

George Floyd – A wake up call for the church

It exposed the following:

- 1 – Experience of racism, unconscious bias by ethnic minorities not just in society but also in the church, the sad reality that experiences were similar.
- 2 – Our theology of race, reconciliation, the church and diversity was insufficiently robust to handle what had happened and therefore we had little to say on the matter and the conversations that happened out there in society began to effect what was talked about in the church.
- 3 – The lack of deep relationships between people from different ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 4 – The lack of ethnic minority leaders emerging in churches at senior levels, whilst this has always been an issue it became more pronounced.
- 5 – The reality and complexity of dealing with the pastoral fall out of decades of racism, superiority and inferiority mindsets and the pressures people feel to assimilate in church in order to fit in.



TRC

Recent History

Going Deeper

Whilst some things have changed, legislation for example has made racism and discrimination illegal, it does not change the heart or even claim to change it. Dr MLK said:

"Well, it may be true that morality cannot be legislated but behaviour can be regulated. It may be true that the law cannot change the heart but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me but it can restrain him from lynching me; and I think that is pretty important also. And so, while the law may not change the hearts of men, it does change the habits of men if it is vigorously enforced, and through changes in habits, pretty soon attitudinal changes will take place and even the heart may be changed in the process."

(Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech on Receipt of Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law, November 13, 1967, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.)



Historic Context

Going back further (Lambeth Palace Library)

1 – The story of Morgan Godwyn an Anglican minister in 1685.

Godwyn said...“We have exceeded the worst infidels, by our first enslaving, and then murdering of Men’s Souls. For how can it be endured that a Nation once so famous for Zeal and Piety...should prostrate herself to that foul idol Mammon, and worship trade.”

2 – Anonymous petition addressed to the Lord arch Bishop of London in August 1723.

it was a letter from an enslaved person asking for the freedom of mixed race persons and an appeal for a Christian education. The writer claims that he is owned by his own brother. There’s no indication that a reply was sent, though the letter was obviously received.

3 – The Holy Bible for the use of Negro Slaves published London 1808 (the year after the Abolition of the slave trade).

This was published on behalf of the society for the conversion of Negro Slaves (a positive group). A standard bible contains 1189 chapters, this version contains 232. It excludes 90% of OT and 50% of the NT. The text skips from Genesis 45:28 to Exodus 19 so it misses the whole of the Exodus story.



Observations

from history

- 1. A troubled history**
- 2. The blindness of race**
- 3. An unresolved history**

A Warning

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