



one another equally (1 Cor. 12:14-26).

So what do we do with this? Jim Crow laws have left a legacy that is far reaching, and their residual effects have stretched even into our own time. The initial step in solving any problem is to first acknowledge that there is a problem, before taking steps to correct

it. Jesus broke many status quos in His time by engaging and reaching out to people whom the majority discriminated against. We shouldn't shirk anyone who has an interest in spiritual things because the Lord never did. If previous generations have attempted to instill in us a distrust of people who are not like us, then we must actively combat any of those tendencies that may have taken root. We must challenge ourselves to go out of our comfort zones and teach people who are racially, and culturally different. The early church was an amalgam of many different peoples from all over the world, and many of them thrived in their work. Brethren, let us be different than the denominations. Let us strive toward a time when it can no longer be said that there are "black churches" and "white churches", but simply "churches of Christ".



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

14.13

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

March 25
2012



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

Segregation & the Church

By Jason Garcia

After many decades of racial segregation, the church of Christ is still caught in the aftermath. Unfortunately there was a time when it was acceptable for African-Americans to assemble separately from Anglos even if they were all members of the church. One could argue that there are legitimate reasons for different ethnic groups who are members of the church to assemble separately such as language barriers or geographical distance. However, for someone to argue that a different ethnic group should worship in a separate location strictly because of the color of their skin is bigoted, intolerant, and runs contrary to the teaching of Christ. The consequence of such prejudice ruins the soul, but has other effects as well. Consider a scenario in which there are two local churches of Christ in a community—one assembly is entirely African-American and the other Anglo. Both groups are in close proximity, teach and preach Christ's doctrine, but never come into contact with one another because "that's just the way it is".

How will the Lord's church be viewed under those circumstances? We must be conscious of how we are being perceived by the world (cf. 1 Cor. 14:22-25). Statistically, ninety percent of African-Americans who attend some religious assembly worship in all-black churches, and ninety percent of white Americans who do the same worship in all-white churches (cf.



Olsen Park church of Christ

Rice, *More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel*). While this may be the trend in the denominational world, we must never allow it to become characteristic of the Lord's church. What does the Scripture have to teach about the ethnic make-up of the church of Christ?

We may be tempted to think that racial segregation is peculiar to this country or, in the very least, that the "racial divide" is different and more challenging than what can be seen in other countries throughout history. However, there is nothing new under the sun, and the people that were brought together in the church during the first century were some of the most culturally, racially diverse groups of the time. The Jews were a people that had been set apart for centuries as God's peculiar people through whom the Messiah would come. One does not have to look far into the Old Testament before finding commands to avoid intermingling and intermarrying foreigners (cf. Deut. 7:3). This was not a consequence of man's desire to segregate—God kept Israel separate to raise up the Messiah from a nation set apart unto Himself. When the Messiah came, this national separatism was set aside. Yet, even through New Testament times, the cultural rift between Jew and Gentile would have been a difficult hurdle to overcome for Jews who would now be expected to accept Gentiles as part of the New Israel (cf. Rom. 11:17-24).

Even so, if we look close enough, we can find examples of bigotry within the early church and just as quickly find the condemnation for that behavior. Although Peter initially struggled with the concept of accepting non-Jews into the church, he eventually would see God's design was inclusive of all peoples. But there still came a time when his pride would get the better of him, and he would relapse to the point of showing favoritism toward Jews (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul would not hesitate to denounce such behavior and tell Peter he "stood condemned"—a warning to anyone believing such an attitude is acceptable under the Law of Christ. The Lord Himself set the standard as no respecter of persons, and we must follow the same pattern (cf. Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34; Jas. 2:1-4, 8-9). Critics may point to instructions regarding the avoidance of Samaria in an attempt to claim Christ showed partiality, but this was only temporary and part of a grand design to bring the Gospel to all people. Furthermore, Jesus Himself would teach a Samaritan woman when given the opportunity (cf. Jn. 4).

Even with these examples, there are churches that covertly adopt a pro-segregation stance for their assemblies! The religion of Christ is not designed to enable segregation or be a segregating influence! Scripture tells us that for those who are

remade into the image of Christ "**there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all**" (Col 3:11 NASB). Again for emphasis the apostle says, "**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise**" (Gal 3:28). The church transcends racial differences and division! The church transcends even gender! God values all men and women in His family the same and we are called to recognize this and value