
Words of Truth

“The Premier Evangelist In Black Churches Of Christ”

By: Brian A. Yeager

I recently found this statement when looking at a book description on the Internet: “Marshall Keeble (1878–1968) was the premier evangelist in black Churches of Christ from 1931 until his death in 1968. Born and reared in middle Tennessee, Keeble came under the influence of Preston Taylor, Samuel Womack, and Alexander Campbell, as well as the social influence of Booker T. Washington. In 1914, Keeble committed himself to full-time evangelism and by the 1920s had established himself as a noteworthy preacher. By the time of his death, he reportedly had baptized 40,000 people and had established more than 200 congregations, some of which still flourish today...”

(http://books.google.com/books/about/Show_Us_How_You_Do_It.html?id=KCNILPB0QrIC;
<http://www.amazon.com/Show-Us-How-You-1914-1968/dp/0817316124>).

What does the statement above tell you? It tells me that there are/were racial divides in churches of Christ. It tells me that such is a known fact in the world at large. It is not just black churches of Christ either. There are many such things on the Internet that show a racial divide in churches of Christ. I found a directory for Hispanic churches of Christ meeting in the state of Arkansas (<http://arkansaschurches.org/hispanic-churches/>). I have seen a Chinese church of Christ here in the U.S. These are not just language barriers either. Such is a cultural divide that creates different sects in churches of Christ.

Back in June LaRosa was approached by a visitor wherein there was a discussion about the differences of what this person sees in worship here at Sunrise and what he has seen in black churches of Christ. That junk makes me sick. Not because I am a white man, but because I know that Christ did not die for His body to be divided up into sections based upon different races.

ONE Body

There are many doctrinal divides that have caused many churches of Christ to lose their standing with God (I Corinthians 1:10, I Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 2:2, Philippians 3:16, and II John 9-11). That is bad enough. To divide based upon skin color and/or cultural differences is absolutely STUPID! It shows a huge lack of knowledge of the will of God.

Notice the following Scriptures that show it is the Lord’s will that all Christians be ONE body: *“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another... For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread... 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... But now are they many members, yet but one body... Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 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; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby... There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling... And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Romans 12:4-5, I Corinthians 10:17, I Corinthians 12:12-13, I Corinthians 12:20, Ephesians 2:11-16, Ephesians 4:4, and Colossians 3:15).

When you read the Scriptures above you see clearly that God wants all of His people, regardless of race, to be one body in Him. Division is a sign of carnal mindedness (I Corinthians 3:3). Carnal minded people are not obedient people (Romans 8:4-8). The congregation meeting here at Sunrise Acres is blessed to be racially diverse. We have to make sure that this continues to be the case. I could not help but notice, when this visitor aforementioned was here, that his preference was to talk with our "black brethren". It was disturbing. I have only seen that here once before and it was from a visiting person as well. Brethren, this article is not one of correction, but of reminder. We all, regardless of race, are one body in Christ. Racism, to any degree, is a show of ignorance to the very existence of mankind.

Of The Same God

God made man in His own image (Genesis 1:26-28 and James 3:9-10). Woman was made from man (Genesis 2:18-23). We, of all races, are the offspring of God (Acts 17:24-30). When a person is a Christian, that person is no more to be seen based upon their physical race. A Christian is a spiritual descendant of Abraham regardless of race (Galatians 3:26-29). God wants us all to be saved, regardless of our race (I Timothy 2:1-4). When men create churches, based upon racial divides, these men have shown ignorance in regard to the Scriptures we have examined thus far.

Conclusion

I know there was a time in U.S. history wherein churches of Christ had struggles with racism. That is SHAMEFUL. Preachers of the past FAILED in allowing this to happen. Segregated churches and preachers should have been marked and avoided for allowing societies' ignorance to divide God's people (Romans 16:17-18; cf. Colossians 3:10-15). Even today, wherein there may be cultural differences in congregations, we have to work toward bridging those gaps (I Corinthians 9:19-27). In the first century this divide existed amongst Jewish and Gentile converts. They had to be taught that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him (Romans 10:12). Let's scream that message from the hilltops today so that the body of Christ can be and ever shall be - ONE!