

The Question of Color: Moving Forward

By Gigi Townsend

March, 2010

1. Some issues the movie "Skin" raised:
 - a. Race –
 - i. Identity
 - ii. Division, separation based upon racial divide
 - iii. Evaluation of worth – of self and others
 - iv. Enormous Distrust/hatred of “other.”
 - v. Anger on both sides
 - b. Socioeconomic Status – historically determined by race
 - c. The emasculation of black men
 - d. The vulnerability of women
 - e. Single Motherhood
 - f. The enormous vulnerability of children
 - g. Domestic abuse
 - h. The hopelessness of poverty
 - i. Displacement
2. We can only cover item a. this morning.

.....

A Biblical Framework

I. We are called to be “set apart”:

- a. (Hebrew word: *Qadash*. holy, distinct, consecrated). This involves both separation *from* something as well as dedication *to* something else.
 - i. *Abraham, the calling journey of Israel. Also, read Deuteronomy 26:18,19.*
 - ii. *1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you...*
 - iii. *Romans 12:1-2 – ...And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...*
 - iv. Matthew 5 – You are:
 1. *The salt of the earth*
 2. *The light of the world*
 3. *A city on a hill*
 4. *A lamp on its stand*

II We are called to be reconciled, unified

- a. The “Farce” of the Old Testament – “Do not be joined to other nations...”
- b. The Book of Acts – The lens of breaking down barriers
 - i. Leadership Team (Acts 13):
 1. Black: Simeon called Niger (African)
 2. White: Lucius of Cyrene

3. Jew: The Aristocrat Manean (likely slave of Herod's Father)
 4. Saul of Tarsus – Native of Asia Minor
 5. Barnabus from Cyprus
- c. John 17
 - d. Gal. 3:23 – “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.*”
 - e. **“A Gospel that reconciles people only to God and not to each other cannot be the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Spencer Perkins**
 - f. We all reflect Him differently; we are incomplete without diversity
 - g. This is not about being politically correct, it's about a true call of the Gospel.

ROMANS 12:1-2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

III. **Called to be Healers of the Breach (Isaiah 58:6-12)**

- a. “In the New Testament, *agape* is a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved... *Agape* refers to a love that compels the one loving to deny self for the benefit of the one loved.” (Deotis Roberts, *Reconciliation with Justice*, 2004).
- b. Separation breeds distrust.

Two of the biggest ways to begin healing this divide:

1. Build quality relationships across the racial divide.
2. Willingness to examine yourself first. Humility: Seek to understand before being understood.
 - a. Healing starts with repentance,
 - b. REPENTANCE STARTS WITH ME.

Key Concept - *Godly behavior is a response to what?!*

Godly behavior is not reacting to how someone treats me, but an on-going reaction to our beautiful Savior, hung on a cross like a scandalous criminal, for you and I.

Matt 5:44-48

Bottom Line: It was in relationship that the wounds were incurred, and it is in relationship that they will be healed. We can neither truly know God, nor truly be healed, independent of one another.

CAPSTONE OF THIS TALK:

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-8

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself (literally: “*laid aside His privileges*”) taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

.....

A Few Quotes

“Evil at its deepest root is the self sufficient pride that refuses intimacy in favor of control.”

-John Dawson

Healing America’s Wounds, 1994.

“A Gospel that reconciles people only to God and not to each other cannot be the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

-Spencer Perkins,

More Than Equals, 1993

“We can begin to bridge racial barriers by building personal relationships across them.”

-Mark Horst

The Unfinished Agenda of the Civil Rights Movement, 2004

“When it comes to the residue from our racial history, AIN’T NOBODY CLEAN!”

-Spencer Perkins

More Than Equals, 1993

“Reconciliation is a costly grace. It is difficult for Whites to repent beyond saying, ‘I am sorry!’ It is difficult for blacks to forgive. Both require cross bearing and concrete action to overcome the estrangement.”

-Paul Lehmann

Associate of Dietrich Bonhoffer