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# Improving Race Relations in the Churches of Christ 1968 Conference: How Christians Can Help Solve Racial Problems

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## HOW CHRISTIANS CAN HELP SOLVE RACIAL PROBLEMS

After a recent Bible class discussion, I was asked to suggest specific things that Christians can do to help meet racial problems that face us. My initial reply was that there are no fixed responses, but that we must reply out of attitudes which have been formed in a life surrendered to the Lordship of Christ. Upon further consideration I still feel this is the course our response should take, but I have come to see that there is also a need for some specific suggestions.

In order for those of us who follow Christ to contribute to the solution of racial problems, rather than to be a part of the problem, I strongly urge:

1. That we realize that since "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34,35), neither can we be (James 2:8-9). We must realize the danger of hating those whom we can see (I John 4:20,21).
2. That we have as our constant guide, "so whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matthew 7:12). Others want usually what we want, and desire to be treated as we want to be treated.
3. That we make a continuing effort to understand the feelings of people who are caught up in racism, or who are its victims. However, realize that we may never have the credentials of understanding which will give us complete acceptance by those who are victims of racial injustice. Many books have been written upon this subject. Most are available in paperback editions.  
  
They may make for uncomfortable reading, but we must read them if we ever begin to understand. A good one with which to start is Black Like Me, by John Howard Griffin. The story of a white man who experiences racial injustice after his skin is made black by chemical treatment and tells about it.
4. That we refrain from participation in humor (either telling or in laughing at jokes) which cast reflection upon the racial origin or dignity of any human being.
5. That we be prepared to admonish all our brethren who show respect of persons (Acts 10:34,35; I John 4:20,21; Galatians 2:11-16; 6:1).
6. That we teach our children by word and deed that every person is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27) and that Christ died for all men (I John 2:1,2). Racism either begins or ends in the home.
7. That we get to know upon a personal, equal, human-dignity-level basis those of other races. Without being paternal, be a friend to those whom others tend to ignore because of race. When a friendship is established have them in your home with your family--be in their home when invited--as equals, made in the image of God.
8. That we be prepared to sell our possessions (homes, etc.) without respect of persons (James 2:15-16).

9. That we be prepared to remain in the neighborhood, and encourage others to do so, when Negro families begin to move in. Be Christian neighbors to neighborhood families of all races.
10. That we accept applicants for jobs without respect to race, and hire those who are qualified, helping them gain acceptance among employees.
11. That we accept supervision willingly from one of another race when placed in such a position.
12. That we realize that racial distinctions should have no part in the life of the local congregation. We must encourage and accept:
  - a. Members of other races as brothers and sisters in Christ, without any distinction.
  - b. Members of other races to preach in evangelistic meetings.
  - c. Members of other races as employees of this church in its ministries, whether custodial, secretarial, evangelistic, or whatever.
  - d. Members of other races as Bible school teachers, deacons, elders.
13. That we continue to uphold respect for authority, for law and order while understanding that there are often underlying injustices which must be dealt with. Let us as citizens of a local community:
  - a. See that injustices are righted.
  - b. See that opportunity for employment is developed.
  - c. See that schools contribute to the solution, rather than perpetuate the problems.
  - d. See that adequate housing is available without respect of persons.
14. That we become involved immediately in a personal way with members of other races with a view to leading them to Jesus Christ. Be prepared to accept them as they are, without approving or disapproving their status, attitudes or circumstances. Demonstrate that as those who have been redeemed, by one who showed no respect of persons, neither can we.
15. That when we try and fail, that we remember that our effort must be continuing. Think how God has been patient with us. Even though your efforts may be rejected, remember that so were Christ's. "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:7-10).