

## **“NO ONE REALLY CARES!”**

A while back, I was away in a gospel meeting, and was talking to one of the members there. He had been viewing our You-Tube videos, and noted that there is a great deal of racial diversity here. I agreed, noting that we have white, African-American, Latino, and Asian (hope I didn't miss anyone!). I also pointed out that we have rich, poor, male, female, military, civilian, executives, and common laborers. My friend asked me how does all of this diversity work for us, and I said it works just fine! So, he asked me, what is the secret to making it work? And I said, ***“It works because no one really cares.”*** In this article, I want to expand on that thought...

You see, I truly believe that the more we focus on our differences, the more pronounced they become. Conversely, the less we focus on our differences, the less pronounced they become. ***Indeed, this “lesser focus” can reach a point where “no one really cares” about any of the differences that the rest of the world seems to focus upon.*** I have long believed that this is the real secret to improving relationships among people.

Of course, I speak of differences that are of no consequence to God, such as race, national origin, income level, etc. I hasten to add that there are differences that **DO** matter! We cannot live in such a way as to make human sinfulness of no consequence. We cannot accept those who persist in sin as though they were faithful to God (cf. 1Cor.5). But so many of the differences that the rest of the world places such a premium upon are, in reality, nothing! We should not let the world squeeze us into its mold with respect to such things (cf. Rm.12:2).

Now, I am not so naïve as to think that racism will ever be completely eradicated from the world. There will always be those who choose to persist in the sin of racism. Jesus once said, “The poor you have with you always” (Jn.12:8). If I can borrow and adapt that phrase, “The racists you have with you always.” I'm not defending this; I'm only saying that this is a reality of our sinful world. But it does not have to be that way for you and me! As Christians, we can overcome the world, and live in true unity (Ga.3:26-29).

Taking this a step further, I am of the opinion that racism is not natural. On the contrary, it is a learned behavior. People become focused on race because they are TAUGHT to focus on race. I grew up in the 1960's and 1970's, when great strides were made in race relations. Those gains did not come easily; but they DID come! Are things perfect? No. But I know for a fact that they are MUCH better! As proof, I cite again the diversity of this congregation.

When my son was born, my wife and I determined that we would simply not discuss racial differences with him at all. It was not difficult, ***because we really did not care!*** Our son had no clue that there were any kind of racial tensions in the world until he went to school. Then, one day, he came home and asked us, “Why do some people not like black people?” ***Now let that sink in!*** He had no clue, because we never made an issue of it. In fact, he had a friend who was black. He spent the night at our house; and our son spent the night at his house. ***These two boys simply did not care!*** Brethren, I am telling you, that is the key!

When we obsess about race, and make everything about race, we keep the pot stirred. So, I say, “Just let it go!” You are NOT my African-American (Asian, Latino, etc.) brother in Christ; you are just my brother in Christ! It simply does not matter to me what color you are, or how much money you make, or how fancy you dress for worship. ***I simply do not care about such things!*** And I am not alone in such thinking. That is precisely why this church works!

*“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Ep.2:14-18).*

--Lanny Smith