"BUILDING A MULTI-ETHNIC MINISTRY"

(Growing a Racially-Integrated Church)

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INTRODUCTION:

The N.T. phrase "all men" demonstrates God's heart for people of every nation.

John 1:7 - *"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."*

John 12:32 - *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*

Acts 20:26 - *"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men."*

I Timothy 2:4 - *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

I Timothy 4:10 - *"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."*

Titus 2:11 - "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"

Revelation 5:9 - *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"*

If there are people of various color in your community, there should be people of various color in the church you pastor!

***Every servant of Christ must have the following Holy Spirit-produced character traits in order to build a multi-ethnic ministry:**

Note: 4 Biblical Requirements for building a multi-ethnic ministry:

I. An Unprejudiced View of all People

To be prejudiced is to pre-judge a person without knowing any facts about his/her own personal character.

Prejudice is judging a book by its cover without seeing the contents of its pages.

Prejudice is making judgments about a person based on a superficial, non-moral, exterior, surface evaluation.

Christians should be "color-blind."

A. Every servant of God must realize the incredible value of the human _____.

Realize that the essence of each human being does not consist in their skin color, size, shape, sex, or social status -- but in their soul/spirit.

*Realize the incredible value of a human soul!

1. Every person has been made in the _____ and _____ of God (Gen. 1:27; 9:6).

a. "Image" ("tselem") - points to man's personality features that are reproductions of God's spiritual, intellectual, and moral qualities.

b. "Likeness" ("demuth") - points to man as not being the same as God, but as being similar in pattern or model.

c. Why does God use both words, "image" and "likeness?"
To avoid the implication that man is a precise copy of God, albeit in miniature, the less specific and more abstract word "demuth" ("likeness") was added by God. "Demuth" then defines and limits the meaning of "tselem" (Humbert, Barr, T.W.O.T. Vol. 1, p. 192).

d. Man bears the image of God in three senses:

1) Man is like God in that he is a person (with personality). A "person" is a being who possesses self-consciousness, self-determination, intellect, emotion, will, world-consciousness, etc.
2) Man is like God in that he has a spirit
(Jn. 4:24; I Cor. 6:20; cp. Eph. 4:23-24).
3) Man is like God in that he has a moral nature
(a basic, innate comprehension of right and wrong - Rom. 2:14; Eccl. 7:29).

When Adam sinned the image of God in man was marred and defiled but was not obliterated.

*Since mankind still retains this sense of the image of God, his life has a dignity and is to be respected, honored, and protected. Doing so honors the Creator (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9).

2. Every person has a soul-spirit which is of more value than all the _____ of the _____ (Mt. 16:26; Mk. 8:36, 37).

Improper definition of man:
"Man is a body who has a soul/spirit"
Accurate definition of man:
"Man is a soul/spirit who has a body"

The SOUL

Hebrew - שפנ ("nephesh")
Greek - ψυχη ("psuche")

The "soul" is the immaterial aspect of man that gives him life (Gen. 2:7 - "...Man became a living soul" ["nephesh"]).

The SPIRIT

Hebrew - חור ("ruach")
Greek - πνευμα ("pneuma")

NOTE: The words "ruach" and "pneuma" in certain contexts are translated wind or breath (cp. Jn. 3:8; Rev. 11:11) because there is a parallel between the spirit and the wind or breath. "The spirit, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial, and powerful" (Vine, Expository Dictionary).

The "spirit" is the immaterial aspect of man that gives him a capacity to know and enjoy God.

1) We know God via the spirit (I Cor. 2:10-14).
2) We serve God with our spirit (Rom. 1:9 12:11)
3) Our spirit belongs to God (I Cor. 6:20)
4) The Holy Spirit bears witness to our human spirit (Rom. 8:16)
5) We pray and sing to God via the spirit (I Cor. 14:15)
6) God's grace is with our spirit (Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23)
7) God's son Jesus Christ is with our spirit (II Tim. 4:22)
8) We are saved by God in our spirit (I Cor. 5:5)
9) Upon death, our spirit goes to Heaven (Acts 7:59 - Note: the "soul" does also - Rev. 6:9)

Is there a difference (distinction) between man's soul and spirit?
Answer: Yes. Key Text: **I Thessalonians 5:23**
God divides "soul and spirit" in Heb. 4:12; I Cor. 2:14-15 and 15:44; and Luke 1:46-47.

What is the difference (distinction) between man's soul and

spirit?
The "Spirit" is the immaterial (invisible) part of man that can relate to God (the spiritual realm).
The "Soul" is the immaterial part of man that relates to this life (the natural realm).

3. Every person's soul will live on for _____

a. The souls of the saved are with the Lord (Gen.35:18; II Cor.5:8; Acts 7:59)

b. The souls of the lost are experiencing eternal anguish & suffering (Mt. 10:28; Rev. 14:11; 20:14,15)

When you realize the value of the soul-spirit of people you will...
1) Respect the _____ of human life (James 3:9-10)
2) Focus on allowing God to nurture the _____ nature (Col.3:10; I Th.5:23)
3) Make _____ the Gospel a priority occupation (Ex.Paul Rom.10:1)
4) Not _____ a person based on _____ (I Sam.16:7)

Racism over skin color is foolish because a "soul" has no color and the soul/spirit is the essence of a man.

5) Not _____ after the _____ (Prov.6:25, Mt.5:28; I Tim. 5:2)

B. No servant of God can tolerate the sin of racial discrimination in his life.

All of us discriminate on a daily basis (i.e. we make judgments or decisions to choose on thing over another based on reasonable criteria; example: the supermarket, the car to buy, the school to attend, the boy to marry, the truth to believe, etc.).

Discrimination is not wrong (on moral matters, on stewardship matters).

Racial discrimination is wrong (note: racial discrimination and homosexual discrimination are not the same issue. Why? You did not have a choice as to your skin color, but you do have a choice as to the lifestyle you choose to live.).

1. No _____ (because all men are created equal) (Gen. 1:27)

2. No _____ _____ (because our citizenship is in Heaven) (Phil. 3:20)

3. No _____ of _____ (because God shows no

favoritism based on man's status or stature) (Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25; Ja. 2:1; I Pet. 1:17)

4. No _____ (because it brings a snare) (Prov. 29:25)

II. A <u>Kind</u> <u>Spirit</u> toward all People (II Tim. 2:24)

When ministering to people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, you need the virtue of:

A. _____ in mannerisms *("not strive. . . gentle unto all men")*

B. _____ in communication *("apt to teach")*

Nothing cuts across all racial and cultural boundaries like the Word of God.
A commitment to <u>expositional</u> preaching is a key to impacting the lives of diverse people (every believer can relate to clear Bible teaching and preaching).

C. _____ in understanding *("patient")*

When ministering to foreigners, remember they often have different concepts of time, punctuality, etc. Such will require patience.

D. _____ in attitude *("in meekness")*

E. _____ in ministry *(". . . if God peradventure will give them repentance")*
"...<u>the Lord</u> added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47)

III. A <u>Flexible</u> <u>Methodology</u> of Ministry to all People (I Cor. 9:19-23)

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" - v. 22).

What are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Let the Apostle Paul's example challenge you to surrender whatever it takes so that you will be more effective in giving your life for world evangelism!

1. **Paul chose to remain <u>single</u>**
   so that he would not be hindered by marital obligations (v.5)
2. **Paul chose to <u>minister</u> without <u>pay</u>**
   so that he would not be misjudged as a money-hungry evangelist (v.6-18)

3. Paul chose to <u>adjust</u> his <u>methodologies</u>
so that he would reach more people, without compromising his message or Biblical convictions (v.19-23)

V. 19
In verses 19-22, the phrase *"that I might gain"* occurs five times.
Paul's heart was fixed on gaining souls for Christ.

"Free from all men" - Although Paul did <u>not</u> have to live to suit anyone's customs, cultural practices, or mannerisms, he freely chose to serve them by adapting to their non-moral distinctions so as to win them for Christ.

V. 20
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Jew</u> to win them
V. 21
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Gentile</u> to win them
V. 22
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>weak</u> to win them

"I am made all things to all men" **-** This does <u>not</u> involve Biblical compromise on doctrine, dogma, or clearly-defined moral issues.
This does <u>not</u> involve adaptations for <u>fleshly</u> purposes (i.e. "When in Rome do as the Romans do.") It does involve adjustments in technique, methodology, and custom for the Gospel's sake.
If a person is offended by God's Word, Bible Doctrine, Clearly revealed standards etc. that is their problem. However, if he is offended by our unnecessary attitudes, behavior or practices, its our problem. We need wisdom to adjust our methods without doing damage to the message.

What does it mean to "be all things to all men"? It means:

1. A willingness to _____ (not everyone has to "do Christianity" just like an American; how willing are you to accommodate the differences of others without ignoring or violating God's moral law?)

2. A willingness to _____ (compromise on preferences, never on principles)

3. A willingness to _____ your _____ of <u>doing things</u> so that you can conform to the culture you are ministering in, without Biblical compromise (be flexible).

4. A willingness to be <u>open to</u> _____

V. 23
Paul adjusted his ways of doing things so that others might be joint-participants in the gospel. Paul was <u>not</u> a rigid, starchy, wooden, stereo-typed, cloned Christian. Paul in one sense would be against cloned

Christianity.

Ministries we do to enhance Christian unity in the midst of ethnic diversity:
--Unified Sunday morning prayer meeting
--Unified Sunday fellowship luncheon
--Unified quarterly "Agape Dinner"
--Unified weekly testimony service
--Unified monthly men's breakfast
--Unified monthly ladies' Bible fellowship
--Unified weekly Spanish translation ministry
--Unified weekly Bible Institute
--Unified ministry opportunities

IV. A Global Burden for all People (Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; Mt. 28:19)

(Needed: "A missionary's heart")

--We are to see that the Gospel is preached to "_____" (Mk. 16:15) . . . unto the "uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

--We are to see that disciples are made of people of "_____" (Mt. 28:19).

To build a multi-ethnic ministry:

A. Every man of God should have a willingness to consider establishing a church in a _____ environment.

B. Every man of God should have a willingness to reach out of the suburbs into the _____ (the "melting pots" of the world).

CONCLUSION:

Do's & Don't's for Racial Harmony:

*Do follow the "_____" toward all people.

*Don't nurture an attitude of _____
Beware of the influences of the "White Supremists" -
Beware of the influences of the "Black Supremists" -

*Don't make racial rules and dogmas which the Bible does not warrant

*Don't tell foolish _____.

*As a leader, do set the Biblical _____ of a true man of God. Your people will become what you are. They will mirror your attitudes. They will mimic your style of dealing with people.