

***A Biblical Answer for Racial Unity*** by H.B. Charles, Jr., Danny Adkin, *et al.* Kress Biblical Resources: The Woodlands, TX (2017). (41 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols.)

### **1. Heart Satisfaction in God.**

When men do not find their hearts satisfied by God, their hearts will not be satisfied. James addresses this in his letter: “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:1-2). [page 10]

### **2. Unregenerate Man Knows Nothing of God’s Love.**

We recognize that we live in a world full of people who are full of evil desires, which emerge from evil hearts—haters of God, and haters of men. As the book of Jeremiah describes it, the hearts of men are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (see Jeremiah 17:9).

Our world is at war with itself because the natural man, the unregenerate man, knows nothing of the love of God. The person without Christ is incapable of loving God, and therefore incapable of really loving people. We too, before coming to Christ, lived in this state of war and death. Titus 3:3 says, “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.” That’s the world we live in. That’s the world of lost humanity. [page 11]

### **3. The Clarity of the Gospel Frees Our Soul.**

When the light of the gospel confronts the darkness—when the clarity of the gospel cuts through all the confusing voices that we hear in this world—then the sovereign Spirit of God unshackles our souls. When God says, “Let there be light,” and the light of God shines into the darkened soul of man so that Christ is seen on the pages of Scripture in all of his beauty—and he is loved, and he is believed in and embraced for life—there’s a new order, a new creation. Old things pass away, all things become new.

Through that saving work, peace replaces chaos, love replaces warring, compassion replaces pride, God brings order out of disorder. All these creations, one soul at a time, form one new man in Jesus Christ. Christ is at the head of a new humanity, a redeemed human race. [page 11]

### **4. Only the Bible Is Profound.**

He turned the light on by declaring the Word of God. Preachers need to stop trying to be profound. Rather we need to be clear and recognize what is truly profound in preaching. What is profound is not our thinking about the Bible. What is profound are

not our individual opinions formed from our reading of the Bible. What is profound is the *Bible*. Preach the Word. [page 14]

## **5. Humility and Sincerity in Ministers.**

Charles Hodge said: “Those ministers who are humble and sincere, who are not wise in their own eyes, but simply declare the truth as God has revealed it, commending themselves to people’s consciences; that is, they secure even the testimony of the conscience of wicked people in their favor.” [page 15]

## **6. Salvation Takes One out of One Domain into Christ’s Kingdom.**

Salvation is a sovereign work. It is a creative work. God calls into being what was not there before. It is an effectual work. He secures that which he seeks. And it’s a transferring work. He takes these people out of one domain, and he places them into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13). [page 17]

## **7. Applying the Truth of the Gospel.**

Orthodoxy is not enough. We must also have orthopraxy. We must take the truth of the gospel and apply it to this situation. [page 17]

## **8. Racial Tensions Are Overcome by Spiritual Priorities.**

This is how we should work through the growing pains of racial reconciliation today. The church cannot adequately address racial issues by trying to be something it is not. The church must be the church. The church must keep the main thing the main thing. The church overcomes racial tensions by maintaining spiritual priorities. [page 21]

## **9. Church Has Problems.**

Here are two facts about any church you enter: nothing is as bad as it seems, and nothing is as good as it seems. Every church has problems. Even the early church had its shares of problems. [page 21]

## **10. The Gospel Puts a New Man in Clothes.**

We must make sure the main thing is the main thing. The challenge for predominately black churches in the United States is to make sure we do not transform the church into some civil rights organization where the gospel is lost.

Anybody, any group, can put new clothes on a man. Only the gospel can put a new man in clothes. As important as these things are, we must make sure we keep the main thing the main thing—the gospel of grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, the authority of the Word of God, and the call for humble obedience—even in the face of ethnic and cultural difference and problems. [page 24]

## **11. Do Not Force the Spirit into Our Mold.**

John MacArthur comments here:

Biblical church organizations always respond to needs and to what the Spirit is already doing. To organize a program and then expect the Holy Spirit to get involved in it is to put the cart before the horse. We dare not try to force the Spirit to fit our mold. Organization is never an end of itself but only a means to facilitate what the Lord is doing in His church. [page 26]

## **12. A Plurality of Men to Lead a Church.**

Christ alone is to be preeminent in the church. And we must not allow any cult of personality to develop around any particular leader. There ought to be a plurality of godly men in the church who are qualified, able, ready to lead the church in prayer and the ministry of word. [page 30]

## **13. The Lord Sends Revival and Restoration.**

Let the church be the church, and the Lord will send revival and restoration that will change lives in our cities and throughout the nations. [page 32]

## **14. Can We All Get along?**

Rodney King is now dead. But his question lives on. *Can we all get along?* Personal problems, family issues, racial divisions, urban challenges, political infighting, international conflict, terrorist threats all around us beg that question—Can we all get along? Is true peace possible? What does it take for love to conquer hate? For unity to replace division? For kindness to bring an end to hostility?

The apostle Paul answers that all-important question for us in Ephesians 2:14-18. Here, the word of God makes it clear that only Jesus Christ can bring peace with God and with one another.

There are three fundamental reasons why we should look to the Lord Jesus for peace. (1) Jesus Christ is our peace; (2) Jesus Christ has made peace for us; and (3) Jesus Christ preaches peace to all. [page 35]

## **15. Jesus Christ Brings Peace among the Races.**

As a black man in America, I am the beneficiary of those who have marched, protested, and even rioted for the sake of civil rights. My father was among those who stood up and sat in to be treated fairly. I am grateful. Yet human activism will never change sinful hearts, as the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement has demonstrated. The only way there will be peace among the races is through Jesus Christ. He himself is our peace. Different races, local churches, and family members cannot truly be at peace

with one another through self-effort. We must believe the word of God that declares there is peace in the person of Christ. [page 37]

### **16. Jesus Christ Creates an Entirely New Man.**

*He has made the two [Jews and Gentiles] one new man.* R. Kent Hughes writes: “Jesus didn’t Christianize the Jews or Judaize the Gentiles. He didn’t create a half-breed. He made an entirely new man.” The two have become one. [page 38]

### **17. The Cross Is the Answer to Racial Issues.**

The blood of Jesus covers our sins to reconcile us to God in one body. William MacDonald rightly commented, “The cross is God’s answer to racial discrimination, segregation, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and every form of strife between men.” [page 41]

### **18. Sin Finds a Way to Divide.**

A minister cared for young boys in his orphanage, and during their bus rides racial tensions would arise. All the of black kids would sit on one side, and the white kids would sit on the other side. The tension broke out one day, and he in frustration pulled the bus to the side of the road, marched them all off, and gave them a stern lecture. When he finished, his concluding thought was that there is no more black and white in this orphanage. “Everyone,” he said out of frustration, “from now on is green.” Then he put them back on the bus. When he started driving again, he heard someone murmur in the back. “Dark green on the left and light green on the right.”

This is just how we are as sinners. We find a way to divide. This is why we desperately need the gospel. Not just the gospel for the world around us, but *we* need the gospel. We need to be reminded of what we were without Christ and what we are in Christ. [page 42]

### **19. Through the Finished Work of Christ the Battle Is Over.**

The last battle of the American Revolution was the Battle of Blue Licks. But it was a battle that should have never been fought, for it was fought after the war was over! News traveled slowly. There was no means of quick communication over the Appalachian Mountains to Blue Licks, Kentucky. The two sides went on fighting because no knew the war was over. Lost people are at war against God and against one another, because they do not know that the battle is over because of the finished work of Christ. May the Lord use us to get the good news out that the Lord Jesus Christ is our peace! [page 44]

### **20. We Are Jew and Gentile Alike.**

This is good news. This is good news for all. We are united to one another, Jew and gentile as one people, one body, one church. It is in Christ, through the gospel, that

Jews and Gentiles share in the Abrahamic promises of worldwide blessing. This is the same gospel that saved us, and this is the same gospel we're called to preach. [page 50]

### **21. We Are One in Christ.**

But the gospel doesn't merely gather a diverse crowd. It gathers a diversity *and makes us one*. [page 52]

### **22. Different Kinds of Diversity.**

We should be careful not make a multiethnic church our idol. But here's what I believe: if you and I in our churches are practicing Ephesians 3:8-9, we ought to pray that Ephesians 3:10 would result. If we are being faithful to proclaim the gospel in our neighborhoods, in our community where our church is, in our workplace, where we recreate, where we shop, when we get together as a family—we ought to pray that our church would eventually come to reflect the diversity of the community that we're in. So, if your community is not very diverse, you won't display much diversity. But there's more than just ethnic diversity. There's socioeconomic diversity. There's educational diversity. There's generational diversity. There's all kinds of diversity. [page 53]

### **23. Living and Fighting Together as a Church.**

Here's the bottom line: when we come together as a church, we need to understand that it's not about what we do in the realm of social reform. It's not about all the external issues that arise from different cultures and backgrounds. It's about preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, which unites us and leads us to love one another in self-sacrificial love, so that we don't demand our personal preferences. That's how we must live together as a church and fight together as a church. [page 54]

### **24. Being Humble and Gentle to Solve Problems.**

How many problems could be solved if we dealt with people in humility and gentleness, and didn't immediately assume the worst of people? We need to look for evidences of grace in other people's lives. We need to humble ourselves. [page 58]

### **25. Bearing with One Another in Love.**

The gospel changes our self-ward trajectory. We have a new heart. We have God's spirit. This is what Paul is saying. In fact, notice what he goes on to say in verses 2-3: "bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." [page 59]

### **26. Fight for Unity in the Body of Christ.**

And this is the ground of our unity in Christ: "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one

baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). We’re to fight for that unity. We’re to be eager to maintain that unity. We’re to deny self. We’re to be patient with people. Yet we all know that these are hard things to do in our own strength. [page 59]

### **27. United by Christ and His Gospel.**

Diversity is a beautiful thing, but our diversity is not like the world’s. The world can have a diversity by gathering people around a sport, gathering people around food. We are united because we have been gathered around Christ and his gospel. [page 60]

### **28. Preaching, Teaching, and Sharing God’s Word.**

As we are growing up into Christ, growing in oneness with Christ, we are to be growing in oneness with one another. We are growing up from childhood to adulthood in Christ. We’re not tossed about by every latest doctrine that comes down the pike. But how this happens is that in God’s grace, the ascended Christ has gifted the church with ministers of the Word who preach the Word, who teach the Word, who share the Word. [page 61]

### **29. Racial Unity through God’s Word.**

How do we define racial unity? What is racial reconciliation? Racial reconciliation and racial unity must be defined under the integrity of the gospel. We can have genuine racial unity only insofar as we submit to the principles that in God’s Word. First, we must submit to the reality that no man is better than the other, because we are all image bearers. Third we must recognize that, as the church, we are joined in a dynamic relationship with the living God, because God has reconciled us to Christ and brought us into one family, one faith. Only when these three truths are embraced can we begin to think about genuine racial unity and reconciliation. [page 77]

### **30. Issues of Disunity Sometimes Come through Cultural/Tribal Difference.**

We must recognize that race is not always the cause of disunity between classes and cultures. These distinctions are much deeper than the color of one’s skin. Some of the most significant atrocities in history haven been perpetrated by man against his fellow man—among people who looked the same, except they had distinct cultural/tribal differences. Mankind has demonstrated this in Africa, Europe, and Asia. Actually, no continent has escaped making distinctions, although some have escaped the more regrettable horrors of attempted genocide, prejudice, injustice, and systemic oppression. [page 79]

### **31. Judging Not an Entire People Group; Knowing Individuals.**

In some cases, people hold things against other people they don't even know. How can I have anything against you without knowing you? How can you have something against me without knowing me? We don't know what others have faced in life. How can we say, for example, that some have privilege because they're of a particular race? Anyone from any race might have been an orphan, an abused child, come from a broken home, or have been consistently told they would never amount to anything. Sometimes we assume these things as we live our lives in these relationships that are flawed even at best.

This is not to say that class systems have not created more opportunities for others, but we must be careful before we judge an entire people group. We must seek to know each person as an individual first if we are to strive for reconciliation. The problem is at the same time complex and simple. The problem is sin—but that sin has a web as diverse as the number of sinners manifesting their prejudices in varying contexts. [page 80]

### **32. Unity of Believers Is Grounded in Grace and Forgiveness.**

Only born-again believers—the true church—understand radical, undeserved forgiveness and reconciliation. The unity of believers is grounded in grace and forgiveness. It is a forgiveness that seeks the best for others. Though we can't grasp how offensive our sins were and are to a holy God, grace is our motivation. We too, therefore, are called and compelled by grace to learn to forgive others, though they do not really understand the depth of their offenses. Grasping this reality will help the church live in racial unity, and strive to exemplify it for those outside the church (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12). [page 81]

### **33. Forgiveness Is the Radical Element.**

If there is to be any hope of racial unity in this world, the gospel of grace must be embraced by hearts who recognize their own need for reconciliation and forgiveness before a holy God. At the heart of the gospel is the free forgiveness of sin that Christ, the King purchased at an immeasurable cost. When we grasp this by faith, our hearts are compelled by grace to forgive others who have sinned grievously against us. And where there is this type of forgiveness, there will be unity and reconciliation. Forgiveness is the radical element in racial unity. If the world is going to strive for racial unity, let it begin with those called to be lights in its midst (Phil 2:15). [page 87-88]

### **34. Looking to Christ and Caring for One Another.**

We are in desperate need of direction. We are lost without the instructions of our Father. But he loves us, and he has given us instructions, and he will meet us. He has

given us the Scriptures. Christ must be our identity—not culture. Our Father has given us a recipe for racial unity. We taste the fruit of it every time we partake of the Lord’s Supper in faith—looking to Christ and caring for one another in the body of Christ. [page 98]

### **35. Setting Our Minds on Things Above.**

Social media, the news, conversations with unbelievers all tempt us to spend all day focusing on crises and controversies. But God’s Word calls us to set our minds on things above (Colossians 3:1-4). [page 106]

### **36. Jesus Christ Is the Answer to Racial Struggles.**

We are not waiting for a solution to our racial struggles. We’re not waiting for someone to propose it. It is here. Jesus Christ has broken into this age. Jesus Christ has inaugurated a kingdom in his blood that brings sinners of every type and kind together.

Genuine and lasting racial unity is eschatological. It’s grounded in knowing where things are headed, and being one family in the new heavens and the new earth. Racial unity is christological. It’s grounded in Jesus Christ, who alone can make one new man. Perhaps not perfectly, but genuinely, believers here and now can overcome ethnic and racial differences—because we have a higher allegiance, higher calling, and unified vision grounded in the new heavens and new earth. [page 108]

### **37. The Church Is Where Hostility Goes to Die.**

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a foretaste of the age to come. The church is a little sign of the new heavens and new earth. The church is the place where hostility goes to die. The church is the place where people are friends, more than friends, brothers and sisters, for no other reason other than Jesus Christ. When a church is operating in that kind of dynamic, then yes, it is truly reflecting the glories of heaven to a lost and dying world.

The future promises a racially diverse, yet gloriously unified humanity worshiping Christ. We must keep this in front of us at all times as we relate to one another in church and in the world. If we do, we will reveal God’s final word on racial unity. [page 110]

### **38. Miners Fellowshiping Together.**

D.L. Moody once commented, “It is a sight in Colorado on Sunday to see miners come out of the bowels of the hills and gather at school houses under the trees while some old English miner stands up and reads one of Charles Spurgeon’s sermons.” [page 115]

### **39. Liberty to the Captives from Jesus Christ.**

God had to emancipate Spurgeon's heart before he could help others find their freedom. "There is another slavery," said Spurgeon, "a slavery into which all of us are born. A slavery in which we have lived, and alas, a slavery under which some of us still live. But Jesus Christ has come, the Great Liberator to proclaim liberty to the captives." [page 118]

### **40. Each Human Made in the Image of God.**

In the Spurgeon library, we have about fifteen researchers and we're interested in all facets of Charles Spurgeon, all sorts of things. One thing we recently discovered is how much Spurgeon was worth. From 1870 to 1891, Spurgeon earned the equivalent of 26 million dollars. In his more productive years, he probably quadrupled that, if not more. We think he may have received somewhere around 100 million dollars over the course of his life.

In New York City, his sermons were selling a thousand copies a minute at trade shows. Any yet, at the end of his life, Charles Spurgeon died relatively poor. He died with only two thousand pounds in his bank account. Why? Spurgeon gave all his money away—not just the interest of his money. He gave the principal.

He funneled all his resources into sixty-six ministries in London. Many of those he personally financed for his whole life. He started a Sunday School for the blind. He started a book fund with his wife. Nursing homes. Nobody in his day demonstrated more love for the least of these than Charles Spurgeon.

Spurgeon believed that each human being is made in the image of God. Inspired by his friend George Müller, he founded two orphanages that provided for 500 boys and girls. He started a ministry for prostitutes, or fallen women, as they were called back then. In 1857, there were 8,600 prostitutes in his ministerial district. [pages 118-119].

### **41. "Man Stealing."**

Spurgeon was vocal about the evils of slavery in his time. He called it "man stealing". He believed it was a sin worth breaking fellowship over. "I do from my inmost soul detest slavery anywhere and everywhere, although I commune at the Lord's Table with men of all creeds. Yet, with a slaveholder, I have no fellowship of any assort or kind." [page 120]