

MY DREAM FOR THE LORD'S CHURCH:



PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

By Bill Davis

There are times when I feel constrained to share the depths of my soul—out loud. I have done this so many times in the past but my anguish, frustration, and pain failed to resonate with many of my listeners. Have you ever been there? Now picture this in your mind . . . having to go through life wrestling with this ever-present burden that is crystal clear to you but seemingly impossible for others to see and acknowledge. For example, how many times have you looked in the mirror and said, “I pray that my color will not cost me an opportunity to live today.” Until I said that, I would venture to say that a great majority of you never, and I do mean never, have entertained such a provocative, heart-rending thought. And why is that? And why should it? Perhaps you live in a world where color is not an issue for you. It never has been and never will be. But when you live in a world created by God that is filled with beautiful shades and hues of humanity, can you afford **not** to think outside your own “cocoon” of existence? And especially when these cocoons comprise the Lord’s church? Unfortunately this is where I have seen and witnessed some of the greatest displays ever of *spiritual macular degeneration*. We profess to love each other and even salute each other as “brothers and sisters” in Christ—only to retreat to our comfortable citadels/congregations shaded to our comfort level . . . **because we want it that way**. And it is for this reason I share my greatest dream for the Lord’s church: **Proactive versus Reactive Discipleship**.

I am deeply offended and frightened when I hear so many of us refer to the Lord’s church as the ‘Black church of Christ’ or the ‘White church of Christ.’ It has become a way of distinguishing the percentage of the majority color/hue in the congregation as opposed to how much of Jesus is in the congregation. It is almost like we wear a badge of honor when we conduct “unity services” that bring the differing hues together for a song service or evening worship assembly . . . only to regress to the mean after everything is over. **Why do we put up with this charade?**

Are we genuinely interested in reflecting the love of Christ from a united front—or not? Are we willing to do the hard work, have the challenging conversations that will require more **walk** than talk? Yes, I have wondered if our precious Savior shakes His head in great disappointment, since we seem to have lost the desire and will to **live for Him** which will help us **love like Him!**

We must wake up and realize that Jesus is coming back for His church—not one that we have created/developed that placates our conscience and makes us feel good about ourselves. So let me ask you, are you able to drink the cup that will demonstrate to the world that we are one in Christ? Are you sure?

The evil one has wormed his way into the thinking, ideology, and hearts of too many members in the body of Christ who focus more on color than the Christ. If we don’t repent of this mind-set/attitude, there are going to be some heart-breaking surprises on Judgment Day! The recent killings and senseless murders of **Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd** have caused an eruption of frustration, pain, anger, confusion, and protests throughout our nation and across the world. I have not and will never advocate/condone looting, burning, civil disobedience, or law-breaking behavior by anyone or any group. While these unacceptable activities/behaviors must be addressed, **we must also make sure we understand what caused the outpouring of frustration in the first place**. Remember when I said that you can struggle with a burden all your life and try to express the pain to others—but many times it goes unrecognized/acknowledged? The pain/anguish of black people has been present in this country since 1619. Have you heard the screams? Have you observed/personally experienced the “you can’t worship here” edict from some well-meaning, but misled/misinformed member of the Lord’s church? Where, in God’s Name, has the consistent righteous indignation been in the Lord’s church for those unfortunate souls who have suffered injustices in every generation since 1619? **Why** do we have to have a volcanic eruption in society before those of us in the Lord’s church scramble to do what we should have been doing all along, that being to care and reach out to **everyone** with the love of Jesus Christ?

How do you think Jesus feels when we act like this and seem to have no plan or strategy to bridge the ‘color gap’ in our worldly, carnal mind? I have some dream-filled recommendations that, if followed, would bring us closer to Jesus and His expectations for true life in Him and His body. Again I ask, are you able to drink the cup?

- I pray/dream that elderships in every city across this country will make a point to befriend their elder colleagues who don’t look like them
- I pray/dream that elderships in every city across this country will meet with their elder counterparts and develop specific strategies to interact more with a view toward **permanently joining forces** to share Jesus in their communities and cities
- I pray/dream that elderships in every city across this country will openly share and discuss their fears, trepidations, hopes, and dreams with the children/grandchildren in their congregations and seek their input/perspective regarding their take on what they are seeing and hearing
- I pray/dream that elderships in every city across this country will teach/preach that prejudice is an emotional commitment to ignorance—that will cause you to lose your soul
- I pray/dream that every congregation will spend the night in prayer and ask God for strength, wisdom, insight, and zeal to live, serve, and love all men the way Jesus does

May God hasten the day when we so live and love the Christ and place Him in the center of our hearts and mind that He truly will draw all men to Himself.

Until then, I will continue to dream . . . ▲