

1. The Church as a Post-Racial Community (Regardless of progress made in our culture it seems racial tension ever remains with us. There always seems to be something stirring--and with politicians and news media eager to exploit it our culture is anything but post-racial. But they should not really be all that surprising--Satan does his job well of maximizing our differences--always has. Consider the racial reality into which the church was born--the Jew/Gentile divide was the overriding challenge of the NT church. It was a struggle as they sought to become that post-racial kingdom community in their setting. Much NT teaching addresses the issue. The goal was to be that alternative place where everyone was welcome--regardless of ethnicity--brought together by the commonness found in Jesus)
2. (The ideal) Galatians 3:28; also Romans 10:12; 1 Corinthians 12:13 (this ideal though only could occur with great maturity--and it took time and struggle to get there--let's just consider this one guy's story for instance)
3. The Apostle Peter
 - a. With Cornelius--Acts 10:34-35
 - b. Confronted by Paul--Galatians 2:11-21
 - c. Wrote of Paul's teaching as "hard to understand" but essential to salvation--2 Peter 3:15-16
4. God still does not show favoritism--Romans 2:11 (tell story of that book--but how do WE get there?)
 - a. It is all about identity (Paul attacks the very notion of superiority in racial identity in Romans--all guilty; all sinners; all deserving of condemnation--no racial exclusions or free passes because of DNA. Only hope is Jesus--so we have to remake ourselves and reshape our very identities--new birth/baptism creates newness which leads to transformation--we are no longer our own, but bought with a price. This means my primary self-identity is no longer about my race; my heritage; the culture I was brought up in--it is now about Christ, the kingdom and its culture. AGAIN NOT EASY--especially with the pressure culture brings to bear on conforming, not transforming. The book of Hebrews illustrates this--Jews giving up their identity in Jesus to go back into Judaism. All of this does not mean we deny our skin color or completely abandon our heritage--Jews for example--it just means that is no longer the primary lens through which we see ourselves---Christ and his kingdom redefines us and becomes that lens)
 - b. (Then we can) End the hostility--Ephesians 2:11-22 (referencing what Christ accomplished in his DBR--look at this text: He is our peace--creating "one new man out of two." It is the power of Christ alone that accomplish this within us--we have to submit our will to his in order to become this post-racial community--YOUTH GROUP)
 - c. (Then we can) Accept each other--Romans 15:7 (just as he accepted us--**in order to bring praise to God**. Lots here--acceptance is based on Jesus ending the hostility and accepting us. The purpose is for God to be praised---and in this to demonstrate the incredible, awesome, amazing alternative this produces in community. How inviting this was in the first century and how inviting it is in the 21st!
5. (This has always been God's will for his people--beautiful text) Revelation 7:9 (but not only one like this--Isaiah 2:2 etc. God's design for his kingdom is post-racial--a place where everyone is welcome, equal and valued--all based on the redemptive work of Christ. Our part in this is here and now--living this out to God's glory and inviting others to join us)