

A Cancer in the Land

Several months ago I was on my way to the hospital to visit my brother Ronald who had been diagnosed with throat cancer. Already saddened by the news of Ron's condition, I was stunned by the behavior of the driver behind me as I waited at an intersection.

"Go, you dumb nigger! Go!" he yelled. The man was apparently outraged at the thought of missing the light, so he blurted racial slurs at me and my daughter, Faith, who was riding with me. "Are you stupid, you dumb nigger? I said go!" he shouted from his window.

I made a quick left turn and headed for the hospital. As I told God how this man's actions hurt me, I realized that racism in our country is just like the cancer that has invaded my brother's body.

One of the definitions the dictionary gives for the word cancer is interesting: "something evil or malignant that spreads destructively." Like a tiny seed nurtured by ignorance, fear and hatred, racism penetrates our hearts and minds to breed in an already sinful nature. It hibernates in the most unlikely places, such as in our children. If we are not careful, our kids will inherit a grown-up's disease.

But the Word of God is clear: There should be no segregation. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NKJV).

The first line of defense in fighting cancer is a strong immune system—which does an amazing job of combating cancer-causing agents introduced to the body through food and the environment. Charisma columnist Dr. Don Colbert says we

strengthen the immune system by eating the right foods. "What you eat makes all the difference!" he insists.

What a parallel. The strongest line of defense against racism in America is the church. Like the human immune system, the church has the strength to ward off cancer-causing agents such as discrimination and prejudice. Sadly, though, the body of Christ is often unaware of racism's power, or it simply refuses to battle the problem. So this spiritual carcinoma is getting bigger, and it boldly manifests itself during what has been dubbed the most segregated hour in America: Sunday at 11 a.m.

After my brother, 39, nearly choked while eating a hot dog, he rushed to the emergency room to be examined. When the doctors diagnosed him with cancer, the first thing they did was develop a plan of action. They explained to Ron that the tumor was stubborn and that treatment would be aggressive—bolts of radiation and several months of draining chemotherapy. The first thing my brother did was repent and ask God to heal him.

Repenting for racism in America—including in the church—will lead to great healing for our country and revival in the land. But this move of the Spirit won't look like the nearly all-white revivals of Brownsville and the Smithton Outpouring; neither will it favor the nearly all-black Woman Thou Art Loosed movement currently sweeping the nation.

Instead, it will resemble the day of Pentecost, when the crowd that gathered heard the gospel in their own languages (see Acts 2:1-12). The gospel wasn't presented in the language of one particular culture; it supernaturally transcended culture and ministered to one race—the human race.

We must take drastic measures through prayer, declaring the Word and allowing the Spirit of God to convict our hearts to act. It's not enough to swap choirs and have nice fellowship meetings. Healing the racial divide requires a change in

lifestyle.

Today, my brother's health has improved dramatically. He withstood the physical pain and the emotional heartache associated with cancer. His diet consists of fruits, vegetables and the Word of God, from which he draws strength daily.

Addressing racism in society may be painful for some because it is so deeply rooted in our culture. But God is calling the church to be the forerunner in this endeavor.

Please don't allow the smile on my face to fool you. When that driver called me the N word, that hurt. But regardless of the pain the scourge of racism has caused in our land, God wants to use you, me and others to stop its spread and bring healing to America.