

Racism Uprooted

My ancestral roots run straight down into the Mississippi mud. My great-grandfather, seven generations removed, was the first Protestant circuit-rider in the Mississippi territory, giving me a rich Christian heritage intermingled with a traditional Southern mind-set.

Unfortunately, my Christian heritage did not tip the scales when weighed against the embedded racial views of the Deep South. My family never spoke with hatred against black people, but they certainly felt that blacks needed to “stay in their place.”

When I was growing up, I was told that segregation was the way God meant it to be. It took many years for God to set me free.

He began by bringing a black sister in the Lord named Teresa into my life. We were walking through a similar trial at one time, and we bonded very quickly as we shared the deep emotions of our hearts and souls with each other.

This relationship opened my eyes to see that the source of racism was truly Satan himself. But patterns of thinking, instilled from childhood, die a hard death, and I could not change by my own strength.

I attended a retreat held at my church that was sponsored by a black Christian women's group. I volunteered, thinking I was there to be a helper, but while I was in the presence of these awesome, anointed women of God, the Lord reminded me of the Bible story of Joseph.

After being sold into slavery, Joseph learned complete dependence on the Lord, and the day came when the brother who sold him came to him in need of bread during a famine in the land.

Likewise, I reasoned, due to years of oppression and slavery, African Americans who have learned to depend on the Lord have been given spiritual bread that the white Christian community needs. This was a powerful revelation to me that left only a few strands of the web of deceit within me intact.

In April 2000 I attended the Charisma Women's Conference. I was not asking the Lord about racial issues at the time, nor was I even thinking about them.

During one of the breakout sessions, I had an enjoyable conversation with a sister in the Lord who was sitting next to me. When I rejoined my friends, who went to a different session, I proceeded to tell them about the woman I'd met and some of the things she said about the conference.

Several hours later it struck me that I had told my friends the entire story of my encounter without mentioning the fact that the sister was black. I had been delivered!

It wasn't because of a prayer or a speech or by anything I could point to directly. My deliverance came by an impartation of the Spirit of God. A river of unity flowed unrestrained throughout that entire weekend and flooded us with His presence.