



Church Within A Church Movement

Liberal Racism

Some white people are, as a result of their upbringing and environment, overt, intentional racists. They have a deliberate belief in the lies of white supremacy and are quite proud of their whiteness and their perceived superiority. They oppose any attempts at communication between races. These people will usually be found in groups like the Klu Klux Klan, the Aryan Nations, or the Minutemen along our southern border. Other white people take a more passive stance. They believe a lot of the white supremacy propaganda, but they are content to sit on the sidelines and cheer whenever racism has a victory and complain bitterly when people of color gain any measure of justice.

It's easy for us to try to disassociate ourselves from these broken, hateful people, without realizing that we carry some of the same feelings and reactions within ourselves. We have learned and internalized the language and actions of racism that were part of our upbringing. In denial of these internal tendencies we then find ourselves becoming unwitting or "liberal" racists.

We declare ourselves innocent or redeemed of the sin of racism, even though we might admit to, at one time, believing some racist ideas. Instead of identifying as racist, we call ourselves, "non racists" or "ex-racists" while we continue to benefit from the perks and privileges of white power. We believe that people of color are just as capable of racism as white people. We convince ourselves that we are "color blind" and treat all people equally.

In spite of this we profess to love people of color, making a point to include them in our circle of friends. We are often involved in charitable, religious or non profit activities trying to help people of color, and might even make a career out of defending, rescuing or empowering people of color, advocating on their behalf, believing that they, not us, are the primary victims or the evil of racism. This is the racism most often found in churches and "liberal" organizations, a subtle kind of racism which professes to be diverse without being truly multicultural.

Most of us would be shocked to learn that this is the kind of racism that is seen as most dangerous by people of color, since it feeds directly into the socialized feeling of inferiority which is the burden of most people of color. It's extremely hard to get angry at people that are apparently nice and at least overtly committed to help us in our struggles.

The challenge to those in the white community is to identify and challenge their socialization and accept the responsibility for their own racism. They have to find a way to become accountable to people of color, and to accept the fact that racism victimizes and misshapes them as much as it does people of color. Then they have to return to their own communities to confront and convert and recruit their own people.

The Anti Racism and White Privilege Work Area has been charged with the responsibility of initiating and guiding conversations regarding racism and its effect on our communities. We realize that racism often presents itself as an institutional evil and demands institutional solutions. If you would like to join the Work Area and participate in this process please contact Manny Ayala vertigus@yahoo.com or the CWAC executive director JustChurch@cwac.us