

February 2001: The Importance of the Body

by Aaron Greenway

If any one of you have never been in a multi-cultural environment, you are missing out. I live in the middle of Old East, inner-city, Dallas, that is, the Latin/Asian/Africans neighborhood. What an incredible blessing it has been for me to live among people who represent so many different cultures.

Being at Dallas Theological Seminary, this has also been true, but with it carries an even greater dimension — that all these Latin, all these Asians, and all these Africans are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thinking the other day of what it must be like to be from another culture

and to come here to this country and speak with others from other cultures outside of this country. Since my Hispanic friends (in their first language) could not communicate with my Asian friends (in their first language), they must all do it in their second language — English. Then I imagined myself serving in Latin America doing ministry with German and Russian missionaries in which the only way I could communicate with them is in my second language — Spanish. What an irony!

I see my friend Pablo (from Chile) working so diligently at the Seminary library. My friend Greg (from Haiti) preaches on radio stations all over the country. My friend, Colby (from Fort Worth, TX) who sits in a wheelchair with Cerebral Palsy, has served with me in ministry and serves Christian artist, Rebecca St. James with the utmost tenacity and professionalism. A lady in our church, Ruth (from Mexico) coordinates potlucks and food for special events. Also, Zaklei (from Nagaland/Northeast India) is a pastor at a Baptist Church. And then there's my friend, Aura (from Guatemala) who diligently coaches me in Spanish every Sunday evening.

Coming back from Perú last summer, I had an even better perspective on people around the world. On a pretty regular basis, I receive e-mail, e-cards, and all kinds of letters of affection and

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friendship from my Peruvian friends. Words cannot describe the inner joy this gives someone, to have friends in another part of the world that love you.

All of this is an incredible picture of the body of Christ and how each member of that body is SO important. In the Body, everyone is accepted. In the Body, everyone is loved. And in the Body, everyone is forgiven. God has created this incredible thing called “the Body of Christ,” something knit together and unified by the Spirit of God. We cannot make it on our own. We cannot overcome on our own. We are a team! And when we stumble, we have others around us to help pick us up.

This is why counting others as insignificant based on their language, their culture, their social standing, their abilities (or disabilities) or the color of their skin is so evil in the sight of our Lord. To pick favorites with people is not just an affront to the people, but also to their Creator. The people I just named above are all important in my life and had I judged them on earthly criteria, I would never have been prepared to do what God is calling me to do. If we have a hard time ministering with believers who are different from us, what guarantee is there we will find it any easier ministering to people who are lost?

Jesus made it a habit of paying attention to those who were out of the mainstream. He went to the Samaritans, something that was unheard of. AND, he spoke with an adulterous woman! There's a shocker!! And guess what? She accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Paul also reached out to Jews and Gentiles alike.

People are real. Sin is real. Hell is real. It is utterly important that we lock arms with those believers whom God has put in our lives and go forward in the cause of winning this world for Christ. If we become too wrapped up in the nonessentials, we have just done a disservice to the cause of Christ and have rendered ourselves useless for the Kingdom. We are in a battle for the souls of men. If the brother or sister beside you (who happens to be from another culture) sees you wounded on the battlefield, he/she may be your only chance of getting up again.