



Why We Must Get Along: Biblical Reconciliation

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Jesus Christ hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”...2 Corinthians 5:19 Reconciled means to bring into agreement or harmony; to restore to communion; to restore to friendship, compatibility Paul informs us that God first reconciled His Saints to Himself! Then He entrusted us with the **“ministry of reconciliation”**, to **“reconcile** the world to himself!” In order to be **reconciled** with God, we must first **“be reconciled”** with one another. Only then can we be effective ambassadors to the world. I find the 2014 international theme of the Church of God in Christ somewhat provocative: *“We are called to minister and witness to a deeply distressed and troubled world,”* It points to the **“ministry of reconciliation”** that God **“hath given to us.”** God has **reconciled** us to Himself and charged us to do the work assigned us in both the Great Commission in **Matt 28: 16-20** and in **Acts 1:8**, in both of which passages Christ’s Church is called to *seriously* be about the ministry of **“reconciliation,”** evangelizing, harmonizing, restoring the world to God.

What better time than during the liturgical season of Advent (coming) to focus and reflect on **reconciliation**. Advent is the first of the seven seasons on the ecclesiastical calendar, which always begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. Advent is when we celebrate God’s visit to the earth as the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us. What a wonderful mandate we have, to witness to the deeply distressed and troubled world in which we live. God has given us a charge worthy of our LORD; a mandate to be ambassadors, **reconciling** humanity to its Creator. And O how desperately the world needs **reconciliation** to its Creator! The list of examples is inexhaustible. We find evidence of the need for true reconciliation all over the planet.

We need only look at events in the media this, and last, week to see numerous reflections of our deeply distressed and troubled world crying out for the witness to which we are called. Numerous sources can be found reflecting the *need*, among many of which I found comprising some of the content in this discussion. Just this last Saturday, December 13, 2014, some estimated 40,000 people marched, among which were the families of more than ½ dozen black men and boys who have been killed by police. The marchers protested, decrying police violence against black men and boys. They gathered at Freedom Plaza in Washington D.C. and marched to Pennsylvania Avenue to a stage near the capital building, demanding a moratorium on police brutality. All such incidents are evidence of a deeply distressed and troubled world that needs us to be reconciled to God. God *“hath committed unto us, whom He hath reconciled to Himself, the word of reconciliation”* that all the world, *especially* the loved ones of the slain black boys and men, so *desperately* need. We, Christ’s ambassadors, have the witness that leads to **reconciliation** with their Creator. Were we to call the roll innumerable voices would answer, including, but also far *beyond*, Ferguson, Missouri. The roll is virtually inexhaustible.

There have been dynamics that range from Protestors “marching, “die ins,” traffic blockings to arrests, acts of vandalism, and destruction of property in cities across the nation-Boston, Houston, New York, Oakland, San Francisco, as well as Ferguson; even as far away as London, England. These are all manifestations of the need for justice in a divided nation that screams for the *“ministry of reconciliation,”* The words of the mother of Tamir Rice are, in essence, a plea for true **reconciliation**. She’s quoted as having said at the March this past weekend *“I truly believe by us being here together, and united, that God sits high and looks low, and the light is also shining on what’s going on.”* For true **reconciliation** can only come from God, who *“sits high and looks low.”* As I indicated above, examples of the need right here in our present day for our **“ministry of reconciliation”** that God *“hath given unto us”* is infinite, and extends far beyond America’s borders. Just this week we hear of the Pakistan Taliban launching their deadliest attack ever, leaving 132 children and nine adults dead at a school in Peshawar, activity of

Jihadist, Isil, hostage takers, suicide (murder) bombers, the list is virtually inexhaustible. In **Rom 8:19-23** Paul lets us know that *all* of God's Creation groans for **reconciliation** with the Creator. The world *desperately* needs us to function in our servant ministry as **reconciling** ambassadors!

Bottom line, for the Saints of God, it's all about **reconciliation**. However, the ministry of reconciliation must begin with *us!!!* We cannot be His *instruments* of **reconciliation** if we are not **reconciled** both to Him and to one another. We, the Saints of God, must take every "*opportunity to do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" **Gal 6:10**. This is why Jesus Commands us to "*be reconciled*" to one another when fractures in relationships occur. Relationship fractures cannot be allowed to exist in the Body of Christ. Christ Commands us to mend *all* fractures and "**be reconciled.**" Only Divine Love can accomplish genuine **reconciliation**. So Jesus Commands us again and again to love one another 13:34, John 15:12, John 15:17. Look again at just *some* of His *numerous* Commands to maintain fellowship, doing the hard work and heavy lifting of mending fractures in our relationships.

In **Matt 5:23-24** He commands us to "be **reconciled** to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. In **Matt 18:15-17** He Commands us to **reconcile** with one another, moving progressively from the individual with whom we are in conflict, to getting witnesses, to bringing the matter before the whole Church, to excommunicating any who refuse to **reconcile**. In **Luke 17:3-4** He commands us to *confront* one another in order to be **reconciled** with those with whom we have conflict. In **Matt 6:12** He commands us to include **reconciliation** in our prayers "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In **Matt 6:14-15** He tells us that if we don't do the hard work of **reconciliation**, God won't hear our prayers. Christ knew conflicts would arise among His people because conflicts are inevitable and unavoidable. So He commands us through Paul to make mending any relationship fractures our *top* priority. Paul writes in **Eph. 4:26-27** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. During this season of Advent, can God depend on you to become an authentic reconciler? Remember, He hath entrusted to us the "*Ministry of reconciliation.*" We must not fail our Lord. We must get along!

SHALOM!

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Part 1 Source Notes: Scripture references:

(*1) **Lev 18:22, Lev 20:13, Rom 1:26-27 , 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Jude 7-8, Rev 21:7-8)**

(*2) **1 Samuel 5:6** -from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved. See also -from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved See also-from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.