

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

There are some among us who feel marginalized because of differences. How can we move together as brothers and sisters toward our divine potential?



By Darius Gray

Founding member and former president of Genesis

Talking with one another about physical ailments such as colds, the flu, broken bones, and sprained joints can help us learn how to find healing. However, we also benefit when we address the challenges of incorrect thoughts and attitudes, including words and actions that harm others as well as ourselves.

Some have felt the sting of being considered “the other.” It seems to me that such attitudes have increased in the world around us in recent years, perhaps due in part to the vitriolic language that has come to permeate political speech in various nations around the globe. Nothing could be further from the teachings of Jesus Christ than for any human being to think of himself or herself as somehow superior to another human being based upon race, sex, nationality, ethnic origins, economic circumstances, or other characteristics.¹

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) spoke broadly to that topic in his address “The Need for Greater

Kindness,” given in the general priesthood session of April 2006 general conference:

“I have wondered why there is so much hatred in the world. . . .

“Racial strife still lifts its ugly head. I am advised that even right here among us there is some of this. . . .

“. . . I remind you that no man who makes disparaging remarks concerning those of another race can consider himself a true disciple of Christ. Nor can he consider himself to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church of Christ. . . .

“Let us all recognize that each of us is a son or daughter of our Father in Heaven, who loves all of His children.”²

Racial and cultural bias is too widespread in the world. Sadly the practices associated with racism and prejudice have caused deep wounds for many.

As we endeavor to heal the wounds of racism, here are four steps each of us needs to take so that we can all move forward together in our efforts to reach our divine potential.

Acknowledge the Problem

The first step toward healing is the realization that the problem exists, even among some of us in the Church, as President Hinckley pointed out. We cannot fix that which we overlook or deny. Our attitudes toward others of a different race or of a different culture should not be considered a minor matter. Viewing them as such only affirms a willingness to stay unchanged.

Recognize It in Ourselves

Some people acknowledge the problem but may not recognize it in themselves. Sometimes racism is so subtle, we may not realize we're expressing it. (See the longer version of this article online for examples that can help you recognize thoughts or ideas that may identify false thinking: lds.org/go/E61843.)

Learn a New Approach

If you are seeking a way to approach those who may appear different, try not to enter into any encounter with a predetermined set of ideas. Meet the person, not the color. Greet the individual, not the ethnicity. See the child of God

for who he or she really is—a brother or sister—rather than someone different.

Listen

If we endeavored to truly hear from those we consider as “the other,” and if our honest focus was to let them share of their lives, their histories, their families, their hopes, and their pains, not only would we gain a greater understanding, but this practice would go a long way toward healing the wounds of racism.

May each of us acknowledge the ongoing harm of racism in the world and recognize it when we see it in ourselves. To the extent that we do this and are willing to make necessary changes, we will help heal the wounds of racism and free ourselves and others to move forward together toward our divine potential as children of our Heavenly Father (see Malachi 2:10). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

See the full version of this article written for the *Ensign* on the LDS.org blog at lds.org/go/E61843.

NOTES

1. See Quentin L. Cook, “The Eternal Everyday,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 51.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Need for Greater Kindness,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 58.

