

It's 11 a.m. - Time for Sunday Morning Segregation

It's almost 11 a.m. - that holy hour that is concentrated with our hubris when the worship services are but a reflection of our preferences, when the pews are filled with the people we are most comfortable with.

It's almost 11 a.m. on this fine Sunday morning where people dress up or down and then sit down and get up unchanged and unchallenged to go out and subvert the kingdom of this world.

Instead, we fall in line and when told, we will skip to the front of the line. I know that Jesus has an order, "The last will be first," but this is the way they do things down here. We act as if Jesus didn't come down here and show us the way.

Called to turn the world upside down, we don't feel comfortable touching anything (Acts 17:6). Just leave it the way that it is. Just go to work and come home.

Just live according to society's schedule and its election cycles. America will change in its own time. We've got plenty of time. Now is never the right time.

What time is it now? Oh, we've got to hurry up and get to church now. But the church is so late, so behind the times when it comes to race and its progeny.

Jesus came and stood side by side with us. The miracle of divinity became human just to be close to us.

And yet, we human beings are still not close enough. Not wanting to live on earth together, we divide up dirt.

Human beings have convinced themselves that we come in colors, and each day they attempt to create distance between each other. And Sunday morning doesn't bring us any closer.

The church in North America offers segregated services. "If you don't want to worship with those people, you don't have to. Hallelujah and Amen."

Instead, I suggest the church in North America close its doors until Christian leaders work up the courage and the nerve to point persons to the narrow way, to preach the life of Christ that is a tight squeeze, that would not allow our racialized, hyper-politicized, capitalized prejudices in.

If not, it makes no difference as a generation has closed its ears to what the church would have to say.

The church isn't getting any younger as the members are all turning gray. They were turned off by pastors turned entrepreneurs and worship spaces that became little kingdoms unto themselves.

Or they took note of the church when it did not chime in or hold her hand when she told stories of sexual predation, harassment, abuse and rape.

Or they circled their absence when the bodies of unarmed African American children, women and men were being outlined with chalk.

Despite testimonies and video surveillance, they managed to preach a manacled gospel that suggested God was with some of us.

Let's hurry along now. Get in the car and pray no one is parked in your spot or sitting in your seat when you arrive at church.

Pray that the choir sings songs that you like and that the pastor's sermon is one you like, that it is one that is sweet and polite, that she not say anything to upset you or cause you to sweat.

Pray that the service doesn't go more than an hour because that would be ridiculous, and you might have to change your plans.

It's 11 a.m. and time for a nap, time to stretch out in our pew-cribs, time for songs that sing our soul's passions to sleep, time for sermons that redirect our callings to the marketplace.

Don't start any trouble. Don't say anything that might trouble our conscious or renew our conviction that we are sisters and brothers.

Just leave well enough alone as if this society has ever been well, like all of us have ever had enough. Let's just say our prayers but then sit on our hands and in effect hold back the answer to them.

It's that time again, that special time when Christian believers go into our color-coded corners for worship and come out swinging.

We all have an understanding, a memorandum of understanding regarding race though most Christians don't have an informed understanding of race. Our meanings for the social construct vary and are more than a little shaky.

But we don't need to know what it means. We know what it means for us. We have experienced racism, prejudice and privilege.

No need to question the impetus behind the biased or preferential treatment as if our skin explains this treatment.

We do not challenge our belief in the differences associated with our skin's pigmentation.

No, we will confess that God is the Creator of all, that Jesus is our kinsmen redeemer, that the Holy Spirit blows upon all flesh and then hate the person standing right next to us for no reason at all.

All buttoned up, clothes, lips and all, we think we can worship God and hate our

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siblings. But this is not love at all (1 John 4:20). It's a lie and all who would live it are liars.

It should be illegal, this Sunday morning segregation.

Editor's note: A [version](#) of this article first appeared on Thomas' [blog](#), Raceless Gospel. It is used with permission.