

Healing racism

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While attending a conference in another country, I met a delegate from an area where racism was then supported by law and daily practiced against his people. This man was a joy to know. He was so gentle, kind, courteous, and intelligent. I felt angry that he was deprived of his freedom. Finally I decided to ask him how he could be so calm and loving in the face of racial bigotry and hatred. How could he stand not being free? With quiet dignity he replied, "But I *am* free. No one can control what I think! No one can limit where I go in my thoughts." Instantly I felt humbled. He had shown me a higher sense of freedom. What love I felt for him. How he spurred me on to pray for racial discrimination to be healed!

Yet despite that experience, some time later I had to confront racial prejudice in my own thinking. I required the services of a computer technician on short notice. The person who came to help me was of a different race. Instead of being glad that he was available, I inwardly doubted his ability. He must have sensed my silent criticism of him and his nationality because he went to some lengths to explain his qualifications and why he had migrated to my country from his native land in Southeast Asia. Immediately I felt ashamed of myself.

On returning home I examined my thinking. I found that I'd mistrusted him because I had accepted the belief that my race was intellectually and culturally superior. Momentarily I'd lost sight of the great spiritual truth that each of us is God's beloved image. Recapturing this holy vision brought with it peace of mind and confidence that this man would do a good job. I felt free from all feelings of mistrust toward him. This experience showed me that racism has many faces and is insidious. It's manifested not only in offensive behavior toward members of another race or in governments that are racially biased, but in the way we conduct business and individually interact with others on a daily basis.

The Bible offers this promise, which applies to everyone equally: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16,17). And a poem by Mary Baker Eddy includes these lines: "'Tis writ on earth, on leaf and flower: / Love hath one race, one realm, one power" (*Poems*, p.22). As God's offspring, each of us has inherited our Father's intelligence and understanding. This makes the theory of racial inequality a lie. Our ability comes from God and has nothing to do with race, material education, geography, or politics. I'm grateful to be learning this lesson.