

## Hearts in Harmony

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*Below is an introduction to the thesis I wrote in seminary called "And the Walls Come Tumbling Down". As part of this thesis I developed a workshop that has now become an interactive dialogue-based curriculum series called "Hearts in Harmony". I designed it with the belief that learning comes when we speak from the heart. I work hard to ensure that enough trust and safety is present so that true dialogue can happen – transforming hearts and lives.*



*"The Language of Hands" (2006) by Rev. Angela Taylor Perry*

### An Introduction

Racial reconciliation, racial harmony, racial justice, diversity training, cultural sensitivity are words used to describe our awareness or lack of awareness to the reality of racial prejudice and institutional racism. There are secular and religious organizations, individuals and denominations fighting for racial equality. But here is the question I would like to propose ...*Are we gaining greater understanding and greater acceptance or are we more confused and more powerless?* My quest is to join with you to explore a pathway for real change. Many race initiatives expose white privilege, internal racial oppression, and institutional racism very well. Some walk away racially aware and emotionally abused. I am envisioning a "next step" to diversity trainings that will motivate and inspire us to step to the front line of the battlefield. I believe that the sharing of our stories will tap into the spiritual strength within each one of us and will teach us how to be willing participants to promote unity in the midst of diversity between individuals and communities.

### Who Am I?

There were once abolitionists, and segregationists perhaps de-segregationists, and heaven forbid even racists. I am an integrationist! I am indeed, African American, over 50 and a "sold out" believer in the indwelling spiritual power of Jesus Christ. I seek to gather together and to help integrate individuals of different ethnic, racial, socio-economic environments, and faith beliefs into a circle of safe dialogue for the purpose of developing multiracial friendships, mutual learning, reconciliation and hope. The essence of being an integrationist is persistence, perseverance, and presence.



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I am advocating that a movement towards the development of intentional friendships across culture, race and religion is necessary for reconciliation to begin. Our impetus for change comes *from a convicted heart and an educated mind*. I choose to believe that we can “undo racism” because racism is learned and it can be unlearned. As a committed integrationist I envision a Hearts In Harmony Reciprocal community that sees racial and ethnic diversity as central to its existence.

I envision a community that seeks to develop faithful leaders of all peoples and is committed to a cross-cultural covenant that transcends and transforms personal preference. It will be through our collaborative effort that will enable us to effectively address social and racial injustice.

We are F. A. T.: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. The birthing of this intentional movement towards change is nourished through trust and ongoing dialogue across the boundaries of socio-economics, disability, religion, gender, culture and race. This movement towards change I prophetically name and claim as:

## *Operation Koinonia:*

*To Promote Unity in The Midst of Diversity*

This movement is defined by a community of people who are intentionally working towards developing authentic, reconciling dialogue that seeks to proclaim life together through honesty, humility, confession, forgiveness, concern, restoration, accountability, availability, acceptance and love.



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