Interracial Relations: Marriages Essay, Research Paper

Interracial Relations: Marriages The United States has witnessed a considerable amount of social and cultural desegregation of Blacks and Caucasians. However, despite years of desegregation, social and cultural differences still exists. These differences still exist in the institution of marriage. Americans have been and are continually moving slowly away from segregation. In the past forty years a multitude of changes have transformed schools, jobs, voting booths, neighborhoods, hotels, restaurants and even the wedding altar, facilitating tolerance for racial diversity ( Norman 108 ). Since the 1960’s, when housing discrimination was outlawed, many Blacks moved into mainly Caucasian neighborhoods. The steadily growing areas in the west and south-west are least segregated, because these areas never had the entrenched Black and Caucasian sections of town ( “Up For separatist’ 30 ). One of the major barriers that face these couples does not come from themselves but rather from family disapproval. Lois, a Black women, and her husband Chuck Bronz, a Caucasian man, were married in 1960. They have no prejudice about each other and they share the comfortable rhythm of any long married couple. They had no problems with friends because they had a good mix of them from different races; friends who looked at the person not the color. However, they had problems with other people, namely Chuck’s mother. His mother had sat Lois down and asked her why does not she marry her own kind. Lois, of course, stood firm and married Chuck, which unfortunately resulted in the ties between her mother and herself breaking (Kantrowitz 40). Rebun, a Black Jewish man, married Mama, a Caucasian Lutheran women. None of Mama’s relatives attended the wedding, except for her mother. Mama’s father was finious that he was expected to accept a Black, and a Jew, into the family ( Aunapu, Monroe, Sachs and Taylor 65 ). It is not the disfavor of strangers that hurts these couples the most, but rather the disfavor of family. Territa, a Black women, had broken up with Todd, her Caucasian husband, several times before getting married because of the initial reaction of Todd’s family ( Randolph 154 ). These people nevertheless survived their family disapproval. Fred and Anita Prinzing, both Caucasians, know the troubles of interracial marriage. Both their son and daughter married Blacks. Fred and Anita responded that they thought that they were not prejudiced, and were proud of it; but when it came to their children, they could not explain their prejudice towards their children marrying Blacks. The best explanation they could give is that their prejudice is the left over residue of their parents ( Gilbereath 32 ). Another major barrier that Black and Caucasian couples encounter comes from an unlikely source, religion. In Earnest Porterfield’s classic survey of interracial marriages, one fact stands out. The majority of couples actively involved in Christian churches before marriage, discontinue church membership and attendance after marriage. A growing number of couples in America are crossing racial and cultural lines to many. Every couple has their own crisis but, for some, church officials who are against divorce will turn around and recommend a separation simply because the couple are Black and Caucasian. In several books of the Old Testament, intermarriage is strongly opposed by God and his prophets. Ezra and Nehemiah, two of Israel’s God-ordained leaders, challenged the people to repent over intermarriage and encouraged divorce en masse. They describe intermarriage with those who do not revere God as one of Israel’s most offense crimes. A closer look at the Old Testament, however, reveals misinterpretation. Opposition to intermarriage arises when people of God many those who worship a God other than Yahweh. These couples are searching for churches that feel like home. If national trends are any indication, the American churches need to be prepared to face a growing phenomenon. Until that happens interracial married couples will meet with resistance from religious people who have been reported as saying that if their own children married Blacks, they would kill them ( Perkins 30 ). The church must repent not only for bad theology but also for failing to protest racist laws in the past (Myra 18)

The law is equally to blame for causing unnecessary tension. A study of thirty nine “fiddle class Black–Caucasian couples in New York found that most of these couples had experienced being pulled over by police who suspected either the Black women to be a prostitute or the Black man to be a rapist ( Perldns 30 ). Edger, a Caucasian Jewish man , and Jean, a Black Baptist women, on more than one occasion have been stopped and arrested by police because they were walking arm in arm ( Aunapu, Monroe, Sachs and Taylor 65 ). Races have mixed, Going back to the Colonial days. Over time, other races have blended with Caucasians without question. Black mixing, however, has been accountable for the “one drop” theory which has defined a way to permanently separate Blacks. Troubles do not stop here for interracial married couples. The problems that are faced by interracial parents are mirrored in their children. On one occasion the Bronzes had sent their daughter, Shelly, who looks Black, to a pajama party. The Bronzes had never met the family, who are Black, that put up the pajama party and decided that one of them should go to say hello. So Chuck, Shelly’s dad, knocked on the door and was met with disbelief The family was surprised that Shelly’s father was a Black ( Kantrowitz 40 ). Older children of interracial marriage parents also face problems. They have to make a choice as to which parent’s culture to adopt. Halle Beny stated that it is important that multicultural individuals make a choice about race early in the life because even if they identify themselves as interracial they will still be discriminated against as a person of color in this country ( Norman 108 ). Knowing all these barriers and problems, what brings Black and Caucasian people together? According to a study done by Matthijis Kalniijin, a factor that is consistently associated with intermarriage is social class or status. Black outmarriage becomes gradually more common when moving up the occupational scale and more common among higher educated Blacks. Among Caucasians the pattern is reversed. It is believed that Caucasians are more likely to many a Black spouse when it allows them to many a partner of high socioeconomic prestige (Kalniijin 119 ). The appreciation of a partner’s beauty and the common; the ability to communicate, and the main reason for marriage, love is what bring them together (Randolph 154). It can be seen conclusively, that parents, religion and the attitudes of people, in general, are the main causes to the friction in interracial relationships and marriages. It is difficult, if not impossible, to change the attitude of parents, the older generation, to influence the churches to accepting the patterns of new thought and identity. The older generation will not change because their ideas and thoughts have been ingrained in them. The current generation, who are also guilty of causing friction, and the next generation must be educated to understand and accept these patterns of new thought, interracial marriages. Until these, attitudes, that support segregation, are suppressed and eventually abolished that the only way to make changes involving segregation. Children of interracial married couples learn tolerance within the family, which allows these children to ad their experiences to others, in one way or another.

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