

## Restored to a New Relationship

By Pastor Francis Williams

Theologians use the term “reconciliation” to describe the restored relationship between God and humans. The term assumes that the parties involved in such relationship were alienated and opposed to each other. Scriptures often portray fallen humans as being in enmity with God. For example, in Romans 8:7 the apostle Paul describes this hostile relationship as follows: “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God,” and that is so because, “it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is unable to do so.” Scriptures also describe people as “enemies of God” (James 4:4) The fact is that human beings are settled in their hostility toward God.

In order to achieve a good relationship between God and humans, it is necessary that the source of the hostility which exists between the two parties be removed. Through the Cross of Jesus, the enmity between God and humans have been eradicated. Paul can say that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them” (2Corinthians 5:19). Those who are in Christ have been restored to a renewed relationship with God. That is why Scripture declares that “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2Corinthians 5:17).

The outcome of this new relationship is that believers are able to relate to others on the principle of love. A fitting testimony of this transformation is seen in local churches where people of various racial, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds are able to worship together. Why is this possible? Because they are now *in Christ*, the one who has broken down the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14). This is a glimpse of what the new heavens and the new earth would be like, as we read in John’s Apocalypse, “After these things I looked, and behold a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation (ethnicity), and all tribes, and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9-10).

In conclusion, let us remember that the work of divine reconciliation is not a side bar to something greater which God is doing. Rather, Reconciliation is God’s major work because that is the greatest need of fallen humans - to be restored to new relationship with their Creator through faith in Jesus Christ.