

November 6, 2008

To: My Fellow Followers of "That Way"
From: Rufus Smith, Pastor, City of Refuge Church (Houston, TX)

As Chairman of the EPC's Urban Ministry Network and the only black senior pastor in the Central South, **may I ask you to consider pausing this Sunday or next to openly recognize the historic American election this past Tuesday?** The question is not whether you or I voted for President-Elect Obama or not, but the issue is the potential capacity of his election to expedite the erasing of the stain, stigma and stereotype in the collective soul and psyche of an indigenous ethnic group and a nation.

Whether you agree with the election results or not, on Tuesday, **something happened in the minds and hearts of a significant percentage of African-Americans in your cities, towns and churches.** For many whom we are trying to evangelize and disciple, please acknowledge in some way this political seismic shift, atmospheric meteorite and divinely permitted event (*Ps. 75:1-6*); to ignore it with silence or inaction would be a setback and a squandered bridge building opportunity. Make a phone call, send a note, visit the office, issue a statement or whatever else the Lord may lead you to do to some African-American pastor or leader in your community.

As a Christian, I am NOT *personally distracted* from the first task of Glory to God via worship and making disciples of every ethnicity; for I deeply believe that our hope is salvation in Jesus not legislation through jurisprudence. As an American, I am *prayerful* for my President Elect and push for his success (*I Tim. 2:1-5* as I did for President George W. Bush); As a Black American, I am as *proud as a prancing horse*.

I was very somber Wednesday. Quite unusual for me. It seemed surreal. Time stood still as I savored what had just happened in my beloved country. 388 long years after the arrival of the Mayflower, the glass ceiling and, I believe, a national curse had been broken.

My 18year old daughter Rhoda called me at 10:45am on Wednesday in tears. "Dad, she said, you won't believe the stuff I am seeing and hearing...Please come get me". I warned her on our drive to school this morning of the backlash some would have today. Several of her classmates are dressed in black today to commemorate the destruction of our country and have hurled insults at her. She has been their classmate for 12 years at this highly esteemed Christian school. My wife Jacqueline went to share an off campus lunch with her, then take her back to school where she belongs to continue her maturation process. I don't fully blame the kids, but their behavior is indicative of the work we still need to do in our society, even among Christians. We as elders know that the ultimate issue is sin not skin.

I don't expect those who are not black Americans to share the SAME EUPHORIC INTENSITY of this HISTORIC DAY as I do. They can't. **At stake is how this atmosphere can be a time of bountiful harvest for the LifeGiver King and how**

it can hasten the probability that inner city churches and multi-racial churches like City of Refuge can become commonplace in our children's lifetime.

I trust that a sacred and civil dialogue can begin for some and continue for others. **This time can be a Kingdom building opening for those of us who name the name of Christ** and are Christians first, Americans second, and African-Euro-Asian-Latino, Native Americans third.

No reply necessary.