



Grain

“Do you want to know if your work on this earth is finished? Well if you are alive, it isn't.” –The Talmud

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

Field

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, 13 they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? 18 Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."
Luke 17:11-19

Thoughts

When I worked for an LGBTQ organization many years ago, during workshops for school professionals we often used the Riddle Scale, developed for exploring homophobic levels of attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. We accessed the scale to discuss attitudes toward students and teachers representing all letters of the LGBTQ+ spectrum to help educators reflect on where they and their schools were at. The levels were 1. Repulsion 2. Pity 3. Tolerance 4. Acceptance 5. Support 6. Admiration 7. Appreciation and 8. Nurturance (I also name this as celebration). Click here for more details for each level of the Riddle Scale.

The same scale could be used for organizations such as churches, and I think for other groups. Where would members of Jesus' society be on a Riddle Scale for Samaritans? The Samaritan leper turned to thank Jesus for being healed. Not only did Jesus tolerate, support, or appreciate the foreigner, but celebrated him as fully engaged with God's love. If you were at the lower end of a Riddle scale, how scandalous Jesus' encounter with the foreigner would have seemed. So the Gospel story is about healing lepers, but also challenging the larger community to be healed of their misperceptions.

Are there groups for which I'd fall on the scale below an 8, even at the lower end? An NPR program from early August, relayed studies showing that young Latinos are exhibiting higher rates of depression when compared to their peers. Many claim that a lot of the current rhetoric toward people of color, especially those who are recent immigrants or perceived in that way, simply uncovers what has always been here. Others say we are moving in reverse. Regardless of which belief is more accurate, we need to be vigilant and keep working. We begin with opening to the grace of having our own blind spots revealed and ability to confess, which leads to forgiveness, celebration of those whom we've deemed as "other," and praise. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy