



FOREWORD



From a historical perspective, Sam Hines, Tom Skinner and I were reconciliation's first generation of pioneer evangelicals in the early 1960s. In the 1990s, Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice, Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein, Bill McCartney and others pushed reconciliation into the evangelical mainstream. Now, in this groundbreaking book, Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson are taking the reconciliation and justice movement to an even higher plain.

During much of the history of the Christian church, the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God have been tragically divorced. This separation has allowed many Euro-American Christians to engage in ethnocentrism and oppression against ethnic groups. In *The Heart of Racial Justice*, the authors have essentially remarried the Spirit and the kingdom. Only the Holy Spirit can give us the power and wisdom to incarnate the kingdom of God here on earth. Only the Holy Spirit can heal the wounds of racism and empower us to do justice. This book





THE HEART OF RACIAL JUSTICE

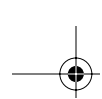
holistically blends the Holy Spirit, the kingdom, justice and reconciliation, bringing together the concepts have been long separated.

I congratulate InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for leading the way among Christian organizations in wrestling with ethnic and diversity issues. I remember when Pete Hammond and I began this process of wrestling with these issues in Mississippi in the late 1970s. It was then that the InterVarsity board of directors made reconciliation a priority. In large measure this book reflects twenty-five years of struggle and success by InterVarsity.

The Heart of Racial Justice is deeply rooted in the gospel. This is the essence of racial, economic and social justice. God has made us stewards of the earth, and it is unfortunate that the Christian church has never quite understood what Paul meant when he said, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV). We must stop reading only one dimension of meaning in that verse and embrace the two-dimensional perspective that leads us to reconcile not only with God but with one another, thus enriching our lives for the kingdom of God.

Promise Keepers, led by Bill McCartney, was the first attempt in my lifetime to massively present reconciliation as a blueprint for proclaiming the gospel. When Jesus said “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35 NKJV), he was basing our love for each other as one of the determining factors for us becoming new creatures. Paul explains, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV). I thank Rick and Brenda for their work at clarifying this issue in these pages.





Foreword

It is sad that in an enlightened world the Christian church even needs to deal with these issues today. Racial reconciliation has not been adequately addressed within the body of Christ. What Rick and Brenda do in this biblically grounded book is to make reconciliation practical through the example of their friendship, reflecting on those who have gone on before them and building on (and appreciating) what each one has to offer. I highly recommend that you take time to read *The Heart of Racial Justice*. It is a blueprint for the Christian church. We at the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) want to make this one of our handbooks for the CCDA movement, because we view reconciliation as a practical reality that intersects all areas of our lives

All of this is from God who has reconciled us to himself and given us the ministry of reconciliation. Brenda and Rick have given us a challenge. I pray that all who read this book, especially those in the body of Christ, will take the challenge and become the next great generation of loving reconcilers!

John M. Perkins

