



***Biography of Dorion Norton
Pentecostal Life***

Dorion Norton is the husband of Doraine and father of Austin and Raine. He currently serves as the District Youth President of the New York Metro District UPCI. He is passionate about the Word of God and souls. He considers it a great privilege to be a minister at his home church, All Nations Apostolic Tabernacle located in Jamaica, NY (Pastor Devon Dawson).

Article Topic: People Not Like Me (race, culture, disabilities) – How do we connect with those we consider not like us?

OBJECTIVE: To help us understand that our differences are strengths to be used for the advancement of Christ's kingdom

One of the great truths about Heaven is that it is a place of differences. We readily understand that we will have true unity in Heaven as we will gather to worship our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Yet, the fact remains that in Heaven we will experience a beautiful blend of differences. Consider these words found in the Revelation 5:9-10 (KJV), "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

The Apostle John witnessed in his vision of Heaven a people from every tribe (race), language, and ethnic group who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The very word "nation" as used in Revelation 5:9 (KJV) is the Greek word ethnos, the root of our English word "ethnicity". It should be readily apparent to us, then, that it is an integral part of the church's mission to win the lost souls of every race, language group, and ethnicity without any prejudice or partiality.



Knowing this mandate, how exactly do we go about connecting with those who we do not consider to be like us? We must start by being intentional about including individuals of various backgrounds in our various ministry programs and activities. Do you have a group of Haitians in your local church? Consider adding a praise and worship selection in Kreyòl during one of your Sunday services. Looking for members to use for your prayer service? Why not consider the Venezuelan sister or the Colombian brother, and ask them to pray in Spanish?

Representation goes a long way in showing people that they are loved and that they are an important part of their organization, whether it be at church, work, or school. Surely, our world has been tainted by racial strife for centuries. It is the way of the world to divide over racial differences and for push certain agendas. However, we in the church ought to be at the vanguard of racial unity, using our differences as strengths to advance the kingdom together.

As such, we must be intentional about engaging in fellowship as well. Luke the Evangelist emphasizes the spiritual importance of fellowship in Acts 2:42 (KJV), “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” One of my favorite forms of fellowship is over a nice, homemade meal. In my local church, we hosted a cultural night as a part of our annual business meetings. There, we eat homemade foods from various cultures. Imagine the joy one of my Haitian sisters expressed when I tried her Soup Joumou for the first time and really enjoyed it! Cultural night has proven to be a way to express that all cultures and national groups are not only valued in our local church, but also in the Kingdom of God.

Another method for connecting with those who are not like us is educating ourselves and developing an awareness of the various cultures in our surrounding communities, workplaces, schools, etc. A great way to do this is to challenge members of your local assembly to commit to witnessing to individuals from specific people groups. Members in my local assembly have recently committed to witnessing to the following people groups and cultures: Greeks, Haitians, Italians, & Trinidadians. This is part of my Pastor’s desire to see more nations in our local church. I can hardly think of a more noble desire where advancing the kingdom is concerned.

When considering those who are not like us, we must also consider individuals who have disabilities. Disabilities are multifaceted and can include physical, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. Just as we need to educate ourselves about racial and cultural differences, we need to be aware of various disabilities and how we can effectively minister to individuals who have them. I always remind myself that those who live with disabilities bear the image of God just as much as I do, and therefore have as much intrinsic value as I have. Seek out opportunities to connect with individuals with disabilities and genuinely connect with them. Love them and take the time to talk and listen to them. Tell them how much you appreciate them and how grateful you are for your friendship.



Be intentional in reaching out to as many people groups as is possible given our local context. When Jesus Christ was here on Earth, even He took the time to reach out to different people groups. One prominent example is that of the Samaritan woman at the well. John writes, “There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.” (John 4: 7-9, KJV).

Jesus took the time to divert from the customary route from Judea to Galilee and go through Samaria just to witness to this one soul. As a result, the Samaritan woman became a witness to those in her community. Our Lord was not selective with the harvest. Neither can we be. May we follow this example closely in our evangelistic efforts. There will be untold joy when we genuinely connect with those who seem to be different to us. In fact, we just might find that we are more alike than we are different.

Personal Application:

1. How can we find ways to involve members of different ethnic groups in our regular services?
2. In what ways are we potentially lacking in connecting with those who are different to us?
3. How can we improve our evangelistic efforts to reach those who are not like us?
4. How can we foster an environment where those who live with disabilities feel love and support?
5. What are the people groups that I interact with daily and how can I witness to them?
6. What resources can I access to ensure that I reach those who are not like me?

