

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Racism and the Christian

Racism has always been a problem in the United States of America. Slavery in America was a racist institution. Today, the problems in dealing with militant Islamic terrorism, and illegal immigration are compounded by racist overtones.

I disagree with the view that if one emphasizes the rule of law, or if one opposes Islam as a false religion, he is a racist (as is sometimes claimed in the national discourse). However, it is obvious that the rhetoric being used by many is indicative of racial prejudice. It is also obvious to me in my observations of God's people that racism is present in the church. This is shameful.

There are a number of scriptures to which we might refer that clearly teach racism is sinful. We might note James' condemnation of personal favoritism in James 2:1-13. While the specific prejudice of the chapter is a preference for the rich over the poor, the principle can clearly be applied to preferences for one race above another. "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (James 2:8-9). In fact, any scripture calling the Christian to love his fellow man, by principle, condemns racism.

In Acts 17:26, Paul (a Jew) spoke to the Athenians (Gentiles) and said, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings..." All men—black, brown, yellow, red, white—have the same blood, and are descended from the same ancestors. Physical distinctions such as the amount of melanin in the skin, hair type, or bone structure are no indication of any superiority, nor a just cause for believing one race to be superior to another.

Most importantly, there is no difference in the relative value of the soul. All men are loved by God, and in need of His saving grace. Paul wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in

Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Any man who is God's child is my brother, regardless of race. Any man who is lost is in need of the blood of Christ, and I must love him sufficiently to share the gospel message to the saving of his soul.

Virulent racism is evident. It is seen in slurs, hate speech, violence, and oppression. However, the Christian is often too polite to be overtly racist. That will not excuse a heart that shows a lack of love because of personal favoritism.

Christians should ask themselves: Do I have an US versus THEM mentality when thinking about other races? Do I consider myself in some way superior because of the color of my skin, or because of the culture of which I am a part? Do I feel discomfort in the presence of other races? Racism is insidious, destructive and completely unacceptable to God. You are not excused just because you "were raised that way." Or because of a mindset you once had while in the world. Paul wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

A transformed mind requires one to purge himself of any racist thought or ideology. As Christians, we note the worth of all men, and desire the salvation of all.

- Stan Cox

Is It God We Desire, or a Particular Path to Him?

"Uphold my steps in Your paths, that my footsteps may not slip" (Ps 17:5)

If we seek God sincerely, we'll be willing to get to heaven by any path that He deems best for us. But this willingness is not always easy. When the way home begins to look uncomfortably different from the path that we've pictured in our minds, the result may be resentment, if not outright rebellion. At times like these, we must learn to love God for His own sake and not insist on any particular set of conditions as we journey toward Him.

The Psalmist prayed, "Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps 119:133). Such a prayer must be our own. And in our higher moments, we know that this is indeed what we desire: we want God to uphold our steps in His paths. We want His wisdom to supersede our own plans and preferences so that the greatest possible good is accomplished, not only for ourselves but for the world in which we live.

Certainly we must avoid any sort of demanding attitude toward God. If we have envisioned ourselves living and serving God within a particular set of circumstances, that may be well

and good. But if life unfolds according to a different pattern, we must still maintain our reverence. Before we start acting as if our “rights” have been infringed, we need to do a reality check.

Long-term service to God requires flexibility, and most of us need to be more flexible in defining what our possibilities are. The good that God puts us here to accomplish can be accomplished in more ways than we might think. We need to accept that there are numerous scenarios through which God could be glorified in our lives, and we must not be so wedded to one or two of these that we can't see the value in others. Is it not obvious from God's created world that He delights in variety? Let us not be so shortsighted or attached to “the way we always thought it would be” that we can't accept something else for the sake of His glory.

“My goal is God Himself, not joy nor peace, nor even blessing, but Himself, my God; 'tis His to lead me there, not mine, but His—at any cost, dear Lord, by any road!” (F. Brook).
- Gary Henry

God is Not a “She”

Several months ago when Helen Reddy was receiving some kind of an award for a song she had recorded, she expressed thanks to those whom she said were responsible for her good fortune. Included in her benefactors was God, she said. In expressing thanks to God for helping her she referred to God as a “She.” “She made it possible . . .,” said Miss Reddy. That made me want to rise up and say and do something. But, I charged it up to Helen's profound ignorance and let it pass. Now, recently a Catholic Nun appeared on “The Today Show” and declared that God was a “She.” It is time we set the record straight.

It is a pity that people with enough intelligence to appear on national television could be so ignorant of things spiritual. We know that, in general, recording stars and Catholic Nuns have very little knowledge of and many times less regard for the Bible. Oh, they may have a “form of godliness” but they “deny the power thereof.”

I could call attention to the fact that the words for God, in the Bible, are uniformly masculine in gender. But since I know very little about the Greek and since Helen and the Nun know absolutely nothing about it, I want to approach this thing in a way that ALL can understand. I want to suggest, before I come to the proof, that, since people don't seem to know the difference between masculine and feminine, between he and she, between father and mother, it is little wonder we have so many “gay” people in the world. No

wonder there is so much perversion among the sexes. But to the understandable proof that God is not a "She."

1. God is a FATHER! Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven." (Matt. 6:9). Now, come on, Helen, are you "Reddy" to answer me one thing? Is "Our Father" a she? Not only did Jesus tell us to say "Our Father" but in Matt. 6:14 and also in verse 15 Jesus said, "Your Father." And so we could go throughout the Bible and find God referred to as FATHER.

2. God is a HIMSELF! Jesus said, ". . . the Father hath life in himself" (John 6:26). Jesus also said, "And the Father himself which hath sent me . . ." (John 6:37). And so we could go throughout the Bible finding God referred to as HIMSELF. I don't believe Helen is "Reddy" and I think the Nun should be DONE with this blasphemous business of calling God a "She."

3. God is a HE! In Acts 17:30-31 Paul referred to God and then FOUR times used the personal pronoun "He." But all through the Bible, God is called a He. Now, does anybody still want to call God a She?

4. Finally, in James 1:18, we read, "Of his own will begat he us . . . that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." Not only is God a HE, but we are HIS creatures, and that according to HIS will!

God is a HE, a HIMSELF, a HIM. Furthermore, God is a FATHER and HE BEGAT us. Is a she a he? Is a she a himself? Is a she a him? Is a she a father? Is a she able to beget a child? Nonsense? That's exactly what I said when I heard these "Misses" refer to my God as a She.

But that's not all. Christ is a He, a Him, a Himself, a man. And the Holy Spirit is a He.

Some women are not satisfied that God made man first and that the woman was in the transgression (1 Tim. 2:13-14). Some women are not satisfied that God said for women to learn in silence (1 Tim. 2:11). Some women are not satisfied that God said for them to submit themselves to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). Some women are not satisfied that God made them feminine. God pity such women.

Women are in a position where they can influence everything and everybody if they will stay on the high plane where God placed them. She is not going to influence anything or anybody for good if she insists on disregarding everything God has said relative to the sexes and as long as she wants to be a man.

- A.C. Grider via *Searching the Scriptures*, August, 1975

- * “A little sin will add to your trouble, subtract from your energy and multiply your difficulties!”
 - * “It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one!”
 - * “The man who pays an ounce of principle for a pound of popularity gets badly cheated!”
 - * “The discipline of desire is the background of character!”
 - * “Be still and know that I am God. (Psalms 4:10)!”
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THIS WEEK’S LESSON: The sermon for Sunday morning is: *Hated Without A Cause!* (Text: Psalm 69:4).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)