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COUNTER CULTURE

FOLLOWING CHRIST
IN AN ANTI-CHRISTIAN AGE

Unity in Diversity: The Gospel And Ethnicity

Is it still a problem?

'We must face the fact that in America, the church is still the most segregated major institution in America. At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation.'

Dr. Martin Luther King 1963

Can we say this is largely untrue today?

If not, in what ways is this still true today?



Some Headlines

‘Sin of Racism Will Continue Until Church Gets Its Act Together’

‘What Christians Get Wrong About Critical Race Theory’

‘Can We Handle the Truth About Racism and the Church?’

‘Immigration and the Church: A Christian Response to the Current Border Crisis’

‘Understanding White Evangelical Views on Immigration: For this cultural group, militant masculinity trumps the Bible.’



The Comments

‘My own observation is that evangelicals have begun to take active steps towards reconciliation but are hesitant to tackle justice, while theological progressives (i.e. liberals) have championed justice but frequently neglected reconciliation.’

‘when white evangelicals do recognize racism, they tend to see it as a “personal” sin requiring repentance, not a structural injustice demanding rectification. When the sin of racism is reduced to personal animosity, the “solution” is simply relationships. That’s why so many white Christians have responded to the recent protests demanding systemic change by encouraging friendship across the racial divide. They prefer to pursue “reconciliation” rather than justice.’



Some Comments

‘the Bible appears to hold little sway when it comes to immigration: a 2015 LifeWay Research poll found that 90 percent of all evangelicals say that “the Scripture has no impact on their views toward immigration reform.”

‘A look at evangelicals’ long history of ministering to immigrants and refugees shows... [their] skepticism of immigration is a relatively recent development. Before the 1990s, evangelical Christians were busier resettling the newly arrived refugees than banning them from entering the United States. Before they became immigration restrictionists, evangelicals actively endorsed and participated in a large-scale legalization effort for undocumented immigrants....’



The World's View of the Problem

- Guilt
- Denial
- Systemic Racism



The world believes the church itself - its identity, its history, its God - is at the heart of the problem.



So the scriptures tell us...

‘For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.’ Psalm 109:2

‘And all nations will hate you because you are my followers.’
Matthew 10:22

‘Don’t you know that friendship with the world means hostility with God? So whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God.’ James 4:4

‘The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.’ John 15:19



Spiritual Truth about Ethnicity

‘From the first chapter of the Bible... this much is clear: all men and women are made in the very likeness of God:

‘From one man [God] made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live’ Acts 17:26

.... [but the wickedness of Cain] spills over into wars among nations.... The more different peoples mix together, the more they mistreat one another. The pages of the Bible and human history are thus filled with an evil affinity for ethnic animosity....

But Jesus shocks the preconceived system of his Jewish disciples... by commanding them to proclaim “repentance and forgiveness of sin... in his name to all nations” (Luke 24:47)’



Spiritual Truth about Our Differences

Ephesians 2 – ‘¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—

¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...



Spiritual Truth about Ethnicity

... ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God'



What are the opportunities for the church?

‘God’s word reminds us that regardless of the color of our skin, we all have the same roots. Fundamentally, we are all part of the same race. That’s why we all need the same gospel.... When we come to understand this, we realize that most discussions in our culture about race and racism are beginning from a gospel-less starting point. For in the process of discussion our diversity in terms of difference “races”, we are undercutting our unity in the human race.’

David Platt



What we can do now

- Politico-centric rhetoric and assumptions
- Practice the central truth that our identity is in Christ alone
- Balanced and impassioned pursuit of all God's commands, especially as they relate to our relationship with Christian brothers and sisters with different views
- Humility in abundance in all our speech

