

Does the Bible Condemn Racism?¹

Ricardo Campos, Elder Grace Chapel Orange, CA June 11, 2008

I INTRODUCTION

Is racism wrong? If it is, on what basis is it wrong? The unbeliever states loudly that it is wrong. One can easily think of those in the public eye who were fired for making racial remarks. But does the unbeliever actually have any grounds to argue against racism? What about the believer? If we believe that God *has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness* (2 Pt. 1:3), on what basis does the believer argue against racism, where in Scripture does he point to make his case?

II THE UNBELIEVER'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST RACISM

A. Race is Irrelevant

It's immoral to treat people differently for arbitrary reasons like race. This assumes racism is wrong. But on what basis is it wrong? Moreover, one can argue that race is not always irrelevant or arbitrary, e.g., knowing a detail like the race of a murder suspect may be crucial to apprehending him.

B. Racism Assumes Inferiority

Racism is immoral because it assumes the inferiority of others. At its heart this argument assumes that humans have value. But on what basis does the unbeliever make such a claim if humans are the products of a random universe?

C. Racism Punishes Someone for Uncontrollable Circumstances

Since no one controls what race they're born, it's immoral to treat people differently for something out of their control. This too assumes the value of human life. But if all life evolved from a single amoeba, what's the difference between a cat and a human? Further, if *survival of the fittest* governs all of life, then isn't it OK to practice racism, since this means that some are greater (fitter) than others?

D. Racism Does Not Consider Everyone's Interests Equally

Everyone's interests should be considered equally. Taking into consideration someone's race is not considering their interests equally with yours. Thus, racism is immoral. However, can't a case be made for racism under this principle? For example, a racist feels undue pain whenever he's around a non-racist, while the non-racist could care less what race the racist is. In this instance the interests of the racist far outweigh the interests of the non-racist because he feels extreme pain, while the non-racist feels none at all. This scenario would justify racist behavior like segregation laws to keep the racist from feeling any pain.

¹ This study is based on the booklet *The Biblical Offense of Racism* by Douglas Jones, Canon Press.

III THE BELIEVER'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST RACISM

A. The Sixth Commandment: *Thou Shalt Not Murder*

Exodus 20:13 contains God's commandment against murder. But how are we to apply this commandment, does it mean that we can do anything to our fellow man short of murder? Could you denigrate and verbally abuse him? Our Lord corrects our thinking in Matt. 5:20-22 where He informs us that *murder-like* behavior is not only actual murder, but unjustified anger and abusive language. How does this apply to racism? It indicates that we cannot justify our hatred or abusive language on the basis of race or anything else. Life is to be treated as sacred.

B. Man was Made in the Image of God from one Blood

Acts 17:26 states that God *made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth*. From where did Caucasians, Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, etc., originate? Everyone originated from two parents, Adam and Eve. Thus, no one is inferior to another since we're all part of the same race, the human race. Further, in whose image was man made? Gen. 1:26-27 tells us that we were made in God's image and Jam. 3:9 reveals how wrong it is to curse one another since we are made in His image.

C. We are Commanded to Consider Others More Important than Ourselves

Rather than seeing others as inferior because of race, we are to esteem others better than ourselves, Phil. 2:3. This flies in the face of racism, which dictates that one race is better than another.

D. God Differentiates Between Two Races, Jews and Gentiles, Yet He is Not a Racist

In Ex. 3:10 God declares that the Jew and no other race are His people. In fact His Law forbid Jews from intermarrying with other races, Deut. 7:3. However, it was not because He saw other races as inferior to the Jew. In fact His own Law treated the Jew and all other races equally, Deut 1:16-17; Lev. 24:22. How should this inform the State on the laws it passes: Jim Crow and Affirmative Action laws.

E. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... neither slave nor free, ... male nor female...*

Whereas God emphatically forbids racism in the world at large, He forbids it even more so in the Church, Gal. 3:26-28. Christ's Body cannot be divided, 1 Cor. 12:25.

IV CONCLUSION

The unbeliever cannot justify his disdain for racism. In fact his logic leads to and condones racism. The believer on the other hand is mandated by God to repudiate racism because it's *murder-like* behavior, man was created in God's image from one blood, others are to be esteemed more than ourselves, God views all races the same, and it has absolutely no place in Christ's Church.