

How the Doctrine of Creation is the End of Racism

Nathan Clay Brummel

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Colossians 3:10-11

The Consequences of Racism

One of the greatest causes of mass murder, war, and genocide in the world is racism. Racism is the belief that one's racial group is superior to that of another. Racism results in racial animosities. Racism involves discrimination and antagonism directed towards a person of a different race based on the view that the persons' race is inferior to that of the other. Racial prejudice involves viewing someone from a different race as inferior intellectually, spiritually, sexually, morally, emotionally, and culturally.

Racism is a sad, pervasive reality in this fallen world.

Racism can be a sin in the present. Racism certainly was a major issue in the past. One hundred and fifty years ago, millions of black men, women, and children in the land of the free were held in slavery. They were treated like possessions, not people. After the civil war, white men in the south, under the masks of the Klu Klux Klan, intimidated and murdered blacks. Great progress has been made in the last 50 years. It is a mistake for people to claim that American culture is just as racist as it was in the past.

It was only 50 years ago that the U.S. Supreme Court declared that white schools must allow black students access! Only 40 to 50 years ago, many blacks in the south were disenfranchised. Laws had been passed that did not allow them the

right to vote!

It was not long ago that racists in America had the support of juries, judges, and politicians. This was brought home to me when I read the autobiography of a black minister, Rev. John Perkins, entitled, *Let Justice Roll Down*. I first saw the light of day on March 16, 1970. I grew up in a little town in southwest Minnesota where racial issues were the farthest thing from my mind. I would have thought that by the 1970s, America was a place where blacks could live in equality without fear. But the same year that I was born in Minnesota, the police, juries, and judges of Mississippi were willing accomplices of racists.

In December of 1969, the events began to unfold that endangered the life of John Perkins. A few days before Christmas, Perkins went into a grocery store with a white friend. Inside the store, a young black man, Garland Wilks, was becoming upset with the store owner, who would not allow him to pay with a check. Garland's voice got louder.

Perkins suggested to Garland that he give him a ride home. On the way home, a patrol car pulled over their car. The policeman took Garland to jail for public drunkenness. It was when Perkins visited the jail to see Garland that he was arrested himself. He was arrested and imprisoned, yet never charged. Perkins then arranged a boycott of all of the white-run businesses in the town until the false charges against him were dropped.

It was a few months later, on February 7, 1970, that the Rev. John Perkins arranged another march in support of the boycott. But this time, the police from a county next door had prepared an ambush. Nineteen students from Tougaloo College near Jackson, Mississippi, came out to support the blacks. On the way home, Mississippi highway patrolmen pulled over the two vans and arrested everyone.

As an example of what these young people endured at the hands of racist policemen, here is what a young man named Doug endured. He states that first he was handcuffed and placed in a patrol car. Then the policeman turned around and told him that what he had threatened to do last summer he was going to do now. The officer turned around and slapped the man in the face. Then he took off one handcuff and pulled the other hand while he slapped and hit Doug. When another vehicle passed them on the highway, he would stop. He hit the young man in the face. Then he pulled his hair to twist his neck so he could reach him to punch him in the groin, stomach, and neck.

When Rev. John Perkins heard what had happened and that these young

people were in the Rankin County Jail in Jackson, he quickly went to their help. But it was an ambush. When Perkins arrived outside the jail and asked to see the sheriff, he was arrested.

As soon as the police got their hands on Perkins, they began to beat him. Officers kicked Perkins in the back and kidney and slapped him on the back of his head. Inside the jail, the nightmare grew worse. At least five deputy sheriffs and 7-12 highway patrolmen went to work on Perkins and his friend. The sheriff called Perkins “the smart nigger.”

The police began to beat Perkins until he fell to the ground. They beat and stomped on him, kicking him in the head and ribs and groin. The beatings went on and on. Later, they got Reverend Perkins off the ground and forced him to walk. As he walked, the patrol officers would kick or hit Perkins with their blackjacks or their feet.

What is astounding is that in 1970, in the land of the free, while there was one brave man in the person of Rev. John Perkins who suffered for the sake of justice, there was no righteousness for him in rural Mississippi. Not one of the officers who abused and beat the black minister or his supporters was ever brought to justice. This happened about 50 years ago in the United States!

Racism is defined in Webster’s dictionary as “The assumption that the characteristics and abilities of an individual are determined by race and that one’s race is biologically superior to another.” In prison I run across blacks who are racists towards whites—and use their false religion to fuel this racism. In addition to black supremacists there are white supremacists who claim that they are biologically and culturally superior.

I am reminded about how one-time Rev. Jesse Jackson was walking by his home in Washington D.C. Suddenly, he heard some men walking behind him. When he turned around and saw that they were white, he felt relief. What is remarkable is that Jackson had the temerity to tell this story to others. He himself had begun to identify young black men with criminals.

If Arabic men are considered potential terrorist threats to national security, certainly our security people in airports should be especially diligent in checking out Arabic-looking men. That is not racism. It is a matter of common sense. The same would be true for any ethnicity thought to be a potential terrorist threat.

But we do have a problem when we caricature an entire racial group due to the misdeeds of some members of it.

It is not as if only certain races can engage in racism. Yes, a Chinese immigrant in California might be discriminated against in the 19th century. But a European trying to establish a business in 19th century China also experienced racism. It is a myth that only whites can act in a racist manner towards blacks. Many whites experience mistreatment at the hands of blacks, simply due to their race.

Racism is not just a social issue. It is a moral issue. It is a moral issue because it is a Biblical issue. It is a heart issue. And by nature, the hearts of all human beings are black.

Nine Biblical Principles on Racism

I am going to develop nine Biblical principles about racism.

Principle #1 is that *the doctrine of creation is the end of racism*. God created all humanity from our first father and mother, Adam and Eve. God created Adam and Eve in His own image. This image involved two aspects. First, God made Adam and Eve in the image of God in the narrow sense. This means that God made them holy, righteous, and with the true knowledge of Him. Spiritually Adam and Eve looked like their Creator Father. Second, God made Adam and Eve in the image of God in the wider sense. This refers to the fact that man is distinct from the animals. He has linguistic gifts so that he can communicate with God. He is given the gift of reason. Man has a will. He enjoys the wonder of emotions. Man was created with a rational, moral nature. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the image of God in the narrow sense. But they retained the image of God in the wider sense. Fallen mankind did not and would not have degenerated into beasts or devils, as Abraham Kuyper erroneously claimed. Fallen mankind remained human. Born again Christians are remade in the image of God in the narrow sense. Therefore, Christians once again have both the image of God in the wider and narrower senses. But even unbelievers still retain the image of God in the wider sense. That is why we may not abort babies. That is why prisoners need to be treated with respect due to the dignity of their humanity.

The doctrine of creation teaches that people from every ethnic group are humans made in the image of God. This gives them great dignity. And it is why we may not discriminate against people due to their ethnic background. Racism is an attack on God who created mankind in His image. And God takes such racial animosity personally. An attack on the dignity of humans is an attack on the Creator

who gave them that dignity. So the doctrine that God created Adam and Eve in His image and that all humans have descended from them (and are of *one blood*) should be the end of racism.

Principle #2

Principle #2 is: *God forbids racism and prejudice.* The word “prejudice” actually means “pre-judgment.” A pre-judgment is a decision before the facts are even considered.

In James 2:9, God forbids prejudice based on wealth or social status: “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” The example that James gives is of Christians showing prejudice against a poor man. If a wealthy man comes and visits their worship services, the Christians give him the best seat in the house. But if a poor man comes, they treat him as if he is unimportant and tell him to sit on the floor! Just as it is a sin to treat someone worse because he is poor, it is a sin to treat someone worse because of the color of his skin.

The Bible presents racism as a sin. Pharaoh’s attempted genocide of the Hebrews in Egypt was racist. Because the Hebrews were from a different ethnic background, Pharaoh was afraid of their growing in numbers and strength. Behind Pharaoh was the devil, who wanted to destroy the covenant people. The tool that the devil used was racial fears, which led to racist policies.

Later, Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses. They were jealous of Moses’ authority. But the incident that led to this rebellion was racial. Moses’ siblings became upset at him because he was planning to marry a black woman from Cush. Numbers 12:1 records:

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

God vindicated Moses from these racists. Did Miriam think lighter skin was better? Well, God gives her pure white skin--leprosy! While Aaron and Miriam were against an interracial marriage, God was not.

Jonah’s attitude towards the Assyrians was racist. Behind this was the antagonism between the Assyrians and the covenant people. But the problem with

Jonah is that this led to racism. He didn't care about the people in the city. He didn't care that there were thousands of little children in the city who did not know their right hand from their left. He even threw a sort of tantrum when he learned that God was not going to destroy all the people of Ninevah. Jonah wanted God to have mercy only on the Jews.

During Jesus' ministry, the Jews were racist towards the Samaritans. Jesus took on this racism in powerful parables--we all know the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' assault on Jewish racism must have fallen like a bombshell on their racist, elitist, pharisaical playground.

Later, the Judaizers were elevating themselves above Gentile converts to the Christian faith. They looked down on Gentile Christians because the latter had not been circumcised. Their concerns were religious. They wanted Gentiles to "become" Jews (proselytes) by being circumcised.

This religious elitism was connected to a cultural elitism. They were prejudiced against Gentile Christians because of their biological and cultural background. They thought they were better followers of Jesus because they were Jews who followed ancient traditions.

Principle #3

Principle #3 is: *Racism is a sin that the new man in Christ must put to death.* God empowers Christians as new creatures to discard the sins of the unregenerate life, which include malice towards people who are different from you.

Peter writes: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (1 Peter 2:1). As Christians, we may not hate or despise people because of their race or culture.

Racial differences are not barriers to love by Christians. In Colossians 3:10-11, Paul writes:

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

The reference to barbarians and Scythians is a reference to the way cultured Romans

and Greeks viewed those with unrefined manners. They looked down on uncultured ethnic groups. If you have died with Christ and have a new man in the image of God, these kinds of differences will not be a barrier to love and fellowship.

Principle #4

Principle #4 is: *The doctrine of the Fall stands against racism.* The doctrine of the Fall is the end of racism. Since all men, from every ethnic group, are all together fallen in sin, no group has any reason to exalt itself over another. There is a common denominator shattering all pride, which is that all human beings are naturally corrupt, depraved, guilty, and condemned. In Hell, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth by everyone.

Principle #5

Principle #5 is: *Fallen man is naturally racist.* In history, we find manifested this natural hatred and prejudice. At the beginning of the 20th Century, Europeans had a very positive view of the progress of mankind. They seemed to think that because of man's progress in science and philosophy, man was getting better. If the history of the 20th Century has proved anything, it has proven that what the Bible says about fallen mankind is true.

Mankind has rebelled against God and as a result, is dead in trespasses and in sin. There are potentials for evil in men and women that blow the mind. Look at the depravity of Nazi Germany. Hitler and the Nazis considered themselves superior to Jews, blacks, gypsies, and Russians. Look how many Germans joined Hitler in his wicked and evil policies.

Think of the rise and history of communist Russia. What a dark and evil history. The history of communism in Russia begins with the eradication of priests and churches. Fallen man does not want to hear about God. The communists tried to destroy any faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus. Then came the insane fury of Stalin and the tens of thousands of communist officials who carried out his dastardly commands.

Around the world, in every continent, there is ethnic hatred. In Rwanda, the end of the 20th Century saw murderous hatred between the ethnic Hutus and Tutsis. What is saddest is that a high percentage of the citizens of Rwanda were confessing

Christians. The genocides showed that there was too often just a veneer of religion. Where there is authentic Christianity, there is also the end of racism.

Principle #6

Principle #6 is perhaps the most important: *Jesus Christ is the end of racism*. Jesus Christ died for a multi-cultural, multi-racial people. He is the Creator who made Adam and Eve. He was sovereign over the development of humanity into different ethnic groups. The world for which God sacrificed His Son is composed of people from every linguistic and ethnic background. Therefore, we should expect as Christians to experience a multi-cultural fellowship. Yet that has not been the experience of many of us. We have imagined the Catholic church to be mainly white and middle class.

The boasting of the Christian must not be in his ethnicity, but in the cross.

Jesus creates shalom between Christians from different races and cultures. Jesus Christ is the possibility of shalom. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that we have the power to love. Shalom is not just the absence of fighting and prejudice and racism. It is a wholehearted appreciation of diversity. It is a blessed living together in love and joy.

Jesus is the end of racism because His body is multi-ethnic. We are to be what we are as Christians — one body. There is no conflict between the members of the body; they work together. Each member of the body is valued.

Principle #7

Principles #7 is: *The doctrines of grace are the end of racism*. John Piper has pointed out that each one of the five points of Calvinism is the end of racism. One reason why we may not be racist is because we are Calvinists! The first point of Calvinism is “Total Depravity.” We have already seen how our common fallenness should keep us from lifting ourselves up above others.

Second, the doctrine of *unconditional election* is the end of racism. God the Father has unconditionally elected certain human beings to salvation in Jesus Christ. He chooses them apart from their ethnicity, language, or giftedness. God did not choose people on the basis of skin color or any other ethnic distinctive. The Bible teaches that God did not choose many who are rich and wealthy and powerful. He

instead chooses the weak and despised of the world, so that He would get all the glory.

God's choice is unconditional, not based on anything in us. John Piper says: "Therefore unconditional election severs the deepest root of all racism and ethnocentrism."

There is no ground in God's election of you for pride. God demonstrates in election His desire to save all ethnicities. If God elects people who are from an ethnic group different from ours, we certainly have no right to look down on them, if God does not.

Third, the doctrine of a limited or *definite atonement* is the end of racism. On the cross, Jesus paid for the sin and guilt of every one of His people. No person because of his race or culture can add anything to the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. The new people, the elect from every ethnic group, the sheep for whom Jesus died are not saved because of anything they did. We are all utterly dependent upon Jesus' cross.

Fourth, the doctrine of *irresistible grace* is the end of racism. It is not the case that people from one ethnic group are able to believe in Jesus, while those from another are not. Regeneration is the irresistible work of the Holy Spirit. That means ethnic distinctives contribute nothing to the rise of your faith. There is no racist, — no matter their background, whom God cannot overcome and subdue. Knowing that we are in the same wretched and impossible situation as people from every other ethnic group should keep us from looking down on them. We are comrades in dependence upon irresistible grace.

Fifth, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is the end of racism. We are just as dependent as any other person, from any ethnic group, on the grace of God to preserve us in our faith.

Principle #8

Principle #8 is: *The mighty operation of the Spirit of Jesus is the end of racism in the catholic church.* Jesus' Spirit gathers a multi-ethnic church from every culture, causing the nations to be glad and rejoice in Jesus Christ. Pentecost is a revelation of the intention of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. On Pentecost, the Spirit revealed His intention of saving a multi-ethnic church:

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

The multitude who heard the disciples speaking in different tongues were amazed:

And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. (Acts 2:7-11)

The church in Antioch reveals the Holy Spirit at work. In Acts 13:1, we discover the Spirit raised up a multi-ethnic church in Antioch with multi-ethnic leadership:

Now there was in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Simeon apparently was black, an African. Lucius was from Cyrene. The early church was overwhelmingly multi-ethnic. In most cities, there were Jews who converted to faith in Jesus Christ. But when the rest of the Jews rejected the Christ, the Apostle Paul would preach to the Gentiles, and God gathered many of them into the church.

We sometimes forget that many of the early churches in the Roman Empire were multi-ethnic. They were not all one color. They certainly did not have members from the same ethnic and cultural background. They were diverse. In the New Covenant, that is what we should expect.

Every true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who is blowing into the hearts of people from every ethnic background, regenerating and recreating people so they become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is unthinkable that a Christian who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit should look down on people from another ethnic background. That is to grieve the Holy Spirit.

Principle #9

Principle #9 is: *Every Christian should revel in diversity because he will spend eternity in a multi-cultural New Jerusalem.* Listen to the Apostle John speak in Revelation 7:9:

After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

In Revelation 21:24, John says this about the New Jerusalem:

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

How can a Christian look down on other ethnic groups when he hopes to spend eternity with them, loving them with a perfect love?!