

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



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Racism, Race Relations, And Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

By Brian R. Kenyon

It is customary for this issue of the Harvester to give a brief review of the lectureship book. This year's volume, *Do You Understand Jesus' Sermon on the Mount?*, already had three chapters written dealing with race relations (corresponding to Thursday afternoon's forum titled, "Doing Unto Others...") before the events of Ferguson, Missouri, unfolded. This editor is still coming to grips with the unexpected racism he observed from various social media posts that had the Caucasian officer automatically guilty before the evidence of the grand jury was made public. The absolute denial of any possibility of evidence existing that could justify the officer's actions simply because he was Caucasian is totally expected from the Jesse Jacksons and Al Sharptons of the world, but when members of the body of Christ act that same way, something seems wrong!

The purpose of this article is not to evaluate the case in Ferguson, Missouri (the grand jury evidence is available online for those who so desire cf. Pr. 18:13), but to examine racism and race relationships in the Bible and even in the churches of Christ through some excerpts of chapters in the 2015 lectureship book dealing with those topics. In so doing, an examination of this important issue will also serve as a preview of the lectureship book.

Was There Racism In The Bible?

In Larry Williams' chapter of the same title, he wrote, "Yes, there was racism in the Bible. It was under the Law of Moses, which named and catalogued sin" (cf. Deut. 10:17-18). Williams continued, "Neither the New Testament nor Christ condemned and/or mislabeled any people as being 'common and unclean' (Acts 10:35-36), not to

mention as being inferior to others because of their race."

In defining the term, Williams wrote,

Racism is both an intellectual as well as an emotional concept that one race or an ethnic group possesses specific attributes, abilities, and qualities that make it inferior or superior to another group. This belief creates antagonism and intolerance toward the said inferior race or ethnic groups. ...Racism is an intellectualism and an emotionalism. While intellectualism is based on bigotry, condemnation, and judgment, emotionalism is constructed upon a triggered attitude, out of controlled speech, and automatic evil response.

In his conclusion, Williams wrote,

Since the church of Christ is the Bible's church, it should strive to better appreciate and love one another. The church that views and interprets one another through God's eyes will not base its judgment upon outward appearance, but upon one's heart. [Jer. 17:10; 1 Chr. 28:9] when Christians view and interpret one another through God's lenses, they will not call one another common and unclean. [cf.

4th Annual Appreciation Dinner



We are privileged once again to have **Tom Holland** do some more rocking from the "pastime porch" on **Tuesday, January 20, 2015**. Contact the office today to RSVP. We are asking that attendees make a \$10 donation to the school. Hope to see you here!

Acts 10:11-16, 28] when the church views and interprets mankind through God's understanding, it will not exhibit a prejudicial attitude (Jas. 2:1). The church should make no distinction based upon ethnicity, riches, nor education. [cf. Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11-13] when Christians view and interpret their neighbors based upon God's wisdom, they know God accepts people based upon their obedience [Acts 10:34-35; Ps. 15:1-2].

Race Relations And The Restoration Movement

Bruce Daugherty begins his chapter of the same title, "The pages of Restoration history give testimony as to how the principles of kingdom living were applied... As with many issues, race relations in the Restoration Movement are a mixture of triumph and tragedy." Daugherty analyzes the topic under five headings: Antebellum Views; Reconstruction and Segregation; Early Voices Opposing Segregation; The Civil Rights Movement; and Race Relations Today.

The Antebellum period (1781-1860) was just prior to the Civil War, The Restoration Movement was well underway during this period. Two of the most well known leaders of this movement were Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. Daugherty wrote,

The cradle of the Restoration Movement, however, was also home to "the peculiar institution"—slavery. While it is difficult to know how many of the Restorer's owned slaves, it is clear that many were "deeply involved in the slavery dilemma"... In some ways, this was surprising since both Stone and Campbell opposed slavery and set the example of emancipating the slaves they had inheritedThe Cane Ridge revival of 1801 had been a turning point in the life of Bar-

ton Stone. As Stone experienced a new religious freedom, he determined to give physical freedom to the slaves he owned. His example also led others to free their slaves. ...When Alexander Campbell married Margaret Brown in 1811, he inherited slaves along with his farm. Campbell emancipated his slaves, after giving them an education with his own children and teaching them a trade so that they could provide for themselves....Campbell utilized the pages of his paper, *The Millennial Harbinger*, to speak out on slavery. In the first issue, Campbell's prospectus included, "Disquisitions upon the treatment of African slaves, as preparation to their emancipation and exaltation from their present degraded condition"... Campbell held true to his word, and in 1830 he wrote his first article.

Viewing the slaves as people created in the image of God and deserving emancipation was one challenge, but incorporating them into a society that had only known the slavery system was even more daunting. Daugherty wrote, "Campbell believed that slavery in the United States was a system that created 'mutual bondage' of black slaves serving white masters and of white masters becoming slaves to the system of slavery [Rom. 6:16]." Thus, Daugherty continued, "Like Stone, Campbell could not envision an integrated society in America...He too, was in favor of colonization or returning the slaves to Africa." Throughout the rest of the Antebellum period, much debate ensued between brethren: those who supported slavery, moderates who were against slavery but thought it best to change it from within the existing social framework, and fiery abolitionists who were for ending slavery no matter the means. Daugherty concluded, "However, by the time of the Civil War, no more middle

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*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month's financial statement.

The Harvester

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1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803
(863) 683-4043

Editor: Brian R. Kenyon, Director

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ground was to be found, neither for the nation nor for the churches of the Restoration Movement.”

Concerning reconstruction and segregation, Daugherty wrote,

The racial make-up of the churches of the Restoration Movement in the South was radically altered by the Civil War. Tolbert Fanning, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, writing in 1872, described the difference, “Time was when thousands of the best informed colored people of the south, lived in full fellowship as members of the church of Christ, with their white brethren... Possibly, in no section of the earth, could so intelligent and cultivated colored Christians be found, as in the state of Tennessee....Our colored brethren, some of whom at least we had aided in purchasing and setting at liberty... were completely alienated from us, and turned against us. The revolution [Civil War] was too sudden and too great, for the moral health of the freed people. They were induced to think, that all with whom they had formerly associated were oppressive, and enemies of the colored race.”

Daugherty described two factors that led to creating that situation.

First, there was a desire on the part of blacks to be independent and in control of their own destinies, including religious institutions. Second, there was the attitude of whites toward the freedmen which manifested itself in paternalism, racial prejudice, and apathy.

These factors shed light on two different approaches on how to change the wrongs of segregation, one exemplified by Marshall Keeble and the other by G. P. Bowser. Daugherty wrote,

Marshall Keeble was the outstanding evangelist, black or white, of the first half of the twentieth century....Most of Keeble’s work was concentrated in the South in the time of segregation and “Jim Crow” laws. As a result, Keeble had to walk a delicate line as he depended on white support while accommodating white segregation....Keeble refused to look on his [white] supporters critically. “Keeble never professed to see racism in white men’s words or events”...This was true, even when he bore the brunt of vicious, violent attacks [including brass knuckles from a man pretending to respond to the invitation]....Several of those in attendance urged Keeble to press charges against the man, but he refused to do so. Keeble’s attitude of forgiveness gained him acceptance in the whole community, black and white....Keeble’s work was extended through the many young men he mentored, through his personal example, and later through the Nashville Christian Institute.

G. P. Bowser also approached race relations in a different manner than Keeble, which may account for his relatively obscure status among whites in comparison to Keeble....Two ideas persisted in Bowser’s ministry: use of the printed page and education. In 1902, Bowser bought a small hand press that he operated from his home. Bowser began the *Christian Echo*, a journal for black churches of Christ....Bowser operated three schools in his lifetime.... [one closed when he and his students were told] to conform to the current social customs, entering by the back door to the school. Bowser was indignant and refused to give in to segregation in his own school....Though Bowser’s schools did not last, he had a lasting impact through the development of leaders in black churches of Christ, four of whom were outstanding—R. N. Hogan, J. S. Winston, Levi Kennedy, and G. E. Steward.

Concerning the civil rights era, Daugherty wrote,

[A]s the Civil Rights Movement began in the 1950’s and ushered integration in the nation, the deep racial divide within churches of Christ remained. African-Americans within churches of Christ labored mightily for the rights that they had been denied. For them, the Gospel carried a community or civic

40th Annual Lectureship

Do You Understand Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount?

January 19-22, 2015

Monday

9:00 “When He Was Set”—Who Is Jesus? Jackie M. Stearsman
9:40 Historical Background of the Sermon Stephen Atnip

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Character of the Kingdom Stephen Atnip

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Relationship Regulations

1:30 Murder Steven Walling

2:00 Making Oaths David Stearsman

2:30 Personal Retaliation Robert Williams

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers on Relationship Regulations

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Jesus’ Relationship to the Law Darrin Morehouse

7:45 Character of the Kingdom’s Effect on Others Michael Shepherd

Tuesday

9:00 Completely Focusing on the Lord Kory Berry
9:40 No Need to Worry Kevin Patterson

10:20 BREAK

10:50 The Providence of God Solomon Quainoo

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Marital Matters

1:30 Adultery George F. Beals

2:00 What Deut. 24:1-4 Actually Teaches Dewayne Bryant

2:30 Divorce and Remarriage Brian R. Kenyon

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers on Marital Matters

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Jesus’ Teaching About Love Roderick “Rick” Evans

7:45 Jesus’ Warning Against False Teachers Jimmy Clark

Wednesday

9:00 How “Social” Should the Gospel Be? Jack Pinckert
9:40 OT Tithing Versus NT Giving David South

10:20 BREAK

10:50 The Value of Heavenly Treasures Jimmy Clark

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Righteous Religion

1:30 Rendering Benevolence Sam Willcut

2:00 Praying Eric Dawkins

2:30 Fasting Jefferson Sole

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers on Righteous Religion

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 The Strait Gate and Narrow Way Creston Frizzell

7:45 God’s Standard of Judgment Terry Frizzell

Thursday

9:00 Condemnatory Judgment Prohibited Glen Willcut
9:40 Lax Judgment Prohibited Sam Willcut

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Proper Judgment Requirements Melvin Otey

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: “Doing Unto Others...”

1:30 Was There Racism in the Bible? Larry Williams

2:00 Race Relations in Restoration Movement B. Daugherty

2:30 Practicing the “Golden Rule” Benjamin L. Radford, Sr.

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions And Answers on “Doing Unto Others...”

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 The Wise and Foolish Builders Kyle L. Smith

7:45 Jesus the Christ’s Authority Melvin Otey

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Florida School of Preaching

1807 South Florida Avenue

Lakeland, FL 33803

www.fsop.net email: fsop@fsop.net

Phone: (863) 683-4043; (800) 320-9780

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responsibility as much as an individual responsibility. Whites within churches of Christ, with a few exceptions, were slow to raise their voices in support of equal rights and justice as they separated salvation from any social obligation [due in large part to the influence of David Lipscomb's view on civil government]...This silence and lack of support for the cause of civil rights contributed to the alienation of race relations within churches of Christ. Blacks viewed the silence of whites as ignorance at best and racist at worst.

Daugherty closed his chapter by noting practical steps that can improve race relations in the churches of Christ,

The apostle Peter said, "Love the brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2:17). In order to love the brotherhood, the brotherhood must first be known. To live in separate fellowships, with very little interaction among each other, is to give fertile ground to ignorance, which in turn fosters prejudice and racism. Greater communication with one another can increase understanding. Christians must learn to engage in courageous conversation with one another...As David Lipscomb said so clearly long ago, "The only point really involved in this difficulty is, whether we will be led by the Spirit of Christ and the teachings of the Bible, or by our prejudices." The choice is ours.

Practicing The "Golden Rule"

Though "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Mt. 7:12) has a broader application than race relations, Ben Radford concluded,

The Bible teaches that there is only one world created by the one true God (Gen. 1:1-31; Acts 17:26). There is no white race, black race, yellow race, red race, or brown race. ... He [God] also has one heaven for everybody...Thus, if God's people want to be together up there, they better get together down here. They must not let the devil rob them of their salvation because of prejudices....Therefore, if a person has a race issue, he or she needs to "Check up before you check out"! 

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