

The Harvester



*Preparing Souls
To Serve The Lord!*



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ADDRESSING "SKIN COLOR-ISM"

Brian R. Kenyon

"Racism" is the term often used today to describe the tension between some people of different skin color. While the sinful attitudes also involve superior thinking of one culture over another or of one social standing over another, the term "racism" is almost exclusively reserved for tensions involving "whites and blacks," or as some would say, "African Americans and Caucasians." Among worldly people, these tensions may always exist (cf. Jas. 4:1-4), but for faithful members of Christ's church, these sinful attitudes toward other human beings, each of whom is created in God's image, should never be found!

In this article, when referring to this topic, the term "skin color-ism" will be used in an effort to be more precise (and perhaps show the ridiculousness of those who practice or promote the sin). There are two weaknesses with the term "racism." First, all humans are the same "race." That is, all humans were created in the "image" and "likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1). All humans are the same genetically, although each has a specific genetic code that gives each individual specific, unique combinations of characteristics, including his or her skin color. All humans are one race with different physical features! The fact that male and female produce "according to its kind" (Gen. 1:12, 21, 24-25), also proves that all humans are the same "kind" by God's creation. No matter the skin color, when a male and female human come together sexually, a human is reproduced at conception (or fertilization, as some prefer). Of course, for humans, God designed their reproducing to be within the marriage relationship

(Gen. 2:18-24; 4:1; Mt. 1:18-20; 19:3-9). Thus, the term "racism" implies there are different human races. Wrong! There is only one race of humans with various shades of skin color (and other physical features). Let us accept (and use terminology that reflects) the truth that all humans are of equal value, made in the image of God.

Second, in the judgment of this writer, the term "racism" is too locked-in to the mid-twentieth century, along with the terms "segregation" and "integration." The dynamics creating "skin color-ism" have changed, at least in American culture. Those who talk of the issue as if the present norm were National Guard troops keeping certain skin-colored people away from public places are seemingly being purposely deceptive. This is not to say harmony between people of different skin color is perfect or where it ought to be, but progress must be recognized were

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it has been made, with a view toward improving the situation. Present “skin color-ism” is mostly based and/or perpetuated today by different dynamics than back then, although there is obviously some similarity. Also misleading with the term “racism,” because of its mid-twentieth century connotation, is that it is usually perceived as light skin-colored people pitted against dark skin-colored people, but such is not always the case, at least from what this writer has observed. Thus, “skin color-ism” more accurately portrays the target of the prejudices.

ADDRESSING THE TEACHING THAT RESULTS IN “SKIN COLOR-ISM”

The number one promoter of “skin color-ism,” without doubt, is education, what people are taught! Thus, if the “skin color-ism” problem is to be resolved, it must start with proper teaching. “Proper teaching” here is not primarily referring to studying about the atrocities of slavery or the Holocaust. Studying history is an important part of any program that seeks to help human relationships to be more harmonious. What is primarily meant here by “proper teaching” is educating whoever is open-minded that skin color does not make a person’s value rise or fall. Different skin colors are part of God’s beautiful creation of humans. Each person, along with his or her tone of skin, is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14)!

Why is it that American culture (especially in some segments of the United States), and those cultures in geographically close proximity

to it, have what seems a completely different attitude toward skin color than other “Western-influenced” cultures? It seems to this writer the answer is simple: people are being taught (beginning in the home) that people with specific skin colors automatically have a certain disposition toward other people of different skin colors. Such stereotyping has prejudiced many people who are of all shades of skin color.

The “skin color-ism” problem that lingers in America does have a connection to the uniqueness of slavery in Antebellum American history. Unlike slavery in the Greco-Roman world of the New Testament, where slaves could not be identified by their appearance, slaves in Antebellum America almost exclusively had dark skin color. Thus, even though slavery as a legal institution ended in America following the Civil War, prejudices still existed due to the perceived difference of worth and social standing based upon the obvious difference in skin color.

Why does that same perceived difference of worth and social standing based on skin color still exist among some people today? There is *only one reason*: they are taught to think that way! Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the *only reason* why people would automatically associate skin color with worth, social standing, or even personality is because *they have been taught* to think that way! People do not just wake up one morning (continued on page 4)

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God's People in High Places: Mordecai and Esther



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The Harvester

February 2019

Page 4

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We appreciate those who contributed financially to this year's lectureship! We were \$1,980.93 short of meeting our expenses. Your help in closing that shortfall would be much appreciated!

(continued from page 2) thinking, "That person has ____ skin color; therefore, he must be ____." Yet, this is how some people think! Again, worldly people will be worldly (cf. Eph. 6:12; 1 Jn. 5:19), but such thinking, resulting from "training," should never characterize Christians (Titus 3:2)!

CONCLUSION

The way to defeat "skin colorism" first involves people knowing and applying what the Bible teaches about human nature and the inherent value of all humans as image-bearers of God. These facts make it wrong for humans to mistreat one another (cf. Gen. 9:6; Jas. 3:8-9)! People must also make a deliberate effort to teach by word and deed the inherent worth of all people, regardless of their skin color! In subsequent articles, defeating "skin colorism" will be further detailed. May God help us see and treat everyone as He would! 🙏



"A Picture of a Picture Is Worth a Thousand Pixels!" In 1999, the school purchased its first digital camera, made possible by a donation from Charles Hendrickson (pictured far right, facing the preachers). This was relatively new technology back then. Pictured on back row are: Adron Doran, B. C. Carr, V. P. Black; front row: Jackie Stearsman (holding camera), E. Claude Gardner, Earl Edwards, and Tom Holland.