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The Remedy for Racism



EVERY CULTURE AND GOVERNMENT throughout history has faced the issue of racism and unjust resentments toward others who are different. Racism is characteristic and evident of the sinful nature of man. Fallen mankind has always built barriers and ostracized others. This stems from pride: a fallen man’s predilection to believe he or she is superior to another in some way. In this regard, racism parades around with his ugly brother who goes by the name arrogance. It is at its core a heart issue; a dilemma with no solution apart from the heart regenerative work of Christ in one’s life.

In fact, the Bible’s test for the veracity of genuine faith is the absence of racism. John 13:35 says, *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”* Jesus’ command here stems beyond loving one’s own kind.

This week let us examine some biblical insights regarding racism. Read on, my friend!

Ralph Drollinger

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Weekly Bible Studies

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*
SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*
HOUSE: Capitol H324: Monday or Tuesday Evenings after First Votes Back. *Dinner Served.*





I. INTRODUCTION

RACISM IS DEFINED as a feeling of superiority based on race. Oxford Dictionary defines racism this way: “The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”

In the first chapters of the book of Ephesians the Apostle Paul addresses what is known in seminary circles as the biblical doctrine of soteriology, i.e., what the Bible has to say about one’s salvation. When the reader arrives at the second chapter of Ephesians, most specifically verses 11 and 12, Paul is in the middle of a discussion about one of the fruits of soteriology. Notice what that fruit is:

Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands — remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Notice the first word *therefore*. What Paul is about to say relates and is based upon what he just said. And what he has just said is that salvation is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8 and 9). Prior to this passage above Paul is conveying the idea that salvation is in no way based upon man’s merit. What he is saying in our passage under study is based on that previously stated idea: If salvation is a gift from God then no one can say he or she has earned it and therefore believe and/or act as if they are superior to one who has not earned it! The attitude that the Jews were God’s chosen people coupled with the fact that the Gentiles were not, is the precise reason why the Jews possessed a superiority complex — a racist attitude — relative to the Gentiles. Since salvation is not based on personal or ethnic merit and is available to all

of mankind, it is incongruous for one who is saved to believe he is superior to another.

More specific to the passage, here’s what’s going on: The Ephesian believers to whom this epistle and this specific passage is addressed were Gentiles. They had been, historically speaking, greatly diminished and segregated — racially — from the Kingdom of God by the Jews.

Even though that was the Jewish sentiment, God never intended for the Jews to view themselves as having a corner on the market — so as to think they were God’s chosen people and no one else was! Rather, God had set the Jews apart to be His representatives to *all the nations*. They were not to hoard God’s blessing, but to share it with the other nations! The Jews, it seems, wanted the divine blessing of God’s decree (cf. Amos 3:12), but not the divine mission of God’s decree — in fact, Israel was supposed to be proselytizing all the other Gentile nations, not hoarding their special status. This is evidenced by the following Old Testament passages:

In Genesis 12:3 God pronounces His fundamental edict upon Abraham, the Jewish Patriarch saying, *“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* The meaning and breadth of the word *all* for sure encompasses more than just the Abrahamic offspring to follow.

In Isaiah 42:6 we learn more about God’s plan for a special, representative-of-Him people:

“I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations.”

Isaiah 49:3 echoes, *“You are My Servant, Israel, in whom I will show My glory.”* Furthermore in verse 6 of the same chapter we read, *“I will also make you a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”*



Since salvation is not based on personal or ethnic merit and is available to all of mankind, it is incongruous for one who is saved to believe he is superior to another.



In chapter 60, verse 3, of Isaiah, God's plan goes on to say, "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising."

God's plan for Israel culminates in chapter 62:1-2 of Isaiah, "Until (Israel's) righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory."

Even though Israel was largely disobedient to God's missional calling of her, these passages serve to illustrate the point that Israel had no basis for feeling culturally superior because in this perspective she was called to serve, not condemn the Gentiles.

II. RACISM ILLUSTRATED: ANCIENT ISRAEL

INSTEAD OF SPREADING God's blessing and message of salvation by faith through the coming Messiah, God's chosen messenger, the nation and ethnic group known as Israel, ended up being condescending toward the Gentiles; they had developed an attitude of superiority. Scripture evidences this attitude in many ways: In the book of Jonah, Jonah was called to preach repentance to Nineveh. He knew that God would bless them if they repented — but since he personally hated them he fled from his God-given assignment to preach to them. Take note of this in Jonah 4:2:

"I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity."

As a Hebrew, Jonah would rather have seen the Gentiles judged than forgiven so he tried to jump ship on his assignment (but even that didn't work!).

In the NT book of Acts (10:28; 34-35), we witness the same attitude in the young Apostle Peter. Peter was a Jew who carried a lot of Jewish baggage concerning the Gentiles until God got hold of him and began to work in his heart:

"You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean...I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."

God had set the Israelites apart and in order to make them distinctive He gave them special and strict dietary, clothing and marriage laws. They however, perverted and devolved these distinguishing characteristics into a source of pride, self-glory and religious isolationism. I.e. in terms of others knowing God, their evangelistic sermon sounded something more like what you might expect to hear on a kid's playground: "Tic-toc the game is locked and nobody else can play." So deeply-rooted had Israel's haughtiness grown that if a Jewish man or woman married a Gentile, the family would conduct a funeral!

The nation of Israel had debauched her calling. And it would cost her dearly! After much patience, God pronounced His judgment on her through the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 5:1-7 God says to His chosen people:

"Why when I expected (you) to produce good grapes did (you) produce worthless ones? So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground..."

This specific prophesy of Isaiah is fulfilled in Jesus' parable of the landowner (note that God is the landowner in the parable) as recorded in Matthew 21:33-43:

"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINEPRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another

★ PUBLIC SERVANT PROFILE

Austin Scott

U.S. Representative, Georgia



EVEN THOUGH he fills one of the most influential political seats in the world that wields the kind of power that has made some giddy with self-importance, Congressman Austin Scott, GA, 8th District, said he well understands that nothing can be accomplished with-

out God.

"I go back to the (President Abraham) Lincoln quote: 'I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.'"

Congressman Scott said he is often reminded of that quote when, preoccupied by many tasks, he tries to work under his own power. "I will be the first to admit from time to time that I roam, and by that I mean I think I can do things by myself," he said. "But it is just not possible to accomplish anything without God having a role in it."

"One of the struggles is governing in this world while trying to live for the kingdom of God."

Congressmen grapple with difficult issues such as abortion and discussions often include arguments about extreme circumstances.

"People say, 'What about this situation, or that situation?' But the fact of the matter is, every life matters," he said. "You have to cast your vote in keeping with God's ordinances."

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■ ENDORSEMENT

Harold Metts

State Senator, Rhode Island
Providence, District 6



“CAPITOL MINISTRIES IN-DEPTH Bible studies are important because Lawmakers need the Gospel and they need the Word of God.

“Sometimes there is an element of resistance for Lawmakers to live out their faith in office due to what they hear about the separation of Church and State. But I always point out that The Constitution provides us with freedom of religion and free speech too, and that our nation was founded on biblical principles.

“Getting into the Word of God through Bible studies reminds lawmakers of their own spiritual roots and increases their awareness of Biblical principles. And too, the Word opens eyes just like it did for me.

“Years ago I read the Bible preparing to teach Sunday school to teenagers and I went from being politically correct to being Biblically correct. You hope that the Holy Spirit will convict Lawmakers to apply the Word of God to their own lives and to the laws they enact.” cm

group of slaves larger than the first and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying ‘they will respect my son.’ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.’ And they took him, and threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?”...“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you....”

The *vineyard* is a common symbol for the Jewish nation throughout Scripture. Herein God, the *landowner* develops a vineyard and leases it to the vinedressers, which are the Jewish leaders. The killings refer to the OT prophets, and the killing of the son relates to Jesus’ death at the hands of the Jews. Consequently, God takes His missional assignment away from Israel and gives His kingdom work to the Church — which is primarily comprised of Gentiles.

Now why have I said all that? Ethnic Israel had no reason to believe she was superior to other ethnicities!

The courtyard on the Temple grounds affords one remaining illustration of Israel’s gross contortion of her calling. God had placed a courtyard in the design of the Temple for the specific purpose of winning Gentile converts. I.e. God’s intended purpose was to provide a place where the Jews could proselytize the Gentiles to Judaism. Israel’s magnificent glory was to be a magnet that would allure the Gentiles to come and see for themselves. So bad, however, was the debauchery of her mission that by NT times, the Jewish leaders were using the courtyard as a place to hold a swap meet in order to make money! This explains why Jesus was so angry with them, driving them out and overturning tables! He said to them, *“Is it not written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS but you have made it a ROBBERS’ DEN.’”*

There is no doubt that the Jewish leaders over the centuries had developed strong racist

attitudes toward the Gentiles. And as we are about to see, it is only through the cross of Christ that the division is healed between any racially divided group. The regenerative work of Christ in the heart of fallen man can heal more than just the racial divide between Jew and Gentile. God’s power can heal any ethnic division. States Ephesians 2:14-16 in this regard:

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one... that in Himself He might make the two into one new man...and might reconcile them both.

Every believer, when he or she understands this theological perspective of Scripture must realize that any present ethnic label should be subservient to being one new man whose identity is first and foremost in Christ!

III. RACISM DEFINED:
THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

The student of the Bible should note that the word “racism” does not appear in Scripture. Rather it refers repeatedly to it as the sin of *partiality* (*diakrino*). *Dia* means “under”, *krino* means “to judge.” Literally “to judge under.” By judging another as inferior or underneath, a person is exalting himself as being superior or elevated above another human being. Again, one of the aspects of the fall is pride and pride often manifests in subtle or not so subtle attitudes of superiority. Whenever we gossip we are in essence championing our superiority to the listener. The more specific meaning and usage of *diakrino* came to refer to the superficial elevation of one person over another for external reasons. I.e. it was common then as it is now to show favoritism based upon wealth, race, appearance, success, position, or social status.

IV. BETTER UNDERSTANDING
THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

Our study now need shift to James 2:1-7 (NKJV), which has as its subject the sin of partiality. Take note of this passage carefully:



My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

James admonishes believers for favoring one person or socio-economic group of people, in this case the upper class, over and above the poor. Without going into too much detail (the passage is a week’s study in its own right) it is important to note that the Church was manifesting favoritism to those who actually blasphemed Jesus’ name!

Secular hypocrisy relative to racism is understandable: kids grow up in public schools learning the theory of evolution as fact. But evolution is more than a biological presupposition: it is a poisonous ideology that says “only the fittest survive” meaning some things in the world have more value than others. What is so hypocritical is that once a child is catechized in this ideology, he is told not to be a racist as an adult. Well why not if evolution is true? Cannot the popularity of partiality today be explained by in large from yesterday’s presupposition of evolution? In fact, evolutionary theory is a seedbed of racism; it is a great conundrum in American secularism.

James is saying that this same kind of hypocrisy should not exist amongst believers: Why idolize or display partiality in the Church, especially when it involves elevating the wealthy — if indeed they are the ones who primarily persecute you?

In contrast to secular evolution, the Bible speaks of God creating man in His image. Accordingly, all of His creation — regardless of wealth, race, sex, handicap, age, position, status or celebrity quotient — inherently possesses a singular, similar value. In fact, The Almighty is impartial. Throughout His Word, He condemns partiality; He specifically warns in John 7:24, “do not judge according to appearance.”

**MAY IT NEVER BE THAT
WE GIVE AWAY THAT WHICH
IS BIBLICALLY CORRECT TO
GAIN THAT WHICH IS
POLITICALLY CORRECT.**

May it always be the other way around: the way of biblical impartiality. The parallel in the capital might be to hold a gathering, inviting the most prominent people to sit at the head table and read from the Scriptures, pray, and give speeches without regard for the fact that they blaspheme Christ by their lifestyles, voting records, words and actions before and after the event. In these regular annual capital gatherings, all spiritual qualifications are conveniently overlooked for the sake the event’s success.

Note the following passages in regards to the seriousness of the sin of partiality:

A. LEVITICUS 19:15

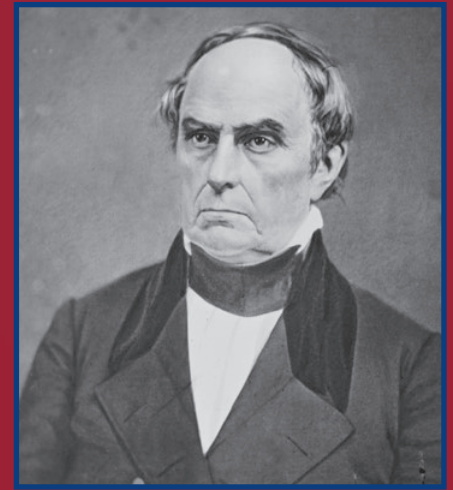
“You shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great.”

Leviticus was a book of instruction for the Levites, the Priests of the newly set-apart holy nation of Israel. Within the book of Leviticus is God’s specific instruction to the Levites as to how they were to lead the effective, God-honoring worship of the nation Israel. It is within this context that God sets forth the above authoritative instruction on partiality.

B. JOB 34:19

“Yet He is not partial to princes, nor regards the rich above the poor, For they all are the work of His hands.” (NKJV)

Daniel Webster



“The Bible is a book... which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man.”

— Daniel Webster, U.S. Senator; Secretary of State; “Defender of the Constitution.”

Daniel Webster, *Address Delivered at Bunker Hill, June 17, 1843, on the Completion of the Monument* (Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1843), p. 31; see also W. P. Strickland, *History of the American Bible Society from its Organization to the Present Time* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1849).



“For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
—1 Samuel 16:7

This section represents Elihu’s best wisdom as he tries to decipher Job’s mysterious plight. In so doing, Elihu fails in his prescriptive counsel, but nonetheless accurately reflects upon the character of God. God is not partial to position — be it a prince or a ruler. He favors not social stature. This is especially underscored by the following passage:

C. 1 SAMUEL 16:7

“For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

D. DEUTERONOMY 10:17

“For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality... He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.”

Throughout Scripture, we see the compassionate, impartial love that God has for all of His creation. Later, in verse 7 of Chapter 15 of Deuteronomy God says:

“You shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.” (NKJV)

God has always held special the poor.

V. GOD IS PARTIAL TOWARD THE HUMBLE

Our passage from James also reveals that while man is sinfully partial toward wealth, celebrity and prestige, God is not sinful in His favor toward the poor and humble. In 1Corinthians 1:26-29 this idea is easily ascertainable:

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the

weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are....

As much as we might think of the historical Paul as a strong, powerful leader of the first century Church, it is interesting to review his perception of himself as expressed in 1Corinthians 2:1-4:

And I brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech, or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God... I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom... but in the power of God. (NKJV)

Such a self-view is indicative of a man who will not have a racist, partial heart toward others of any other ilk.

VI. JESUS’ LESSON ON RACISM

Paul’s rejection of racism can only be attributed to God’s work in his heart when one considers the society into which he was born; as it has already been pointed out, the Jews were not known for loving their neighbors. The Samaritans were people in particular that the Jews hated with long-standing passion. Jews regarded them as an inferior mixed race and considered them less than human.

Jesus addresses this prejudice in Luke 10:29-37 when He is asked by a lawyer how he may gain eternal life. Jesus asks the lawyer what is written in the law.

And he Answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

In this passage Jesus tells the lawyer he is correct and says, “do this and you will live.” The lawyer further challenges Jesus asking, “And who is my neighbor?”



In this context herein, Jesus tells the lawyer the story of the Good Samaritan: A man was attacked, stripped, beaten, and left for dead by robbers on a treacherous road from Jerusalem to Jericho. A priest and a Levite, people who were highly regarded among the Jews, both walked across the road to avoid the dying man, who was a Jew, by the way. However, a passing Samaritan, considered by the Jews to be lower in societal hierarchy than tax collectors and outcasts, ran toward the man, not away from him. The Samaritan bandaged the man's wounds and took him to an inn where he paid the innkeeper to care for him.

Jesus asks the lawyer who was the good neighbor. The lawyer replies, "*the one who showed mercy.*" "*Go and do the same,*" Jesus tells him.

In telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus accomplished many things. Jesus broadened the concept of neighbor for the Jews, He challenged the lawyer's personal prejudice, and He illustrated the need for a Savior because relying on his own merits, the lawyer could never live according to God's law.

The importance of the love-your-neighbor concept — a neighbor being someone who is perhaps not of your particular race — is further defined and understood in and by Matthew 22:36-46 when Jesus is asked what is the greatest commandment of all.

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." All that to say:

WE SHOULD STRIVE TO LOVE PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES TO THE SAME DEGREE WE LOVE OURSELVES.

The OT Jews refused to associate with the

Samaritans: people they deemed to be of an inferior race. Jesus herein rebukes such inner attitudes. Are there any people with whom you refuse to associate today?

VII. RACISM: ITS NEGATIVE RESULTS

When believers act out in ways racist or partial, the following deleterious results occur relative to the overall witness of the body of Christ:

A. PARTIALITY POLITICIZES THE BELIEVER

Partiality sucks away the very lifeblood of spirituality. No longer is spirituality the most important consideration: status is. But remember this: who you are in American life is far less important than who you are in Christ.

B. PARTIALITY POLLUTES THE BELIEVER

It is much better to be a spiritually hungry believer than a "who's who" believer. Too many Churches have become ineffective "Christian" country clubs. Lost in their partiality is their mandate for missions, and their fervor to win souls for Christ! Christianity becomes a comfort zone where I only hang out with my friends of a similar social-economic status — and such is of far greater importance to me than the possible discomfort of cross cultural missions.

C. PARTIALITY PRE-EMPTS THE BELIEVER

James 4:6 states that "**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**" As said previously, partiality stems from attitudes of superiority and superiority is based in pride. Don't miss the severity of this passage: it indicates that God is actually working against those who have hearts of superiority. He only works through those who are dead to self and alive in Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20).

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.



May God grant you and me a heartfelt love for others!

continued from page 3

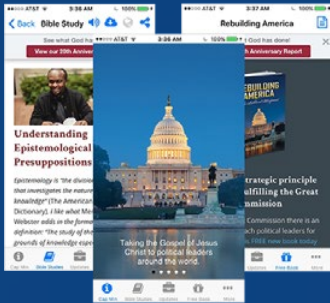
The weekly Members Bible study is protected time on Rep. Scott's calendar.

"It is extremely important to me. The Bible studies provide in-depth looks at God's instructions on so many of the things we are dealing with."

"They also provide opportunities to sit down with other people who are very strong in their faith and discuss the pressures of the job, the challenges to our families and the future of our country and recognize that not only are you not in this alone because you've got God who is looking out for you, but you are not in this alone because you've got other children of His who are right there with you. It gives me the opportunity to speak and pray with people of faith who have the same challenges as I do." **cm**



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VIII. SUMMARY

May God grant us an increased discernment relative to the devastating socially dividing, mission-stopping sin of partiality! The nation Israel totally corrupted her purpose for existence via self-exaltation and Gentile condescension. Partiality totally corrupted her! Proverbs 24:23 states, It is not good to show partiality in judgment. (NKJV) Here are three takeaway applications:

A. First, the remedy for racism starts with me and a biblically-based theology relative to the sin of partiality. As a believer do I have this aforementioned understanding and theology in my heart? Do I view other races as equal to mine? There is no worse witness than someone who names the name of Christ, but yet is demeaning to any race of people. Such reeks with hypocrisy when you understand the aforementioned theology.

B. Secondly, the remedy for racism has more to do with evangelism than public policy. Racism is a form of partiality that stems from man's fallen nature. It is only through the power of the cross that the inner nature of a person can be changed from the inside out. Certainly laws pertaining to discrimination have their place and are necessary, but they will never eradicate the problem from society — so don't think the answer is in more legislation. It is not. The wise public servant will therefore always work toward religious freedom and incentivization of the Church — so that it can best facilitate evangelism and change hearts.

C. Thirdly, we cannot expect the secular humanists, those who are steeped in an ideology of evolution, to get this right, or to model anything different than what their evolutionary theory has taught them. Conversely, it is incumbent on believers to model cross-cultural acceptance and impartiality. For instance, I work hard at incorporating other ethnicities into Capitol Ministries versus having an all-white ministry. Partiality and racism have not been a major temptation or stumbling block for me because I grew up playing basketball and lived and competed with many great African American guys who are still friends. Putting off partiality and racism might not come as easy for you if you grew up not being exposed to people of different races. I understand that, but nonetheless it is a matter of obedience to God to be impartial. So then, what are you doing that is deliberately cross-cultural?

May God grant you and me great wisdom in this area — and a heartfelt love for others of different races. Amen. cm

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