



Spirit of Grace Herald

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“Systemic Racism”

One of the charges by some black leaders following the murder of George Floyd is that America is saturated with “systemic racism.” Systemic racism refers to a sort of built-in, pre-packaged racism that infests every area of society and has its icy cold, oppressive fingers in every aspect of the American experience.

This was once true. From the days of slavery through the mid 1960’s blacks were held back in all kinds of ways due to racists laws, racist policies, and racist white people. But thanks to the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, a host of lesser civil rights warriors, and the gracious providence of God, laws were both enacted and enforced which demanded that blacks receive exactly the same privileges and opportunities as whites.

These laws put an end to racism by policy and decree, racism sanctioned by the government. Black children began attending schools that had formerly been all white. Restaurants and other businesses started hiring blacks. Gone were the voter’s “fees” and “literacy tests” which had been created to suppress black voters.

It would be stupid to suggest that this ended all racism in America. Of course it did not. People who were racists before Lyndon Johnson were usually still racists after Johnson. But gradually more and more of American accepted these new policies, and began, not only to obey them, but to actually recognize

that they were reasonable and good.

There were two problems left over after the Civil Rights Movement brought legal equality for all races. First, although the blacks could no longer be openly denied the privileges that whites had, they still were far poorer than whites. Apart from black athletes and singers, most black families made a fraction of the money that whites did. Huge numbers of blacks lived in poor neighborhoods where gangs roamed, prostitutes paced, and bullets flew. And second, America still had its fare share of racists. Racial slurs and racist incidents still took place. Black leaders saw these things as evidence that America was still racist to the core, and that “systemic racism” was alive and well.

No thinking man or woman can deny that racism still exists in America. But is America still steeped in racism in every city, every town, and every village from California to New York, from Michigan to Texas? Nobody but a racist himself could ever believe this.



Safe to Be Black?

When George Floyd was killed, people were suggesting that it was hardly safe for blacks to walk on the road or drive their cars down the streets. Surely policemen were killing unarmed blacks every single day. But any objective look at the statistics will reveal what a total fabrication this is. Last year there were not thousands of unarmed blacks killed by police in America, there were not hundreds, nor were there dozens. There were eight or nine, depending on whom you read. What this means is

that if an unarmed black man or woman goes out for a walk or for a drive in their car, they are around five times more likely to be struck by lightning than to be killed by a policeman. While even one incident per year of a wrongful killing by a policeman is a tragedy, and should be thoroughly investigated and the policeman brought to justice, it is a huge stretch to convert nine killings in a year into a charge of systemic racism rampant throughout our entire nation.

The problem of the inordinate number of blacks who live in poverty and in poor, gang-infested neighborhoods is real. Some have interpreted this to be the result of racism. But there is little evidence of this. What is far more likely the cause is the startling statistic that over seventy percent of black babies are born out of wedlock. Former president Barak Obama stated: that children who grow up without fathers are five times more likely to be poor and twenty times more likely to end up in prison.

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Of course, many white children experience father-less homes as well, but for the whites it is the exception but for blacks this is the rule. Black males need to follow Beyonce’s admonition to “put a ring on it.”

There is very little agreement between the political left and the right. They disagree on almost every issue. But the one issue on which they both agree is racism. Both conservatives and liberals, evangelicals and atheists, and Republicans and Democrats recognize and declare that racism is evil and despicable. Anyone who can suggest that the racial situation is as bad as ever in the U. S. is living in some kind of fantasy world. For every wrongful police killing of a black man, there are millions of black men and women who every day get up in the morning, eat a nice breakfast, go to work, come home at night, eat dinner and spend time with their families, and repeat the cycle the next day with no police interactions at all, day after day and year after year.

The two remaining problems, “leftover” white racism and the disintegration of black families, both have the same answer and that answer is Jesus Christ. No man or woman can be full of Christ and full of racism simultaneously. Where Jesus enters, racism exits. Similarly, the black males who refuse to marry the women they impregnate, and will not father the children they produce need more than a good lecture to be more responsible. They need Jesus!

After the Civil War, the chains of slavery were removed from the African Americans. After the Civil Rights Movement, the chains of racist laws and policies were brought down. And today the chains of unequal opportunities are collapsing. But what we must all recognize, black and white, is that the greatest, strongest and the worst chains of all are the chains of sin that tie the hands and hearts of all Americans, black and white. And these are chains that no government can break, no laws can fix, no protests can address. The Bible tells us that we are all, black, white, Asian, and Hispanic, under the chains of sin, which hold us back at every turn, spew ugly racist thoughts into our minds, demand sex but refuse marriage, spoil our relationships, limit our potential for usefulness, and ensure that we must go to a dark place of torment after we die. The only remedy for these chains is Jesus, the One who tells us, “If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” And again He declares: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever” (John 6:51). And this “Bread” is freely available to all races and all people.

MINISTERING IN A COVID-19 WORLD

We are in the business of ministry, but because of COVID our normal ways and means of ministry are no longer available. The solution is that we are determined to do ministry any way we can. For now this means producing lots of ministry videos. Benedicta and I have done a number of Bible Studies and posted them on YouTube. I am producing “video-devos” almost every week, which are condensed Bible lessons, running around 6-7 minutes, and also posting them on YouTube. And as always I am writing more and more devotional, teaching articles, and we are nearing the 500 mark on these articles/recordings.

Another area of ministry we are exploring is to extend our outreach to Africa by “proxy.” Over the years we have made many ministerial contacts, especially in the nations of Kenya and Nigeria. Many in these nations are suffering terribly as a result of being unable to work. Pastors are also suffering, since so many of them depend on the donations of their members, and when church services are no longer allowed, or are only allowed with tiny groups of people, they cannot receive offerings as before. We cannot possibly minister to all the needs in Africa, but we want to do our part to help bring relief to some, both in sponsoring free medical clinics, supporting pastors of small churches who barely have enough money to feed their families, and looking for other ways to bring relief to the poor people most severely hurt as a result of government-enforced shut-downs. Your gifts to Spirit of Grace Ministries will help us to put into motion a ministry of kindness and compassion to hurting Africans. Thanks for caring!

