

Psalm 43*Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)*

Judge me, O Lord, to Thee I fly,
 New foes and fears my spirit try;
 Plead Thou my cause, my soul sustain,
 And let the wicked rage in vain.

The mourner's refuge, Lord, Thou art;
 Wilt Thou not take Thy suppliant's part?
 Wilt Thou desert, and lay me low,
 The scorn of each insulting foe?

Send forth Thy light and truth once more,
 To Thy blest house my steps restore:
 Again Thy presence let me see,
 And find my joy in praising Thee.

Arise, my soul, and praise Him now;
 The Lord is good, be faithful thou:
 His nature changes not like thine;
 Believe, and soon His face will shine.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Am I My Brother's Keeper? A Dialogue about Race and the Church: Part 5***Jon Pratt and Emmanuel Malone***What are tangible ways we can respond to racist attitudes in our churches? How can we promote healthy relations between people of different ethnicities in our churches?**

JP: Believers' responses to racist attitudes in local churches should be the same as they would be in regard to any sinful action or perception. We are called to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15), to admonish and warn (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; Heb 3:13), and to instruct others (Col 3:16). So whether the sin relates to corrupt speech or racist attitudes or disrespectful behavior or any other type of transgression, believers have an obligation to speak up, to point out the problem, and to offer help so that the person can repent and turn from his destructive path. We show a lack of love toward one another when we fail to point out the sin of racism (or any other sin, for that matter) and can even help to "save" them (to use Jude's words in v. 23).

While we do have a responsibility to address racist sins when we see them so that such behavior is thwarted, we must also model generous and loving hospitality and kindness toward those who are of a different ethnicity than our own. This welcoming attitude should begin with the leaders in the church and filter down to every member. There should be an integration of every member into the church's ministry, regardless of their ethnicity, so that responsibilities and places of service are based on the gifts given by the Spirit for the "common good" (1 Cor 12:7).

EM: I suggest a proactive approach. A church needs to know the hearts of God's people with every issue that plagues where we live. A way for assessing heartfelt attitudes and the basis for those attitudes, including perplexing thoughts that trouble members, is small group studies and discussion. Well-planned discussion can produce great and sometimes challenging conversations. Sharing one another's life stories is another way of learning about one another. A follow-up question might be "What were the lessons from home that remain part of your life?" Or "How has your experience with otherness influenced your thinking?" There are about six hours in a week a church



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might gather for study, worship, and prayer, yet we leave the house of God with no more than superficial knowledge of one another or what we think.

The home must be the first place where discussions and teaching start. The church can assist families with resources and topics. Youth ministries share the gospel, make disciples, teach, and preach against drugs, questionable music, pornography, premarital sex, and other sins. Why not include love for the brethren, even our enemies, with particulars pertaining to race and the controversies of the day? Young people are aware of what is happening in our world. Millennials especially want discussions. The home and church must help them process what they hear and see. Solomon taught Rehoboam what to expect in the nation at large. The first lesson was about guarding himself from the gang mentality (Prov1:5-19). The lessons are not a one-time curriculum but reoccurring, perhaps annually, as a reminder of what kind of Christians they must be or must become.

A third helpful way is introducing the church to Christians of color who were stalwarts of the faith. There are former slaves who were pastors and some even preached to all white congregations! There are missionaries. One notable former slave, Rev. George Liele (1782), left for Jamaica eleven years before William Carey's missionary enterprise to India (1793) and thirty years before Adoniram Judson left for Burma (1812).

I believe the tension between Black and White will always be a challenge in our country. As political capital, racial discrepancies will not be allowed to go away, and unfortunately those of African descent will remain the pawns. Therefore, since racial disharmony is a given, some racist attitudes will enter the church, and we cannot let it have place. The church can promote racial harmony by de-emphasizing racial classification and promote the one man found in Christ, who is our peace and who has made both Black and White one (Eph 2:14-18).

Should Christians support Black Lives Matter?

JP: While the slogan "Black Lives Matter" is certainly a true sentiment, just as "blue lives matter" and "all lives matter" are likewise factual, Christians should be wary of using the phrase. Here's why. The *official* Black Lives Matter movement is built upon a Marxist foundation and strongly supports the LGBTQ agenda—a quick perusal of their website will confirm this. By "Marxist" I am not referring to the economic version which is most familiar to us, but rather I am speaking of social Marxism. Douglas Murray (*The Madness of Crowds*, 52) describes this well: "Just as Marxism was meant to free the labourer and share the wealth around, so in this new version of an old claim, the power of the patriarchal white males must be taken away and shared around more fairly with the relevant minority groups." Thus, in this way of thinking it is no longer wealth that should be redistributed but rather social and cultural power. All of the atheistic foundations of Marxism remain in this newer version of social change advocated by Black Lives

Matter, and for this reason Christians should have no part in using the BLM hashtag, displaying yard signs, or carrying placards that support the movement. At the same time we should be aware that many protesters, hashtag users, and yard sign people are probably unaware of all the anti-biblical foundations of Black Lives Matter; they merely like the slogan and blindly support it. Thus, education is needed, especially among Christians in our churches.

EM: My simplest response: "No!" I say this for two reasons. First, BLM's statement of beliefs includes positions contrary to truth. They oppose the institution of marriage ordained by God and gender identity, male and female, created by God. In their own wording, they seek to "disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and 'villages.'" They want to "foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise)" (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>).

The second reason I say no Christian can support BLM is because it is a dangerous organization, Marxist-leftist in ideology. Large sums of money are flowing into it, and the intent of that giving through the organization supports the deconstructing of American society. John Hayward, writing for Breitbart, references *Fortune* (2016) which looked into BLM's funding and "noticed its agenda and funding streams could 'help dispel the myth that the movement itself is set on violence,' but could also 'confirm the worst fears' of skeptics who saw BLM becoming another part of the vast and protean left-wing money machine" (<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/06/11/the-complex-funding-and-ideology-of-black-lives-matter/>).



This essay is by Jon Pratt, Vice President of Academics and Professor of New Testament at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
