

“PCA Reconciliation, Pt. 2 - What Are We Supposed to Do?”
The Bible and Culture - NLPC Summer 2018

- Where do we go from here?
 - These discussions in the PCA, formal and informal, are not going away...
- For some, the point in all of this is “truth telling”...
 - To some of our minority members (and others), it’s important that the PCA tell the truth about presbyterian history.
 - It’s important that we acknowledge publicly and privately that racial sins existed in presbyterians past...
 - It’s important we do the same for racist experiences they still encounter today.
- Yet some in PCA appear to be taking “truth telling” too far...
 - For some in our denomination, only minorities get to define what the “truth” is that needs to be told. — “Don’t give me facts...”
 - Concerning facts, sometimes “truth telling” only includes one set of facts...
 - ▶ One truth we’re supposed to tell is that blacks are more subject to police brutality.
 - ▶ But reliable statistics tell a different story...
 - Some in the PCA are asking for our “truth telling” to include an acknowledgement of one’s “white privilege”, if appropriate.
 - ▶ White privilege is the notion that whites in Western culture are advantaged in countless ways over others.
 - ▶ This is also a very popular idea in secular culture as well.
 - ▶ We should also question the assumptions of white privilege thinking.
 - ❖ People talk as if advantages come to a person randomly, willy-nilly...
 - ❖ This is one reason someone with white privilege should feel a bit guilty about it (at least!) because it could’ve been anyone’s.
 - ❖ But according to the Christian faith, nothing is random...

- Any advantage or disadvantage comes to a person directly from God.
- Any good that a person has is a personal gift from God.
 - ★ Unearned? Yes.
 - ★ But no less given to them.
- ❖ In a Christian universe, we call that *blessing*.
- ▶ Christians, white or black, should react properly to whatever blessings God has given, even those they were born into.
 - ❖ A proper response includes not shame but gratitude.
 - ❖ A proper response to blessing includes a willingness to share as the Spirit leads.

1 Timothy 6:17–18 - ¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

 - ❖ A proper response to blessing does not include allowing someone to manipulate or shame you into parting with your blessings.
 - ❖ It also does not include the conclusion that you can't participate in racial discussions just because God has blessed you.
- There are voices in the PCA who tell us our “truth telling” must include the reality of systemic racism, particularly that against blacks.
 - ▶ What's usually required is simply copping to the reality, and then being proactive in fixing it:
 - ❖ Dismantling parts of our church culture and structure that might limit black advancement.
 - ❖ Being “intentional” in the hiring of black church staff members, in the filling of denominational agencies.
 - ❖ Actions are like this are said to correct past systemic injustices - despite their actual success or results.

- ▶ Again, let's consider the intellectual foundations of culturally popular ideas like systemic racism or systemic oppression:
 - ❖ Undergirding such notions is a Marxist view of the world and history.
 - ❖ According to such views, history is nothing more than a cycle of oppressors oppressing others.
 - ❖ If someone has more than another it's always because of personal or systemic oppression.
 - The haves (of money, power, influence, etc.) are always guilty.
 - The have-nots are always innocent.
 - In our culture its often majority whites who are guilty of oppression and minorities who are their victims.
 - ❖ Let's examine the idea Biblically.
 - Does a universe where all success and advancement is the result of someone else being oppressed sound Biblical to you?
 - Is that the kind of teaching one finds in the book of Proverbs?
 - Do peoples' lives end up less blessed *only* because someone else oppressed them?

- Where to we go from here?

- Tell the truth where truth needs to be told, yes.
- But the whole truth needs to be gently told as well.
- The real truth of white privilege and systemic oppression cannot be off the table of discussion.