

## God is my Judge

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Is Religion a hindrance or help when it comes to racial equality?

It cannot be in doubt that Religion, especially that of the Judeo-Christian culture, has formed much of the foundation of the western mind, as strongly argued for by Tom Holland. And so, some argue that such a perception gives credence to the concept that the racial inequality which spread like gangrene must also lay in contingency to such a Judeo-Christian Ethic. But this is a fallacy.

Ideologically speaking the Judeo-Christian Ethic, and that is really what is in question here, as Islam is much more modern to the scene of the western world, has an ethic of complete impartiality of value. Adam as Genesis says is created in the 'Imago Deo', and for the person wishing to dispute that was merely Adam, need only to realise that the word Adam is ultimately just the Hebrew word Man. As Colossians 3:11 says "Christ is all, and is in all". Therefore, the idea of distinctions in race is an idea foreign to the Christian ethic, in which there exists no impartiality of value.

Surprising as it may seem, I think rather than Religion as a hinderance it is the cure, let me offer three reasons why I believe this to be the case.

1) Sociologically speaking religion unifies people, this is the argument of Emhile Durkheim, that Religion embodies and creates a Collective Conscience. If this is the case then Religion can play a great role at least culturally speaking in promotion of racial equality. Now it may be argued however that Society can do this aside from Religion, but this seems to me a rash thought, as what is the collective conscience of the unbelieving society?

2) Philosophically speaking religion provides an ethical foundation of which to deny the injustices of racial inequality. Part of the difficulty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is that in its denial of Religion it has lost itself to ethical flux, and in so doing has made many a man uncertain of where he stands on such vital questions as racial equality. Religion does not offer the modern man such ethical flux, but rather establishes in concrete firm the truth of the injustice of racial inequality.

3) Theologically speaking I believe that whatever your view of religion, it provides as Burke would argue a cumulation of wisdom through its long passed down tradition. This is important as it means that Religion can be used as a guide for both believer and unbeliever, not in every detail, I hardly imagine the well-read atheist to read such a remark and start worshipping YHWH, but rather that it provides principles that can be recognised, one of which is the impartiality of value.

For these three reasons I think it can be in little doubt that far from religion posing a threat to racial equality, it opens many doors for such a promotion of the proposition. And though objections will come no doubt talking of the slave trade and some history of tensions within Religion in terms of racial inequality I will stand unfazed. What many a modern man misapprehends is that Religion is not defined by its constituents, but rather by its source. And the source of the religion in question unarguably supports the position of racial equality.

Now while I have the chance, I shall seek to demolish probably the most common and absurd argument pompously postulated by the opposition. That the foundation of the Judeo-Christian ethic is just one of segregation and slavery something hand in hand with the idea of racial inequality. Though it is true that in such things as the Levitical Laws as found in the Torah

servitude is promoted, slavery is not the right term here. Christopher J. Wright in his tome “Old Testament Ethics for the people of God” takes this argument to task much better than I will have time for here. But in short, the Hebrew term there “Ebed” does not mean slavery in the sense you would think, but rather the giving of oneself to another for work, usually to pay back a debt. And so I don’t think the argument can rightly be made that the source of such worldviews is one that promotes such segregation as compatible with racial injustice.

To bring the case together therefore I think it can be soundly argued that Religion within the context of the Western World has at its foundation a rejection of racial inequality. Also, I believe I have put forward three strong reasons, which when taken together make a solid case for Religion as the cure rather than the hinderance to racial equality. And finally, there has been a discussion of a common objection to my position, and response. It can be fairly concluded thus that Religion is no hindrance to racial equality.