

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

1 - The following textbook excerpt was part of the Scopes Trial of 1925. How much of an impact did the teaching of this ideology have on the minds of young people across the country in terms of racial bias?

***"The Races of Man.** At the present time there exist upon the earth five races or varieties of man, each very different from the other in instincts, social customs, and, to an extent, in structure. These are the Ethiopian or negro type, originating in Africa; the Malay or brown race, from the islands of the Pacific; the American Indian; the Mongolian or yellow race, including the natives of China, Japan, and the Eskimos; and finally, the highest type of all, the Caucasians, represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America.* Hunter, George William" A Civic Biology: Presented in Problems

### 1 - We have to admit that this is A Very Real Problem

A - Being aware of racial issues is no the same as admitting to being a racist. Dietrich Bonhoeffer made this statement during WWII: "Not to act is to act, not to speak is to speak." As believers we cannot simply remain silent in the face of evil. How can you as an individual help combat this issue? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 2 - We have to understand that our words have power

A - I Am Not A White Christian:

1 - How does the use of language effect who we are, and how we view the world around us? \_\_\_\_\_

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2 - How can I alter my use of language in a manner that supports healthy racial relations within my own sphere of influence? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 3 - We need to Follow A Better Path

A - **Galatians 2:12-16** <sup>12</sup> When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. <sup>13</sup> As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?" <sup>15</sup> "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. <sup>16</sup> Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law." (NLT)

**B - Step One: It starts with you**

**Galatians 3:26-29** <sup>26</sup> For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. <sup>28</sup> There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you. (NLT)

1 - As silly as it may sound, ask yourself if you truly believe the scripture above.

2 - How does that believe show itself in your life and behavior? \_\_\_\_\_

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**C - Step Two: Confront it at home**

1 - When Paul saw Peter treating others badly, what did he do? He confronted it right then, why? \_\_\_\_\_

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2 - How important is it to deal with this issue in the lives of your family, and in the home? \_\_\_\_\_

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**E - Step Three: In the community / workplace**

1 - Here are a few things to consider:

- Who are you outside of the four walls of the church?
- Who are you in the community, who are you at work?
- Are you aware of the events happening around you?

2 - Does your life serve as an example of kindness, or do you default to the standards of those around you, do you follow or do you lead? \_\_\_\_\_

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