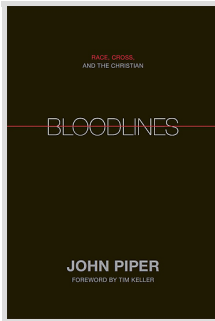


Faith and Heritage

Bloodlines: John Piper's Assault on the Hereditary Family, Part 1

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Introduction

John Piper, the pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has recently authored a new book on race, entitled *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*. The book does little to break new ground on the (allegedly) Christian stance against a traditional understanding of race, including all the banalities and [platitudes](#) expected in any other Christian anti-racist literature. Yet while these arguments are unoriginal, that can only press the need further for a racially conscious voice in opposition. Therefore, I aim to provide a systematic kinist critique of Piper's new *opus*.

Defining One's Terms

Piper includes a note to the reader on the terms "race" and "racism" before he embarks on the rest of the content of his book (p. 17). He makes the point that he is "a stickler for clear definitions," which is appreciated. Most people do not care to define "racism," but just assume their media- and public school-inculcated feelings are sufficiently clear to accuse others of sin. As we will see, however, Piper fails to do what every anti-racist in history has failed to do: provide a definition of racism, explain why it is sinful, and identify how many (or some) people are guilty of it. If any of those three criteria are not achieved, then the lamentations of institutional racism are vacuous.

Oddly enough, Piper says that he wishes the term "race" did not exist, since it has not enhanced human relations or been found in the Bible. This desire is particularly odd, because it appears to be concealing a more insidious desire that race itself not exist. To apprehend this, suppose that "stock" were the general term used to separate subspecies of humanity, rather than "race," and that "race" was used only in the context of athletic competitions. We could discuss the various stocks of the world, including the white stock and the black stock. Inevitably and infallibly, Piper's ilk would decry "stockism," and mourn over the terrible sins perpetrated by the white stock against the black stock. The same purported problems existing in our "racist" world would exist in a world with different terminology, and Piper would express his wish that the term "stock" did not exist due to its detrimental effect on human relations.

The problem is not in the terminology. Piper has a problem with the concept itself. He desires that man would not actually be categorized into different subspecies, since it is that categorization which he thinks has not enhanced human relations or been found in the Bible. What other conclusion can be drawn? His objection cannot simply be against the bare collection of letters comprising the word "race."

Of course, the fact that the Bible does not use the term "race" is no reason to reject it. Scripture likewise has no mention of "trinity," "incarnation," "original sin," or "gender," and yet we all recognize them as biblical categories since they are conceptually grounded therein. This is where the anti-racists object that the exact subdivisions of mankind into white, black, and other colors are not conceptually grounded in Scripture, but this objection is simply naïve. God's Word makes it clear that many subdivisions exist within the unified whole of Adamkind, including families, tribes, and [nations](#), and even implies at times that certain nations are grouped one to another in biologically meaningful ways (e.g. Deut. 23:7; Num. 20:14). Given this Scriptural premise, and given one's proper use of the eyes in surveying God's world, it is easy to see that the Bible supports the distinction of mankind along racial lines. Frankly, it should not be necessary for the Bible to justify a concept that is obvious from natural revelation, and so the argument is irrelevant; but this *non sequitur* from the anti-racists even has a false premise, since Scripture does support the taxonomic division of mankind.

At any rate, despite Piper's urge for race to disappear, he notes that he still wants to use the terms "race" and "racial" because they are currently embedded in our language. To try to discuss racial issues without using the word would only spawn confusion.

Curiously, Piper states that the pastoral staff at his church spent *months* in attempting to provide a viable definition of that blackest of sins, racism. The long time period is an indicator that anti-racism is utterly novel in church history, and it should have been an indicator to them that they were trying to nail down a [false sin](#). Nevertheless, they churned out a working definition—except that they didn't. At the end of his assuredly grueling process, Piper's pastoral staff decided to just take the Presbyterian Church in America's definition from 2004: "Racism is an explicit or implicit belief or practice that qualitatively distinguishes or values one race over other races" (p. 18).³ Their appropriation of another church's definition would be rather humorous—imagine working on a definition for months and then at the end of the process deciding to copy and paste someone else's—if the definition were not so woefully inadequate.

Piper does not even attempt to provide any possible objection for such a definition. For instance, what does it mean to "qualitatively distinguish" among different races? Does that mean to say that different races are genuinely different (that they are *diverse*), having different capacities, strengths, and weaknesses? Does it carry some grand metaphysical sense, meaning that different races possess some different hierarchical position on the scale of being? Furthermore, what does it mean for someone to (qualitatively?) value one race over another? Does it mean to prefer one race's company to another's? Does it mean to have a certain race's interests in mind first before considering another's? Does it also have some grand metaphysical notion of value? Just what does this all mean?

Unfortunately, as soon as Piper begins to select any of these possible interpretations, he stumbles into the same pitfalls as any definer of racism inevitably does. Of these alternatives, the most likely options are clearly not sinful; e.g. it would be just as absurd to call those who prefer their own race's company "racist" as it would be to call a family man a "familist." But if Piper rejects those options, then all he has left are the quirky metaphysical options, which are inapplicable to people generally accused of racism. When Piper ought to have laid a firm and stable foundation, he quoted someone else's work and abjectly failed.

Piper also distinguishes between "race" and "ethnicity," denoting the former "primarily in terms of physical features" and the latter in cultural terms (p. 18). Because ethnicity involves culture, he says that it therefore "includes beliefs and attitudes and behaviors," subjecting it to potential Christian critique, unlike race. This distinction is rather annoying, because it is almost guaranteed to be mere lip service when one knows that any criticism of non-whites will inescapably be deemed racist. Yet, there is an additional problem with it: it is uninformed and reductionistic. Though he may not intend it, Piper's distinction makes a rather large chasm between physical factors and cultural factors, which is unwarranted and contradicted by experience. A cursory view of the world reveals that different races tend to hold different beliefs and produce different types of cultures. This does not mean that there is some one-to-one correspondence between race and beliefs, nor does it mean that the physical factors of a man's genetic endowment directly and unilaterally lead to certain beliefs or behaviors; all it means is that the physical and the cultural are interrelated. As such, it follows that physically-related groups of people—races—can likewise fall under biblical critique. To say otherwise is to deny common sense.

The Divine Right of King

Any typical anti-racist piece will necessarily include gushing worship of Martin Luther King, Jr., and *Bloodlines* is no different. In order to orient his readers properly, Piper includes conventional praise for the Civil Rights leader before entering into the first chapter of his book. Unfortunately but entirely expectedly, Piper does not mention how King was supreme monarch only among [plagiarists](#) and [adulterers](#), but rather casts him as a paragon of Christian virtue. (It cannot be emphasized enough how deplorable it is that such a putrid and verminous man as King is one of the very few people, alongside the King of kings and Christopher Columbus, to receive a federal holiday in America.) In reality, when not bedding white women, King only was delivering fluffy rhetorical bombast, having very little substance to his speeches. He deserves nothing but the contempt which communist agitators ought to receive.

Part of the oppressive fist of white rule which King opposed was, obviously, segregation. Piper joins the burning reprobate in bemoaning separateness:

Separate schools, separate motels, separate restrooms, separate swimming pools, separate drinking fountains. How could you more clearly communicate the lie that being black was like a disease. [sic] (p. 23f.)

One of the ways to more clearly communicate that blackness is a disease would be by actually wronging them. Saying that certain places are for whites and others are for blacks is merely a statement of societal order, even though certain people may not like it. But certain people's discontentment with a policy, perhaps motivated by envy, perhaps motivated by a perceived arbitrariness in the law, ought in no way to be construed as righteous indignation. No one makes such a huff about [gender](#)-segregated bathrooms, yet the inference of diseased

populations is as valid there as in Southern segregation.

Indubitably, the anti-racist will respond that gender-segregated bathrooms are a different issue from racial segregation, since we have *good reason* to separate the sexes. But of course, this objection already presupposes that there are no good reasons to separate the races. While much could be written about the various benefits of segregation—for everyone, not just for the more powerful race—suffice it to say that segregation had much social utility in its implicit statement that whites and blacks are not to miscegenate. Parents need not worry about their children rejecting their racial ancestry if they hardly interact with other races in the first place.

All of this escapes Piper, because he has been trained to praise the Civil Rights movement at all costs. He goes so far as to compare *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Roe v. Wade*, stating that the former “tried to restore rights to an oppressed group” while the latter “took rights away from an oppressed group” (p. 24). We are aware, after all, that whites’ and blacks’—in schoolhouses paid for and built largely by whites—receiving education in separate locations is morally equivalent to mothers’ murdering their own unborn children. Sadly, today, most would express less ire at the latter. That Piper would be so slanderous and cruel towards slain children is dolorous.

Naturally, Piper also expresses praise for the communist Rosa Parks, whose notable achievement consisted of rebellion to established authority by refusing to give up her seat on a bus. No Christian should support Parks’s action here, even though, ironically, many statist Christians would bind their conscience to any other commandment by the state. Whatever arguments might be made for the pragmatic merit of racial segregation laws on public buses, it is clear that such laws do not contradict God’s Word, which itself acknowledges racial distinctions and acts upon them. Therefore, if segregation laws are not anti-biblical, then they are binding if made by a legitimate civil authority. To defiantly disobey such a clear command is principally anti-Christian. To praise and create statues for rebels is even more flagrantly so.

Conclusion

Before even entering into the first chapter of his book, Piper already shows his hand both by displaying an unthinking abuse of the terminology of “racism” and by adulating Martin Luther King and his fellow Christ-deniers. He admires King’s “historic Christian vision,” and he even takes seriously King’s and Ralph Abernathy’s showmanship in kneeling down in prayer while rebelling against the police (pp. 24, 25). He mourns the murder of James Byrd,² but fails to mention the deluge of black-on-white rapes that are destroying our women—over ten daily and 35,000 annually.³ This deliberately misrepresents current race relations in the U.S. and perpetuates Piper’s false narrative of the poor black victim suffering under the cruel white oppressor. Far from being original or breaking new ground, *Bloodlines* is the same anti-white material dressed up as “anti-racist” that we have seen hundreds of times before. *Bloodlines* is designed to psychologically and spiritually disarm whites and to make them view any organizing around their racial identity and interests as evil at a time when they and their entire civilization are under heavy, systematic attack. As such, John Piper and pastors like him should be viewed as the enemies of our people.

[Part 2 of the series](#)

[Part 3 of the series](#)

Footnotes

1. Taken from “Committee on Mission to North America, Pastoral Letter on Racism, Approved at the March 2004 MNA Committee Meeting as the Committee’s Recommendation to the Thirty-Second General Assembly.” <http://www.pca-mna.org/churchplanting/PDFs/RacismPaperFinal%20Version%2004-09-04.pdf>.
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Byrd,_Jr.
3. http://www.davidduke.com/general/heres-the-shocking-proof-37460-black-rapes-or-sexual-assaults-on-whites-0-white-sexual-attacks-on-blacks_3567.html

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About Nil Desperandum

Nil Desperandum is currently a college student in Ohio. His interests include theology, philosophy, and the application of biblical law to society.

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