

The Christian Case for Intra-Racial Marriage

"I want to be the white man's brother, not his brother-in-law"
Martin Luther King, Jr.

The question of the relevance of race to marriage, for those seeking the truth with no preordained conclusions, is observed to be a one-sided exercise in rhetorical prejudice.

The issue is usually addressed in a negative manner, such as "Does the Bible forbid interracial marriage?" The answer likewise is given in a negative manner, assuring the questioner that the only requirement of a believer is that their spouse be Christian, and that those, presumably parents, who oppose such a union must necessarily care only about racial heritage rather than the more important spiritual qualifications of potential mates for their children. With the "straw man" thus established, the answerer proceeds to invoke the politically correct shibboleths of our age, complete with the usual slippery slope logical fallacies leading inevitably to a passing reference to Hitler¹ and condemnations of racism².

But these answers, while helping pastors and teachers ingratiate themselves with the multicultural, globalist *zeitgeist* of the world, do little to answer the real question. While all honest Christians must acknowledge a minimum Biblical requirement for Christians to marry Christians, *in addition to*, not instead of that requirement, can the Bible or practical wisdom offer lessons on the question of interracial marriage?

I am convinced after careful study of the question that the weight of Scripture and empirical evidence favors a norm of *intra*-racial marriage, that is, marriage within the same race. Furthermore, the question of whether interracial marriage is forbidden carries with it the baggage of an extra-Biblical and decadent Western individualism. This extreme individualism, born of the atheistic influence of the Enlightenment and coming of age among the devils of the French Revolution,

¹ Among the early Internet enthusiasts of Usenet, the first online forums, it was observed that, given the combustible cyber-combination of anonymity and instant distribution, all arguments would inevitably degenerate into some sort of reference to Hitler or the Nazis. Eventually, such a reference became shorthand to indicate that a discussion had exceeded its productive shelf life, as both sides had produced whatever actual arguments might support their position and proceeded to the ultimate *ad hominum*.

² Racism is notoriously hard to define in contemporary America. Leftists decry anything short of absolute equality of outcome as racist, while conservatives point to examples like Jesse Jackson and Jeremiah Wright as those truly motivated by hate. There are, of course, many reasons other than hate why a parent may or may not approve of a particular mate for their child. We should not judge others' motives in their proper sphere of parental authority. The Apostle Paul's warnings against being busybodies and gossips seem particularly appropriate here.

vainly seeks to transcend the limits God has placed on us as creatures. In His Providence, He has created and ordained our lot not as merely spiritual abstractions but as members of a particular family, tribe, nation and race with concentric levels of responsibilities toward each.

Before proceeding, I wish to make a general disclaimer regarding the purpose of this document. There are a small but slowly growing number of individuals in the Church who have married interracially. This document is not addressed to those individuals or meant as a condemnation of their decisions. My audience, frankly, consists of my own children and my future grandchildren, Lord willing. I am not here to offend or condemn, but to pass along wisdom to my descendents and to others who may agree with my reasoning and profit from it. For any who are offended, I humbly ask for your forgiveness and forbearance as an imperfect brother in Christ³.

This subject is important because many families feel an instinctual preference that their children marry within their race. However, due to the politically correct pressures of our time, these preferences are either repressed or uttered in secret. This issue, like any other, must fly or fail in the face of Scripture. Silencing or censoring our feelings on this issue for the sake of political correctness gives the appearance that there is something wrong with such a preference, when in fact this may not be the case.

Finally, it is important to limit the scope of our discussion. Many Christians have had the displeasure of attempting to discuss some moral issue on a Biblical basis, perhaps in a political context, and someone takes issue by making fallacious arguments that such positions lead directly to a Religious Right theocracy and from thence to the Inquisition.

Let us reason together on this most controversial of subjects with humility and self-control. The question of preserving the historical norm of intra-racial marriage is not about denying any person their civil rights. It is not about denying the beautiful diversity that God has created among the human race (to the contrary, as we shall see, it is about preserving it), or denying that all men and women, of every race, are made in the image of God. It is not about unlawfully and unjustly segregating people on the basis of race. It is not about hating anyone or denying the fundamental multiracial nature of Christ's Church.

³ St. Paul again offers much wisdom. For those who believe Scripture supports interracial marriage, I believe the Biblical position regarding those who do not is one of tolerance, not condemnation. As the early brothers did regarding differing opinions on meat and drink, let us avoid being stumbling blocks for each other despite our honest disagreement on this issue.

This is simply my attempt as a father to come to terms with the realities of our multicultural society and set a course for my family to navigate this new era without losing our sense of identity, place and purpose.

The History of Race and Marriage

"It has become fashionable in recent times to talk of the leveling of nations, and of various peoples disappearing into the melting pot of contemporary civilization. I disagree with this, but that is another matter; all that should be said here is that the disappearance of whole nations would impoverish us no less than if all people were to become identical, with the same character and the same face. Nations are the wealth of humanity, its generalized personalities. The least among them has its own special colors, and harbors within itself a special aspect of God's design."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

In the Bible, we see a human grouping quite alien to the contemporary Western perspective, that of *tribe*. One way to define the tribe is that of a sufficiently distantly related group of individuals for whom intra-marriage would not result in the competitive disadvantages of incest. In the bare-bones scarcity of the ancient world, tribes were the smallest coherent group competing with other groups for land, dominance and resources.

From nearly the beginning of history, men have surely noticed that marriages of close relatives result in both moral and physical degeneracy. We now understand the problems with incest scientifically, but it is a testament to Biblical inerrancy that what must have seemed, to the unregenerate, arbitrary and capricious restrictions in the Law of Moses also coincide with empirically validated practices in our best interest.

We now know that many human deformities are prevented due to our having two copies of each of our chromosomes, one from our father and one from our mother. In most cases, deformities never occur because the body will mostly or totally ignore the "bad copy" on one chromosome and use the "good copy" instead. Incest results in too many of the same copies of chromosomes, which means a higher incidence of observed deformities, since the body has no "good copy" in the case of identical chromosomes. ⁴

Thus, the tribe is a practical grouping for marriage. Of course, it is not *merely* that, for as I will remind the reader in the coming pages, *God uses means*.⁵ The

⁴This also explains the higher incidence of birth defects among males (who have only one copy each of the X and Y chromosomes) and among relatively isolated populations like Ashkenazi Jews and the Acadians of Louisiana.

⁵ This phrase is simply shorthand for a particular theological understanding of Divine Providence, in that the normative work of God is done through observable, ordinary causes. We should not, of course, commit one of the errors of Deism and restrict God to merely ordinary causes, but when seeking to interpret Divine Intent, ordinary causes are not dismissed simply because they are ordinary.

tribe is God's ordained basic human grouping. The tribe's integrity is maintained even after the formation of the nation of Israel, as God, through the practice of the Jubilee, restored to each family its ancestral tribal land.

Similarly, the nation is a combination of tribes sharing a common lineage. The nation of Israel is formed of the seed of Jacob and the twelve tribes correspond to those descended from Jacob's respective children. The word nation itself literally means of common birth, sharing a Latin root with words like neo-natal (meaning newborn) or the Nativity.

As we look at Old Testament history, an important observation is that once Israel had conquered the Promised Land, God nowhere sanctions further expansion. Israel, of course, fought defensive wars to protect its territory, but God never ordained that Israel become an empire like her neighbors in the Middle East such as the Egyptians, Medes, Babylonians and Persians.

When Solomon attempted to build an empire, God judged him for, among other things, taking to himself foreign wives⁶, a common diplomatic practice among would-be empire builders.

A reasonable conclusion from both the Bible and secular history is that the nation is the upper limit of human organization ordained by God. All multinational empires eventually die, even mighty Greece and Rome.

Thus, God has organized men into three primary spheres of identity: family, tribe and nation. For 99.99% of people throughout human history, one's tribe and perhaps one's nation contained the total universe of potential spouses⁷. When we ponder the wisdom of the previously unprecedented possibility of mass interracial marriage, it is not appropriate to justify such a position as normative based on what may be a few Biblical exceptions to a widely established historical norm.

Even these purported exceptions, such as the "Ethiopian" wife of Moses, may not be as they seem. Let us examine a few Biblical case studies.

⁶ See Nehemiah 13:26.

⁷ This is almost a tautology. For example, in Mitchell's *Daily Life in Victorian England* it is reported that most people never traveled more than ten or twenty miles from home before the development of railways.

Purported Examples of Interracial Marriage in Scripture and Basis for Biblical Norm of Intra-Racial Marriage

The Biblical exceptions to the norm of intra-racial marriage are murky depths to plumb, as the Bible does not have as a primary objective the communication of racial information about its subjects. Many times people were referred to as a certain type based on a convenience of geography (the ancient world lacking last names as we use them, simply calling people by their first name and distinguishing based on place of origin, e.g. “Jesus of Nazareth”).

With a limited stock of first names, it is clear distinctions of geography might be made on very little pretense, even if someone had only spent a short time in the nominal place of origin. Add to this historical uncertainty about what ethnic groups occupied which geographical areas (often with errors of several centuries) and it becomes almost impossible to determine the racial composition of many individuals in the Bible.

To give a modern example, say we referred to an individual as “the Mississippian”. If future scholars don’t know precisely when what groups occupied the state of Mississippi, it is entirely unclear whether this person is a Native American, African American or American of European descent.

When someone is described as an “Ethiopian” or a “Hittite” we may in some cases know their geographic origins but little conclusively about their ethnic origins. Given the strict assimilatory regulations for foreigners under the Old Testament Law (requiring some groups to wait ten generations before full acceptance into the covenant community), it is likely more often than not these individuals were ethnic Jews or closely kindred groups for whom the geographic moniker was a title of convenience.

Though I am by no means a professional theologian, over the past few years a number of possibly inappropriate Biblical examples of purported interracial marriage have entered the Christian consciousness as common knowledge. This section will serve to look at these examples more closely for alternative explanations.

Moses’ “Ethiopian” Wife

The most popular example of purported interracial marriage in the Bible is based on Numbers 12, where a wife of Moses’ is referred to as an Ethiopian.

Christian and Jewish tradition both hold that Moses had only one wife, Zipporah. Her entry from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* is reproduced below:

Daughter of Jethro and wife of Moses. According to the Bible, Moses met the daughters of Jethro when they were being driven away from a well by shepherds; he assisted them, and was invited into the house of Jethro, who gave him Zipporah to be his wife (Ex. ii. 21). On his return to Egypt, Moses was accompanied by his wife, who saved him from great danger during their journey (ib. iv. 24-26). She appears to have returned with her children to her father's house; for after the exodus from Egypt, Jethro brought Zipporah and her children out to Moses in the wilderness (ib. xviii. 2-5). Zipporah is mentioned only once more in the Bible; namely, in Numbers xii. 1, where she is referred to as "the Ethiopian woman," for having married whom Moses is upbraided by Miriam and Aaron.

Exodus 2 explicitly states that Zipporah was a Midianite, not an Ethiopian. Midian was a descendant of Abraham (see Genesis 25). Now the Midianites lived near Ethiopia, but were racially distinct from the black Cushites, descendants of Ham. Several mainstream Christian sources confirm that Miriam and Aaron called her an Ethiopian as an ethnic slur against her Midianite origins⁸. For example, the 1599 Geneva Bible states:

Zipporah, Moses' wife, was a Midianite, and because Midian bordered on Ethiopia, it is sometimes referred to in the scriptures by that name.

Matthew Henry explains also in his commentary on Numbers 12:

Zipporah, who on this occasion they called, in scorn, an Ethiopian woman, and who, they insinuated, had too great an influence upon Moses in the choice of these seventy elders

The mainstream of Christian and Jewish thought confirms that Moses was the husband of one wife, Zipporah, who was of Semitic, Abrahamic descent; alternative explanations of Numbers 12, implying that Moses was a polygamist who married a sub-Saharan African, are suspect because they have only been promoted as a sophistic device by those already committed to a pre-ordained agenda of interracial marriage.

Ruth As a Moabite

A less-used example of purported interracial marriage is the marriage of Ruth, described as a Moabite, to Boaz. This is a very weak claim of interracial marriage. The Moabites were the descendants of Moab, a son of Lot (Genesis 19:37), and thus a kindred Semitic group to the Israelites.

⁸ This might be comparable to someone slurring an Italian-American as a "mafioso" or gangster because of the association of Italy with the mob. However, the mafia is actually a Sicilian cultural artifact, not Italian, but the close geographical association of Sicily to Italy makes the slur both offensive and inappropriate towards Italian-Americans.

In addition, Ruth may have herself actually been an Israelite. Biblical history shows that the Moabites were wiped out by the Amorites (Numbers 21:26-29) and the Amorites subsequently wiped out by the Israelites (Deuteronomy 2:23-43, Numbers 21:33-35), and the land occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manassah (Deuteronomy 3:12-16 and 29:8). Thus it is likely that Ruth's being known as a Moabite was a mere geographic term of convenience, much like Moses' being referred to as an "Egyptian" in Exodus 2:19. While much remains unexplained (for example, how Ruth was not religiously an Israelite until her marriage, though apostasy to foreign gods was not an uncommon state for racial Israelites in the Old Testament), it is clear Biblically that Ruth could not have been a racial Moabite, despite her residing in that territory.

Ezra and Nehemiah

Perhaps the strongest Old Testament example of interracial marriage is that of the Israelite congregation under Ezra and Nehemiah after their release from captivity in Babylon. Ezra and Nehemiah, speaking for God, commanded the men of Israel to "put away" their foreign wives and children.

Most contemporary Biblical commentators spiritualize this passage, emphasizing that the separation was of a religious, not racial or ethnic, nature. However, the verses make no exception for foreign wives or children who have converted. For the absolute separation described in Scripture ("Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from **all** foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers" Nehemiah 9:2) to be purely spiritual, we would have to believe that not a single foreign wife or child converted to the Israelite faith. In addition, surely some of the children would have been infants, incapable of belief, perhaps some of them circumcised; yet these too were ordered to be put away.

This spiritualizing interpretation also conflicts with Paul's elucidation of the Law in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, where he explicitly forbids divorce of unbelievers except in cases of abandonment. Since God's Law is the same at all times and places, how is it that a divorce of a non-believer is permitted in Nehemiah and cited as a righteous act of repentance but is then forbidden as a sin by Paul?

The only explanation that does not implicate a contradiction is that the "putting away" in Nehemiah was of a different kind with a different basis than the marriages referred to by Paul (all of which, in Corinth, were likely intra-racial intra-ethnic marriages among the Gentiles there).

We must be careful here theologically about proving too much. All I seek to show is that God has at times protected and cared for Israel on a racial and not exclusively religious basis. This can help show that racial concerns for our own children and people are not inherently sinful.

Ethnic Considerations in the Bible

Before proceeding to further discussion, let us look at one other Biblical episode: A strong positive example is that of Abraham's seeking a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:2-4):

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

This command of Abraham's occurred before the Law of Moses, and to the extent any sort of religious boundary existed (i.e. Abraham's faith, the covenant of circumcision), that boundary would have included Abraham's circumcised servants. But Abraham specifically commanded that Isaac have a wife of "my kindred", despite the fact that his own Canaanite servants would have been more religiously similar to Abraham than his own pagan kindred in Ur. Thus, we see Abraham making considerations of ethnicity and descent an important factor in selecting a mate for his son Isaac.

The theologian R. L. Dabney makes an important point in his essay *Anti-Biblical Theories of Rights*. He says that ethnic considerations cannot be inherently sinful (i.e. always sinful) because God Himself makes ethnic distinctions between people in applying His Law:

[Speaking of distinctions among non-Israelites in admission to the Old Testament Church] "The descendants of Amalek were forever inhibited. The descendants of Ammon and Moab were debarred to the tenth generation. The Egyptians and Edomites could be admitted at the third generation; the one, because their patriarch Esau was brother to Jacob, the other, because the Israelites had once lived in Egypt.

"Let the inference from these histories be clearly understood. It is not claimed that these caste distinctions established by God himself obligate us positively to establish similar distinctions in our day. But the fact that God once saw fit to establish them does prove that they cannot be essentially sinful. To assert that they are, impugns the righteousness of God. Whence it follows, in direct opposition to the Jacobin theory, that should suitable circumstances again arise such "caste distinctions" may

be righteous. It will be exclaimed that the New Testament reversed all this. We shall be reminded of Paul's famous declaration (Col. iii. 11): "Where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all"; or this (Gal. iii. 28): "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." But before a literal and mechanical equality can be inferred from these, it must be settled what the Holy Spirit meant by being "one in Christ," and whether the parts which are combined to construct a component unity are not always unequal instead of equal. The latter is certainly the apostle's teaching when he compares the spiritual body to the animal body, with many members of dissimilar honor. The apostle himself demonstrates that he never designed the leveling sense to be put upon his words by proceeding after he had uttered them to subject women in one sense to an inequality by imposing upon them ecclesiastical subordination, and even a different dress, in the church. The Scriptures thus teach that all distinctions of caste are not unjust in the sense charged by the current theory."

As Dabney points out, it would be an overstatement to say based on these Old Testament examples that the consideration of ethnicity in legal or marital contexts is always a positive good. However, we can with certainty say that ethnic considerations are not always bad.

If God, at certain times in Biblical history, either ordains or commands ethnic consideration, then it follows that such considerations cannot be universally evil. Such a conclusion invalidates at least some arguments of the sinfulness of such positions and removes the question to the realm of Christian liberty, conscience and practical wisdom.

Thus, our question: May a parent have the liberty to instruct children in the wisdom of making ethnic distinctions when choosing a mate?

Let us consider, then, not so much whether interracial marriage is legally permissible under God's Law, but whether it is wise to reverse the historical norm of intra-racial marriage given the information available, or at least whether enough credible, rational evidence exists to make parental guidance towards intra-racial marriage a question of liberty and wisdom for families rather than universally condemned as a vestige of "hate" or "racism".

Defaulting to a Conservative Position

Short of choosing to follow Christ⁹, we make no more important decision than that of whom we will marry. If we are conservatives, then we should approach any radical restructuring of the mate selection process very cautiously.

⁹ As a Calvinist, I believe God chose me, so this phrase is somewhat self-contradictory, though it may seem like a choice from a human perspective.

If the essential tenet of liberalism is the perfectibility of man, then the corollary for conservatives is the Depravity of Man. Because of man's wickedness, his natural state is one of death and destruction. Thus, any good in this world is not only the gift of God¹⁰ but also against the very grain of human nature and society.

At the peak of Christian influence, God's Providence had provided those of us in the Western world and especially in America with a remarkable wealth of things that were truly good, like functioning families, plentiful food, and individual rights against the state¹¹. Things were not perfect, but our civilization had reached a height previously unachieved in post-Fall history.

Because of our forebears, we still enjoy material prosperity and a decent remnant of individual rights, though we are surely spendthrifts drawing quickly on our ancestors' accumulated moral capital. Nevertheless, the good we enjoy is not the norm in our world today nor is it the norm historically.

Conservatism simply acknowledges that change must move slowly, as the natural estate of man is death and decay, and the good must be preserved as something rather fragile. It is not a blind rejection of all change, but instead represents a shifting of the *burden* of proof against change for change's sake¹².

From a historical, conservative Christian perspective, the prospect of even international marriages, much less interracial marriage, is radical. We must, absent substantial proof to the contrary, endorse the Biblical and historical norm of people marrying within their own nation¹³, especially when we consider the circumstances under which this norm came to be challenged.

Unfortunately, the ascent of humanism and its unifying myth of the Brotherhood of Man occurred so quickly on a historical scale that we went in one generation from a society in which interracial marriage was unthinkable¹⁴ to a society where

¹⁰ Many theologians refer to this as common grace, like the rain that falls on both the "just and unjust".

¹¹ The great English common law is simply an informal "natural law" system based on the Ten Commandments.

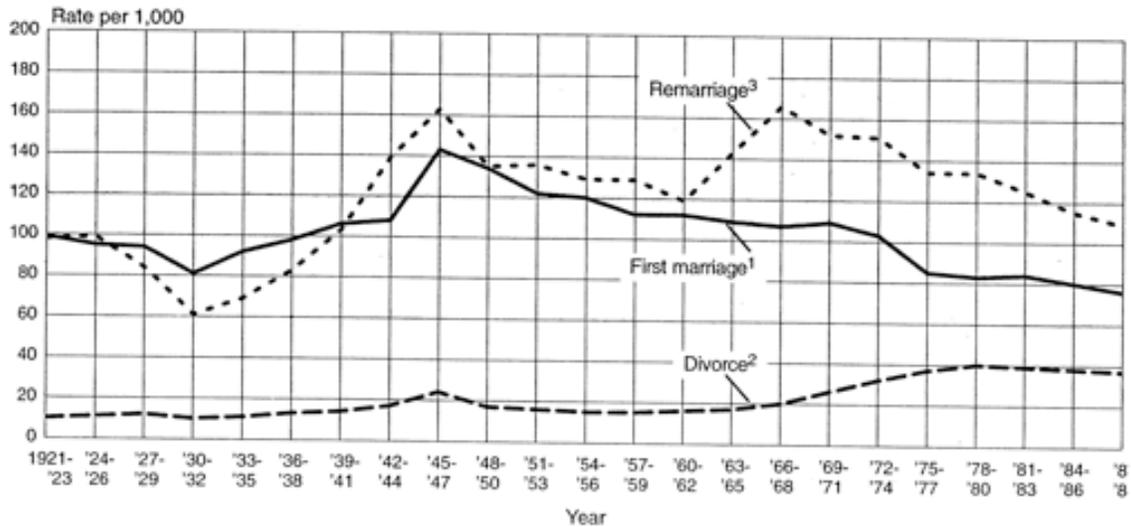
¹² Fallen man is always chasing after some vain, new thing, whereas Scripture declares "there is nothing new under the sun."

¹³ As covered earlier, the word "nation" in a Biblical sense does not mean those sharing a common government (as many moderns use the word), but rather a group of people of more-or-less common ancestry sharing a common culture and religion. In this sense, my nation is not the United States but rather my fellow Anglo-Celtic Christians and other kindred peoples permanently assimilated into this group.

¹⁴ Many segregationists held up interracial marriage as an example of the horrors that must necessarily follow integration (a horror shared by most of the public at the time), while their enemies vehemently denied such an outcome in public and secretly wished it in private. It turns out that intra-racial marriage norms were more robust than the segregationists feared, as interracial marriage rates among African Americans and Americans of European descent remain below 0.5% as of the 2000 census.

it is positively endorsed by almost unanimous public consensus¹⁵. Let us examine the track record of humanism in its effect on American marriages. The following graphic from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the divorce rate in the United States increased by 400% between 1921-3 and 1981-3¹⁶:

Figure 1. Rates of First Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: 1921 to 1989 (3-Year Averages)



Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

¹First marriages per 1,000 single women, 15 to 44 years old.

²Divorces per 1,000 married women, 15 to 44 years old.

³Remarriages per 1,000 widowed and divorced women, 15 to 54 years old.

Obviously it would be ridiculous to suggest that interracial marriages, being such a small portion of the overall population, caused the increase in divorce rates. However, if we can establish that humanist attitudes are at the root of both phenomena, then we can reasonably reject the other as insufficiently proven against the conservative position of preserving the good against capricious and radical change. Notice in particular the acceleration in the divorce rate starting at right about 1965, the year in which humanist attitudes of equality reached enormous consensus in the passage of federal laws forbidding liberty of conscience and association in hiring and housing.

The transition from a rural, Christian society where interracial marriage was literally impossible for most people to one where its endorsement is publicly

¹⁵ A 2007 Gallup poll revealed that 77% of Americans told a stranger taking a telephone survey that they approved of interracial marriage. The gap between expressions of approval of interracial marriage and its practice are a testament to the power of the modern spirit to enforce confession of its creeds.

¹⁶ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Document P23-180, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the 1990's*

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/marr-div/p23-180.html>

coerced occurred so quickly that no actual debate over the practice ever took place. It went from an example of abomination to affirmation in less than one generation.

This is why reviewing literature of the past on interracial marriage can seem disconcerting and unpalatable to the modern sensibility. In an era of universal agreement that such a practice was undesirable, intelligent writers often made broad sweeping statements that can seem offensive or insensitive in a context where interracial marriage is tolerated and encouraged. Unfortunately, the rapid transition afforded its opponents little opportunity to craft arguments to defend the wisdom of the past.

It is thus left to us to feel our way into the future, dealing with the prejudice of both the past and present to chart a wise and fruitful course.

Given the importance of marriage and its qualitative decline over the same period, we must be extremely cautious in any accepting any marriage practice endorsed by the same modern spirit that has yielded so much rotten fruit in our families, churches and nation.

Divorce and Interracial Marriage

The data available indicate that interracial marriages present an increased risk of divorce.

The most definitive data comes from a 2002 report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This report¹⁷ revealed that the ten-year probability of divorce in a first marriage for individuals of the same race is 31%, while the risk for those of different races is 41%. Thus, interracial marriage introduces a 32% increased risk of divorce.

The following table presents the risk of divorce based on various risk factors defined by the study:

Risk Factor	10-Year Divorce Rate	Divorce Rate Absent This Risk Factor	% Increased Risk
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¹⁷ *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 23, Number 22: "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the United States". http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_022.pdf

Interracial Marriage	41%	31%	32.3%
Cohabitation Before Marriage	40%	31%	29.0%
History of Anxiety Disorder	42%	31%	35.5%
Low Religiosity ¹⁸	35%	31%	12.9%
High School Dropout	42%	36%	16.7%

Parents advising children contemplating marriage have always played an important role in ensuring that objective measures of marriage success (employment, religious background, etc.) are considered by cooler heads than those involved in a passionate emotional relationship.

Many parents are mindful of such factors on a preventative basis, for example when selecting a college with an appropriate moral and culture environment for a daughter. Most Christian parents also communicate explicitly with their children about the risks of certain behaviors relative to marital success, such as warning against cohabitation and stressing the importance of the religious devotion of potential mates. Fathers of daughters are rightly concerned about any young man’s career prospects and his ability to support a wife and children. Since the data show that race is at least as important a factor in marital success as any of these other unquestionably legitimate factors, this would seem to definitely settle the question that parents may instruct their children in the wisdom of selecting a mate of their own race, nation and culture.

Now, some may object to parental objection on the basis of race as unfair because race is what we call an “immutable” characteristic of a person, something they cannot change. First, there is no Biblical basis for “fairness” to all potential mates.

Parents are to provide guidance in finding suitable mates, not ensure their daughter provides “equal opportunity” to all regardless of objective risks to the

¹⁸ Those who rate religion as only “somewhat important” as opposed to “very important”.

relationship. Second, on the rather limited timescale of romance, engagement and marriage¹⁹, other supposedly “fair” characteristics are equally immutable. Let’s consider some of the other risk factors: income, religiosity and cohabitation.

In the course of a year or two, most suitors would be unable to significantly raise their income²⁰. Any newfound religious conviction coincident with an interest in one’s daughter should be regarded suspiciously, and cohabitation (and its corollary, pre-marital sexual relations) can’t be “undone”.

Each of these supposedly legitimate risk factors are often as immutable as race. I believe it more likely that guilt-inducing media propaganda on race explains any queasiness over its exclusion as a legitimately considered risk factor than any logical argument for ignoring it.

The data show that parental concern over interracial marriage has a legitimate basis. Those who argue for prescriptive condemnations of parental concern for interracial marriage are mistaken in their assumptions that all such sentiments are motivated by hate or racism.

Divorce is an epidemic in contemporary Western society, even among the churched. Arguably, divorce is the major foreseeable, preventable negative life event that responsible parenting can help mitigate with helpful, age-appropriate advice on mate selection.

As hard as it is to fathom, race is more important than religion among divorce risk factors. This speaks to either the weakness of our churches in teaching the necessity of obedience to God’s Law on marriage or the primacy of nationality and race in God’s created order, of its fundamental nature in determining the ability of two human beings to enter into a successful lasting marriage. I believe it speaks to both. We need to teach God’s Law and inform our children of those practices most likely to succeed.

An argument of difference and of a divine ordained order does not imply the noxious questions of superiority and inferiority. Theologian R.J. Rushdoony writes²¹:

“Unequal yoking plainly means mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers is clearly forbidden. But Deuteronomy 22:10 not only forbids unequal yoking by

¹⁹ Periods of time that seem like years to young couples in love actually only encompass a few months.

²⁰ An obvious exception here would be young men about the graduate from college, but any wise father would wait for actual employment to materialize before giving final consent to the marriage.

²¹ *Institutes of Biblical Law*, p. 257

inference, and as a case law, but also unequal yoking generally. This means that an unequal marriage between believers or between unbelievers is wrong. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), and woman is the reflected image of God in man, and from man (1 Cor. 11:1-12; Gen. 2:18, 21-23). 'Helpmeet' means a reflection or a mirror, an image of man, indicating that a woman must have something religiously and culturally in common with her husband. The burden of the law is thus against inter-religious, inter-racial, and inter-cultural marriages, in that they normally go against the very community which marriage is designed to establish.

"Unequal yoking means more than marriage. In society at large it means the enforced integration of various elements which are not congenial. Unequal yoking is in no realm productive of harmony; rather, it aggravates the differences and delays the growth of the different elements toward a Christian harmony and association... Cross-cultural marriages are thus normally a failure... A man can identify character within his culture, but he cannot do more than identify the general character of another culture."

Racism and Interracial Marriage

There is one alternative view of interracial marriage and divorce that should be reviewed. A prominent and well-respected American pastor and theologian, John Piper, has advocated an extra-Biblical prescriptive stance towards interracial marriage²², encouraging Christian parents to seek interracial marriages for their children despite any increased risk of negative social consequences.

Piper, peppering his argument with the usual bromides about the horrors of segregation (an era that will be sixty years in the past by the time my oldest child is of marriageable age²³), asserts that:

1. Interracial marriage and racism present a chicken-and-egg problem. Racism makes interracial marriages more difficult, and the lack of interracial marriages sustains racism.
2. Christians are not called to a life of ease, and so should marry interracially anyway, despite any difficulties, to help break down racial barriers in the church and "crack" the chicken-and-egg paradox of racism and low interracial marriage rates.

²² I apologize for the long URL that follows, but it is the only source. Readers could easily Google "John Piper Moses Marry Black Woman" and find the article:
http://www.9marks.org/partner/Article_Display_Page/o,,PTID314526|CHID598014|CIID2359816,oo.html

²³ By the time my oldest daughter is twenty years old, the era of segregation will be as far in the past as the pre-WWI era was at the end of segregation. When will Americans of European ancestry no longer be smeared with the supposed sins of their ancestors?

Let us examine the two tenets of Piper's argument. The first is his insistence that interracial marriage is not an independent risk factor for marital difficulties (a position that would tend to point to Providence as cautioning against it), but rather is only difficult because of the particular problem of white racism.

Racism can at times be a serious problem. In Matthew 5, Jesus compares feelings of contempt for others with murder.

We must admit that all groups harbor racist individuals, those who hate in their heart on the basis of race. The frequency of truly racist individuals is debatable²⁴, but before we can accept Piper's assertion, we must see some data that shows white racism to be of greater frequency than other groups. May I propose a dataset implied by Christ Himself? If racist individuals are more prone to violence, and white Americans are especially prone to be racist, then surely crime statistics would show massive levels of white-on-black violent crime.

In August 1999 African-American conservative commentator Walter Williams reported²⁵ on a study that showed that 90% of interracial violent crime involved a black perpetrator and white victim. The same study found that, after adjusting for blacks' proportion of the population, blacks were 39 times more likely to commit a violent crime against a white than vice versa.

Perhaps the ultimate hateful act is that of rape, a crime for which there is no payoff beyond the gratification of hurting the object of one's contempt. The statistics for rape are even worse, showing that black-on-white rape is 120 times as prevalent as white-on-black rape²⁶.

Now, it is outside the scope of this work to debate the ultimate causes of these crime rate differentials, but the data show that racism among whites and blacks, to the extent it manifests itself as violent interracial crime, must necessarily be more prevalent among the black community than the white community.

An additional test of relative racism between whites and blacks is the 2008 Presidential election, which featured Barack Obama and John McCain. African-Americans, nearly all of whom claim to be Christian, voted for pro-abortion Barack Obama by a greater than 20:1 margin. If 43% of white people vote for the

²⁴ The media's desire to rewrite the history of our nation is enabled by the mythology of omnipresent white male racism and its corollary, the victim status of "minority" groups, including women and homosexuals.

²⁵ <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/williams081899.asp>

²⁶ An updated version of the study cited by Williams can be found here: <http://www.colorofcrime.com/colorofcrime2005.pdf>

African-American candidate and only 4% of African-Americans vote for the white candidate²⁷, in which community is racism demonstrably a greater issue?

Piper's argument that the difficulties of interracial marriage are a self-perpetuating engine fueled by white racism is simply without basis. More direct evidence is found in a study of interracial and international marriages in the Chinese city of Shanghai, finding that these marriages are more likely to end in divorce²⁸, consistent with American data. Since Shanghai is half a world removed from the supposed influence of American white racism, it is more likely that these difficulties are universal and Providential rather than artifacts of the American racial experience.

Piper's second argument, that Christians should intentionally choose a difficult course by marrying interracially, is even less convincing. It is true Christians are not called to lives of ease, but what does that really mean? Could not the same argument be used to justify any other non-sinful but foolish act likely to cause negative consequences?

Why should my children, mere toddlers, be deprived of practical wisdom on mate selection, to the possible detriment of their marriage, to atone for the supposed sins of American whites occurring nearly sixty years in the past?

Practically, with epidemic divorce in society and the Church, this is not an area properly "shored up" against known and likely risks such that Christians enjoy the luxury of intentionally adding risk into marriage decisions.

Interracial Children

For many of those opposed to interracial unions, concern flows from the consequences felt by the children of such marriages. Again, we find ourselves in unknown territory, for we simply have no historical precedent or data on which to base conclusions. For those opposed, there is the obvious objection to the loss of a discrete racial identity that forms a part of one's overall social identity in society.

Of course, race is not one's only identity, or even the most important identity, but it is a God-ordained reality and contributes to our sense of self. Those with an identifiable race should not assume that the racially blurred experience of mixed-race individuals is universally positive. Among the most distressing factors for

²⁷ Source: CNN.com 2008 National Presidential Election Exit Poll.

²⁸ <http://www.divorcereform.org/sha.html>

individuals to handle psychologically are identity-based factors they cannot change. The choice of the parents to engage in an interracial relationship is also a choice made for any children, who are destined to be in the minority of individuals with an ambiguous racial identity. We find a pertinent example in the life of the 44th United States President.

Barack Obama's autobiography *Dreams Of My Father* tells the story of Mr. Obama's torturous path to prove to himself that he was "black enough" for his father's approval despite his being raised by his Caucasian mother. Obama was deprived of a discrete racial identity due to his parents' respective choices and the inherent contradictions in such an identity continue to emotionally affect Mr. Obama's quest to be a part of the American black community. Though a highly articulate and gifted person, Mr. Obama's politics continue to reflect a Leftist radicalism largely motivated by his desire to be "black enough". Though not all individuals of mixed race may be as sensitive as Mr. Obama, many will share his struggle.

For those who support interracial marriage, we find an ideological commitment to absolute human equality without any data to support a radical break with historical norms²⁹. Much of the time the hardships faced by the human faces of these unions, the mixed race children, or simply ignored.

The Bible speaks of the spiritual equality of believers regardless of race, and this only to the extent that all are fallen and in need of salvation relative to God's Holiness. On the relative scale among human groups it has little to say, other than to sometimes imply that there might be important differences³⁰.

Thus, it would not be unbiblical if science were to find problems associated with interracial unions, as certain physical or genetic incompatibilities between races

²⁹ Many individuals who support interracial marriage are hopeful that its ultimate effect, the erasing of racial distinctions, will end racism. Such a view is unbiblical of course, as fallen man will always find new distinctions. Indeed, in places where the races have mixed on a large scale, like Mexico and Brazil, we find caste distinctions based on skin tone (i.e. the relative proportion of European blood among those country's largely mixed-race populations) that are even more divisive than race in the United States; a prominent scholar describes these Latin American societies as "pigmentocracies". God, in His Providence, has arguably already provided an ordinary means of grace to mitigate ethnic prejudices, and that is the peaceful separation of different ethnic groups into various nations here on Earth, with unity not on Earth but in Heaven in Christ. Such a means, however, is repugnant to the globalists who wish to rebuild the Tower of Babel by destroying national distinctions.

³⁰ For example, in Titus 1:12-14 Paul makes generalizations about the Cretans as a group. Now Paul's inspired comments here cannot be either sinful or false, which shows us that A) some group differences exist and B) it is permissible to make bald general statements about average differences between groups (i.e. Cretans are always liars, which really means individual Cretans are more likely to be liars) that would not necessarily be true about every individual in that group. Granted, in our politically correct age such a statement, if true, might not be wise to make publicly, but it would not be sinful.

would say nothing about their ultimate spiritual or moral equality. Unfortunately for advocates of interracial unions, several new scientific studies are raising serious questions.

- A study at the University of California-Davis recently found that bi-racial Asian Americans are twice as likely to suffer from depression as their monoracial counterparts³¹.
- The Stanford University School of Medicine recently found that pregnant women of mixed white/Asian couples were more likely to develop gestational diabetes, a complication of pregnancy with severe consequences if untreated³².
- The Cancer Research Center at the University of Hawaii released a study showing that individuals of five ethnic admixtures were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese than their component ethnic groups³³.
- Racial distinctions in the genes controlling bone marrow production have made it difficult for mixed race individuals to find matching donors for bone marrow transplants, according to the National Marrow Donor Program³⁴.
- A University of North Carolina study found that children of mixed race were more likely to manifest higher risk behaviors including a 50% greater risk of depression, 24% increased risk of smoking, 20% increased risk of drinking, 34% greater likelihood to have serious thoughts of suicide, 50% more likely to be sexually active in high school, and 94% more likely to be suspended from school compare to children of white ancestry alone. In fact, mixed race children had higher risk factors across nearly all categories compared to single race children, including the most disadvantaged single race group, African-Americans. This suggests that racial mixing could lead to social problems greater in severity to those currently present in our predominantly African-American inner cities.³⁵

These findings are relatively recent (2007-2008) and many are dependent upon new technology that allows for new genetic data to be brought to bear upon

³¹ <http://in.news.yahoo.com/43/20080818/938/thl-bi-racial-asian-americans-more-likel.html>

³² http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-10/sumc-acf092508.php

³³ <http://www.nature.com/oby/journal/v16/n5/abs/oby200831a.html>

³⁴ <http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/health&id=6443924>

³⁵ <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/cgi/content/full/93/11/1865>

epidemiological analyses in the medical sciences. Since we know very little about the mechanics of our genetic expression, these findings may be the tip of a large iceberg.

Since race is by definition a genetic grouping, and genetic variation has historically occurred gradually within a limited geographical area among similar ethnic groups, we simply have no idea what medical or psychological consequences may accrue from interracial unions that involve mixing genomes of vastly different geographical origins.

Providence and Race

The multiracial nature of God's Church is undeniable in Scripture. Perhaps the most explicit passage featuring this truth is found in Revelation 7:9-12:

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

There are several additional obvious conclusions from this passage.

Race, language and nation are eternally significant. They are not part of our salvation of course, but they remain recognizable features of our identity forever in Heaven. God could have made man of one race, one language and one kindred. Yet, Scripture shows us that Providence is opposed to this, explicitly commanding and causing the fragmenting of the human race at Babel.

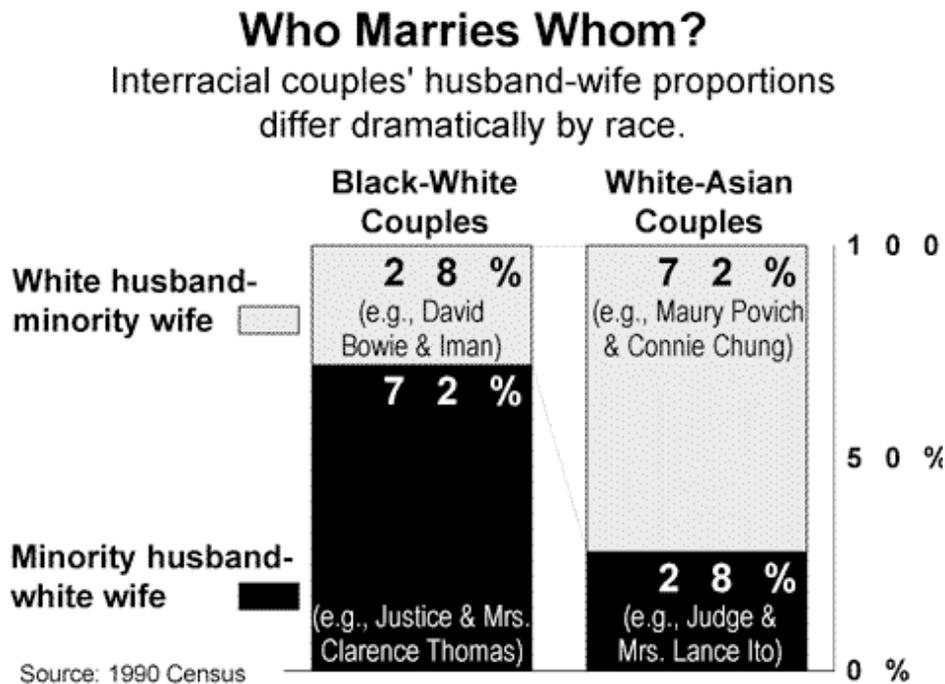
The clear racial distinctions in heaven demand another conclusion: if there are many races in heaven, then that implies a relatively low level of interracial marriage, as interracial children would not clearly belong to either race of their parents. Those who claim that most humans will be of mixed race in the coming centuries are going against the grain of Providence. While limited mixing has occurred throughout history, it is likely that racial distinctions created by Providence in the past will continue well into the future, even into eternity.

Interracial Marriage and Gender

Another interesting facet of interracial marriage's impact is its effect on gender balance among ethnic groups. Among the races, it is much more likely to find a black male / white female couple than a white male / black female couple. Similarly, white male / Asian female couples are much more common than Asian male / white female couples.

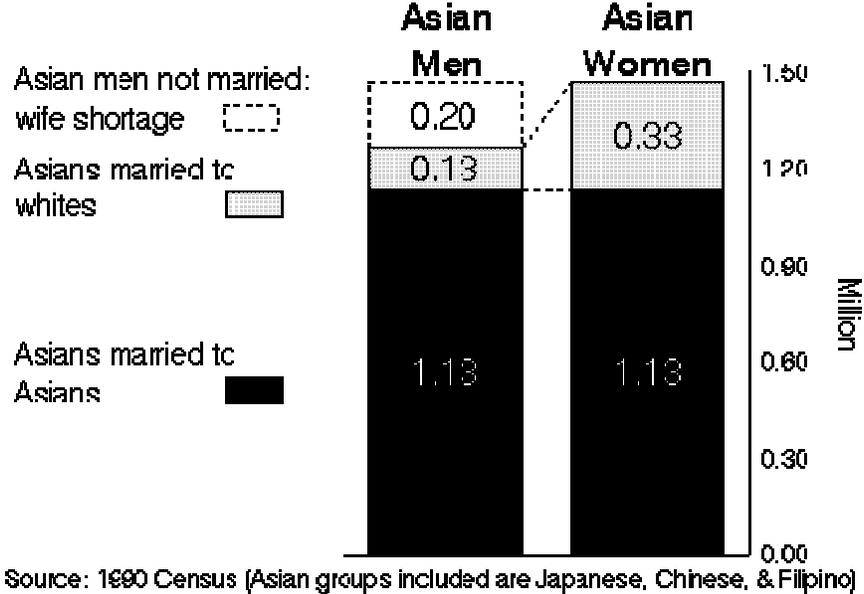
In a 1997 article in *National Review*³⁶, author Steve Sailer reports on the frustration experienced by African-American women and Asian men on the one-way distribution of interracial marriage among their respective ethnic groups. As a result, both groups face a shortage of marriageable mates with few options for a compensating interracial union to offset the imbalance.

The following figures quantify the imbalance:



³⁶ Available online at: <http://www.isteve.com/IsLoveColorblind.htm>

Asian Males' Wife Shortage

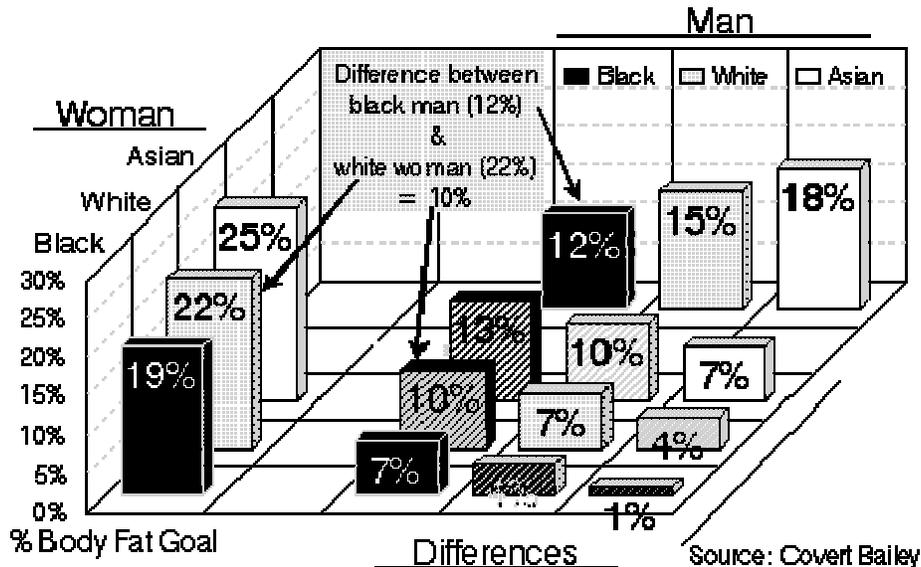


Sailer finds a surprising link in his research between natural physical differences between the races that result in asymmetrical attraction between opposite sexes of different races. To simplify, it appears God has fashioned the male and female traits of each race to be proportionate to the other within the same race, but these proportions do not hold outside of the race.

For example, one way in which men and women differ (and thus find each other attractive) is in the area of body fat percentage (a high inverse correlate with testosterone levels in both genders). Men are attractive to women in part because of man's higher proportion of muscle and lower proportion of fat, whereas men are attracted to the relatively softer and rounder features of women. This pattern holds for all races:

Body Fat % Goals for Adults

Fitness experts recommend different goals by sex and race



Blacks are generally more muscular than whites, and whites more so than Asians. This measure is a rough approximation of “maleness” and “femaleness” in body chemistry. Thus, while it is very easy, for example, for a black man and Asian woman to potentially find each other attractive along this vector, it would be much more difficult for a compensating couple of an Asian man and black woman, as their healthy body fat percentages differ by only 1% despite their being of opposite gender.

These endocrine differences between the races are God-ordained and God-created. In fact, if you look at the diagonal in the chart above, we see perfect symmetry among the races, a consistent 7% difference in body fat between men and women of all races, showing the fingerprints of a Creator who precisely fashioned the body chemistry differences within each race to optimize attractiveness.

The implications of this chart may be hard for whites to appreciate. As the race “in the middle”, there are ample opportunities for interracial marriage consistent with the natural grain of male-female attraction. However, while some whites may benefit from this arrangement, the losers of interracial couplings are inevitably black women and Asian men.

Asian men, despite earning higher incomes and showing fewer anti-social qualities than either black or white men (as the group least likely to be incarcerated), find themselves less able to marry as white men take Asian wives,

while natural differences in masculinity make them less physically attractive, on average, to white women and black women.

But perhaps the greatest victims are black women, who already must suffer the highest rates of single motherhood and struggle with the welfare state's destruction of the black family from the 1960's onward. A good proportion of black men are dead or incarcerated by marrying age, leading Sailer to estimate that for every 14 black women there may be only 10 employed black men. Sailer illustrates this frustration with a revealing anecdote:

Black women's resentment of intermarriage is now a staple of daytime talk shows, hit movies like *Waiting to Exhale*, and magazine articles. Black novelist Bebe Moore Campbell described her and her tablemates' reactions upon seeing a black actor enter a restaurant with a blonde: "In unison, we moaned, we groaned, we rolled our eyes heavenward . . . Then we all shook our heads as we lamented for the 10,000th time the perfidy of black men, and cursed trespassing white women who dared to 'take our men.'"

Similar to the unintended consequences of welfare, is it possible that mainstream universal support for interracial marriage is itself a manifestation of white liberals' insensitivity to its true impact on the cultural cohesion and marriage prospects of others?

Is it possible God's design of complementarian gender diversity is intentional among and between races and perhaps ought to be preserved as a norm?

Race and Family

Much of the dialogue about race is inextricably linked to questions of racial superiority or inferiority. These are political questions that are ultimately unanswerable, as there is no objective way to measure a complex creation like a human being to rank one group as absolutely superior or inferior. The truth of things is that each race is superior to every other race at being itself, as each has been gifted with God with certain remarkable abilities.

Subjectively, however, man must always prefer his own. My family is not "superior" to any other family, yet I prefer it just the same. I like the way my children look, talk and smell in a way that I will never like anyone else's children.

As a father, I simply prefer that my grandchildren look like me, just as I look like my grandparents. I do not know where this preference comes from, but I know it is there and I find no Biblical evidence that it is sinful. If I heard a person of another race express the same sentiment, I would not feel offended or belittled.

Much of the dialogue about interracial marriage tends to cast it as an issue of parental authority, and in many situations interracial marriages are made despite the objection of parents. However, this may not be the best way to look at it.

A new study from Poland³⁷ conducted by Durham University (UK) has produced some shocking results, finding that women with high-quality relationships with their fathers are more likely to select mates who look like their fathers. Conversely, women with absent, detached or abusive fathers were more likely to marry men who look less like their fathers.

Christian parenting manuals have taught for years that the opposite-sex parent is essentially a model for the child's sexual imprinting upon future mates. In a healthy family, it is simply normal for sons to want to marry women like their mothers and daughters to want to marry men like their fathers.

For parents concerned about the issue of interracial marriage, the primary preventative measure is a quality, healthy relationship with your children that will naturally result in your children choosing mates similar to their parents. If we communicate our wishes on this issue as part of that loving relationship, along with the reasons for our opinions, it is likely our wishes will be respected.

Absent that loving relationship, our expressed wishes, especially since they go against the grain of media influence, are more likely to result in rebellion than compliance.

Interracial marriage, then, can be seen in the aggregate as a referendum on the quality of parental relationships. For a child who has been ignored or abused, perhaps the most natural thing in the world is to seek a mate as unlike their family in culture and appearance as possible.

Practical Conclusions

There are a number of possible positions one can take on interracial marriage. From aggressive to tolerant, they are:

1. Interracial marriage is a positive good and ought to be outright encouraged in the Church. Those who would advise against interracial marriage for moral or practical reasons have violated the "Law of Love" and should be shunned and excommunicated from our fellowship.

³⁷ *Daddies' Girls Choose Men Just Like Their Fathers*, *Science Daily*, 6/13/2007.
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070613071240.htm>

2. The Church ought to remain neutral on extra-Biblical considerations of marriage and leave liberty of conscience to families and their children on the issue of interracial versus intra-racial marriage.
3. The Church should by analogy encourage the Biblical pattern of respect for tribal and ethnic boundaries and encourage a norm of intra-racial marriage, while being careful to tolerate and love those who choose otherwise.

My hope is that churches will resist the temporal political pressure of our age and default to a position of #2 or #3. There are a number of legitimate reasons for parents to support intra-racial marriage that are not based on sinful motivations of hatred:

- The Bible places great emphasis on considerations of tribe and ethnicity in the Old Testament.
- Many recent expositions of purported examples of interracial marriage in Scripture may be *post hoc* projections of those with a preordained multiculturalist agenda, and without any real basis in historical Christian and Jewish scholarship or tradition.
- God Himself commanded ethnic distinctions, proving at least that such distinctions are not necessarily sinful.
- The principles of conservatism, a corollary of the fallen nature of man, should guide us with caution in considering major changes to human society. Man tends to evil instead of moral progress and thus the burden of proof should be upon the proposed change, not the *status quo*. Interracial marriage represents a huge break with historical practices.
- Survey data from the CDC show that interracial marriage is a divorce risk greater than or equal to cohabitation, sexual relations before marriage and religious incompatibilities.
- Crime data from the FBI definitively show that white racism, while always a sin for an individual, is not an overriding factor in American society relative to the racism of other races. Special efforts to increase interracial marriage despite known risks to compensate for supposed white racism is not only morally vacuous but factually without basis.

- Numerous recent studies, among the first of many likely to come, show that interracial children suffer higher risk factors for various metrics of mental and physical health.
- Due to God-ordained differences in body chemistry among the races and between genders, interracial marriage has a disparate impact upon the marriage prospects of Asian males and black females. While individual whites may feel they benefit from increased opportunities, the impact upon these two groups is real and verified by Census data.
- Since parents are the models for opposite-sex relationships, interracial marriage can be seen as an inverse proxy for the quality of familial relationships. This implies that a norm of intra-racial marriage is the God-ordained outcome of healthy sexual imprinting upon children, if children have a positive relationship with their opposite-sex parent.

Let us not judge the motives of others or infringe the Christian liberty of parents to teach wisdom in marriage practices according to their sphere of authority. For those who support interracial marriage, let us agree to disagree without resorting to *ad hominum* attacks or competitive displays of political correctness to please the world.

For parents who find my arguments in agreement with their own reasoning or natural instincts, may I encourage you in the notion that your wanting the best for your children in marriage is not hate or racism. Your wisdom is real and your authority is legitimate. Do not be browbeaten or made to feel guilty about your convictions by the politically correct spirit of our age, and be silenced or shamed on this important issue. Be afraid of no man as you seek to raise your children in wisdom and truth.