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DO DARKIES HATE THE WORD "DARK"?

Pernicious consequences of the "be-kind-to" movements

CONSEQUENCE 1: Distortion of the classical Christian gospel/theology

THE BE-KIND-TO-**WOMEN** MOVEMENT

1 Sunday I heard a small child ask a UCC clergywoman "Who do you work for?" Her reply: "My boss is the Lord Jesus Christ." Double shock to me! "Boss" violates politically-correct antihierarchicalism (simply put, the vertical in human & even human-divine relationships); & "Lord" is a hated word in the gender-feminists' lexicon.

2 Also Sunday, the UCC president preached in a Cape Cod church which doesn't use the new UCC hymnal, THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL, so the hymns sung were xeroxed from the latter, & one of them was Henry van Dyke's "Joyful, joyful," which was sung also simultaneously in another Cape Cod church, mine, as the hymnist wrote it: "Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, / God of glory, Lord of love"....

3 ....but of course it wasn't sung that way in that other church, but rather in a manner reflective of the trendy preferences of politically-correct liberal religion: (1) "Lord" is hated, so the bland "God" is substituted (sacrificing both the theological clout of "Lord" [important to the hymn] but also the "L-l" assonance); (2) "Father" is embarrassing [except when subjected to gender equality, as later "Father, Mother"], so "Father love" is replaced by "Boundless love"; (3) "brother" is naughty except when subjected to gender equality by the presence of "sister," so both "brother" & "Christ our brother" are dropped; (4) generic "man" is naughty, so both instances in the hymn are dropped ("man and man" becoming "race and clan"); (5) "dark" is naughty even when, as in this hymn, it's correlated with "light"--so "dark" becomes "storms"; (6) Military metaphors (even though biblical!) are naughty, so "victors" becomes "faithful."

4 Would you say that "alt."(ered) is an honest description of what happened to van Dyke's hymn when it went through the filters of the UCC national office? "Greatly altered" might do, or even better "Rewritten," as "America the beautiful" certainly was (TNCH 594, reprinted in the NEWSWEEK article which, appropriately, laughed at TNCH). That radical bowdlerization of an American classic was written by the seminary professor under whom the UCC clergywoman (§1, above) did a Doctor of Ministry degree in hymnology! Says emiment UCC theologian Gabriel Fackre, TNCH, in following its "inclusive language" guidelines, doesn't mind "depart-[ing] from the theological purposes of the hymn-writer and from classical Christian teaching" (HOW SHALL WE SING THE Lord's Song? An Assessment of TNCH [1997], 73--a book that D.Min. in hymnology is unfamiliar with).

THE BE-KIND-TO-**AFRICAN-AMERICANS** MOVEMENT

"All de darkies am a weepin', / Massa's in de cold, cold ground." I haven't heard or seen the wd. "darkies" for many decades except in old classics of popular song. In the old dictionaries it's marked "colloq."uial; in the new, "offensive." The wd.'s not obsolete, it's dead! Yet apologists for TNCH's pathologically social-sensitive "inclusive language" policy claim (& that D.Min. brought it up Sunday, in defending that hymnal) that African-Americans are so offended by "dark" that the wd. should never be used even though it's the nature-based antonym of "light" (as in the beginning of the Gospel of John). That D.Min. said she found "dark" offensive in black churches she's preached in: I never encountered this when preaching in black churches, being president of an interracial fellowship of hundreds of churches, & having hundreds of black pastors in my classes. The taboo is a figment of liberal white imagination. "In contrast to TNCH policy, 'dark' is a standard word in the hymnody and preaching of African and African-American churches. A basic distinction is made in these traditions between 'dark' as the absence of color and thus evil, and 'light' as the full rainbow of color and thus good. For African-Americans 'black' is a color in that spectrum [of paint colors] and, as such, is 'beautiful'" (Fackre, *ibid.*, 85-86). In this & on many other counts, TNCH is a sad & silly songbook, reviewed in THE HYMN as more "the work of a sect" than of a church.

Yesterday in our church my wife was the officiating clergy at a black/white wedding. The silliness of this color business: besides being black (African-American), the bride was also brown (Portugese), white (Irish), & red (Native Ameri-

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can). Too bad she wasn't also yellow (Sinic, which is in Tiger Woods' mix). At the reception an old guy, looking at the bride, said to me "What gorgeous skin!" Certainly esthetically superior to that of her paleface groom. Our Lord is also Lord of the paintbox.

THE BE-KIND-TO-**JEWS** MOVEMENT

Being a language maven, my particular concern in the PC (politically correct) genus is the species LC (linguistically correct): I hurt & cry out when language is twisted & theology distorted in the interest of pluralistic supersensitivity. In this section of this Thinksheet, my cry is against those who make NeoNazis happy by tabooing "Old Testament," thus cutting the first part of the Christian Bible off from the second part &, in effect, equating "NT" & "the Christian Bible." A 1998 Eerdmans book by a Yale OT professor--Christopher R. Seitz's WORD WITHOUT END: The Old Testament as Abiding Witness--abominated this baleful academic practice now leaking out into the media & the churches.

1 The pejorative connotation of "old" need not be determinative. (Jn.Wesley: "If it's old it's good, if it's new it's bad.") "Old" is no implicit putdown on the Jews & Judaism.

2 Jews are not empowered to tell Christians how we are to designate the first part of our Bible, which (being the Septuagint) has no Hebrew but is all Greek (& the OT "original languages" are Hebrew, Aramaic [7 chapters], & Greek [15 books, in all Christian Bibles except those who let Martin Luther exclude them]). Anyway, the Jews aren't causing this trouble! Far from being "the Hebrew Scriptures," there's no Hebrew in the Christian Bible. (But I taught Hebrew as well as Greek: there's no understanding of Christianity without both languages.)

3 "'OT,' in combination with 'NT,' preserves the essence of the Canon," otherwise the OT is for Christians only "recommended reading" rather than "required reading" (J.R.Edwards in an excellent summary of the issue in 8.9.99 CHRISTIANITY TODAY 59-61). "It takes two testaments to tell the one story....What Jews believe they must do in order to maintain their identity (i.e., reject the NT), Christians cannot do if they are to maintain theirs (reject the OT)!" "New" requires "old": Jer.31.31 cp. Ezek.34.25; 1Cor.11.25; Heb.9.15.

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