

Covid Musing – June 1, 2020 – Racism North Star Mennonite – Dan Graber

One news item before getting into the topic today. Eastern District Conference and Franconia Conference merged into one. The new conference title is: Mosaic Mennonite Conference. Years ago, the Eastern District congregations, left the Franconia Conference over a variety of issues. This is the only General Conference Mennonite Church conference that came about because of a split. The irony is that the Eastern District congregations left because they wanted to do such things as: take minutes, use the printing press, and so on. Of course there were personality differences but this is a great move by both conferences, after years of doing some work together. In at least one place a congregation split and are today located on opposite sides of the road – a few hundred years apart with one church name starting with West and the other church name starting with East. This is way long overdue! Thanks be to God!

The theme today is racism. I found this article that nails it! Won't even comment. Heard about it on a news feed from Microsoft that has various news sources – including this one from Fox News.

Max Lucado: What is the answer to racism? This profound yet simple promise

Recent racially charged incidents including the tragic death of George Floyd have stirred ensuing riots and torn open the rawest of wounds – racism. Judging a person according to skin color is an ancient sin. For that reason, God gave this ancient solution.

In the earliest words of Scripture, God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth” (Genesis 1:26).

Embedded in these words is the most wonderful of promises: God made us to reflect his image.

No one is a god except in his or her own delusion. But everyone carries some of the communicable attributes of God. Wisdom. Love. Grace. Kindness. A longing for eternity. We are made in his image.

Sin has distorted this image, but it has not destroyed it. Our moral purity has been tainted. Our intellect is polluted by foolish ideas. We have fallen prey to the elixir of self-promotion rather than God-promotion. The image of God is sometimes difficult to discern. But do not think for a moment that God has rescinded his promise or altered his plan. He still creates people in his image to bear his likeness and reflect his glory.

Pop psychology is wrong when it tells you to look inside yourself and find your value. The magazines are wrong when they suggest you are only as good as you are thin, muscular, pimple-free or perfumed. The movies mislead you when they imply that your value increases as your stamina, intelligence or net worth does. Religious leaders lie when they urge you to grade your significance according to your church attendance, self-discipline or spirituality.

According to the Bible you are good simply because God made you in his image. Period. He cherishes you because you bear a semblance to him. And you will only be satisfied when you engage in your role as an image-bearer of God. Such was the view of King David. “As for me, I will see your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness” (Psalm 17:15).

How much sadness would evaporate if every person simply chose to believe this: I was made for God's glory and am being made into his image.

Would you let this truth find its way into your heart? You were conceived by God before you were conceived by your parents. You were loved in heaven before you were known on earth. You are not an accident. You aren't a random fluke of genetics or evolution. You aren't defined by the number of pounds you weigh, followers you have, car you drive or clothes you wear.

You are made in God's image. Print that on your resume. You are a diamond, a rose and a jewel, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. In the eyes of God you are worth dying for. Would you let this truth define the way you see yourself?

Would you let this truth define the way you see other people? Every person you see was created by God to bear His image and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This means that all people deserve to be seen for who they are: image-bearers of God.

Imagine the impact this promise would have upon the society that embraced it. What civility it would engender! What kindness it would foster! Racism will not flourish when people believe their neighbor bears God's image.

Why does God love you with an everlasting love? It has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with whose you are.

The fire of feuds will have no fuel when people believe their adversaries are God's idea.

Will a man abuse a woman? Not if he believes she bears the stamp of God.

Will a boss neglect an employee? Not if she believes the employee bears a divine spark.

Will society write off the indigent, the mentally ill, the inmate on death row or the refugee? Not if we believe, truly believe, that every human being is God's idea. And he has no bad ideas.

Parents and grandparents understand the implications of this truth. I recall when my daughter Jenna was pregnant with our first grandchild. She was round as a ladybug. Long before Jenna gave birth to Rosie, I loved our granddaughter. I'd never seen her, but I loved her. She'd done nothing to earn my love. But I loved her. She'd never brought me coffee or called me papa. She'd never sung me a song or danced for me a dance. She'd done nothing!

Yet I loved her already. I would do anything for her. That is not hyperbole.

Why? Why did I love her so? Because she carries some of me. A small part for sure, but a part of me, nonetheless.

Why does God love you with an everlasting love? It has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with whose you are. You are his.

How can we respect our neighbors? What is God's solution to angry racism that gives birth to violence and bloodshed? Government programs might help. Lectures might enlighten. But, in the end, God's plan is the only plan: see every person on the planet as God's idea.

And He has no bad ideas.

Max Lucado is a San Antonio pastor and best-selling author. His forthcoming book is "How Happiness Happens: Finding Lasting Joy in a World of Comparison, Disappointment, and Unmet Expectations" (Thomas Nelson, September 2019). Visit his website at www.MaxLucado.com. Follow him on Twitter [@MaxLucado](https://twitter.com/MaxLucado).