

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

June 3, 2020

Focus on Racism

Mike Wilson, Doy Moyer and I had been talking about publishing a magazine for a couple of years. We took the dive in January 1997 with volume 1, number 1 of *Focus Magazine*, with the subtitle, *“Insights to Edify the Thoughtful Christian.”* Since I served as managing editor, I was responsible for designing and editing the magazine, and making sure the magazine was sent to subscribers on time. I also handled the finances, until we turned that huge job over to Arletta Vestal.

Our aim was to edify through sound scriptural interpretation and application, to condemn group think, and to promote the importance of church autonomy. We wanted *Focus Magazine* to be accessible to the average Christian in the pew, not another scholarly journal for preachers. Though we tried hard to apply Colossians 4:6, “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone,” some of our attempts to meet these goals were met with criticism — some of it severe — from brethren in other regions.

The fact that we were three California boys didn’t help our cause. You may be surprised at the level of animus some feel just because you come from California. In fact, I wrote an article once in another journal entitled, *“You Shall Know Them By Their Zip Codes.”* As you might have guessed, I employed some sarcasm.

Enough about that. Looking back on that first issue, it’s interesting how prescient it was. In my editorial, I began with a quote from Siegfried Unsel who said “one of the signs of Napoleon’s greatness is that he once had a publisher shot.” I went on to say, “I have to assume Siegfried was fed up with media when he said that, and most of us know what he means.” That was 23 years ago. I quoted Unsel to make the point that the three of us were, perhaps, foolish to enter the publishing world. However, since then, trust in the mainstream “media” has all but evaporated.

I started out as a journalism major in college and the first thing we learned was to leave your opinions to yourself. Now, so-called news organizations, with very few exceptions, are ideological propaganda vehicles and that’s a shame.

The other article from that first issue that is timely, even

23 years later, was written by Charles Spence, an African American brother living in Arkansas at the time. The article was entitled *“Race and the Gospel of Christ.”* Racism has been a regular item in the news for several years now and especially the last ten days or so. In the article, brother Spence said, “I have met black brethren who would not welcome whites into their assemblies and I have met white brethren who would not welcome blacks into their assemblies.”

I hope that’s not the case these days, but it could be. Race relations have clearly taken a turn for the worse in the last ten years. I haven’t commented on the George Floyd tragedy, not because I’m not appalled by it, because I am, but because I don’t know what to say.

So much has happened in the aftermath and little of it has to do with Mr. Floyd. Some of it — like looting and burning — is inexcusable. And are you aware that a white Dallas store owner was beaten to death during looting and a black retired police chief was shot to death because he tried to stop some people from taking some TVs? These deaths have barely been mentioned in the media, if at all. Why is that?

Racism is real and cuts in many directions. It is as ugly as any sin we could mention and God’s word condemns every bit of it. Read, for example, Acts 10:34-35; Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:28. All these affirm that every soul is precious and Christ came to the earth and died for *all* people, of all nations and of all colors. Brother Spence’s words 23 years ago need to be read again and again.

