

A Few Words about Charlottesville For the Church and For the Nation

This is the antithesis of the Kingdom of God. Let this fact take root deep within us. God's kingdom is every tribe and every tongue worshiping the Jewish Messiah. It looks nothing like white men with torches chanting "blood and soil" and asserting their significance. According to Paul in Galatians the gospel unites different races and obliterates ethnic pride. This, like all assertions of ethnic superiority, is evil.

The church needs to address this and do so with more than tweets. Wisely, the Southern Baptists condemned this kind of thing this summer. Just about all the evangelical leaders to whom I listen have been vocal in their condemnation. This is good, but for the most part these are just words. I would like to see real racial reconciliation like what Paul talked about in Galatians 3.

I would like to see the end of black churches, the end of white churches, the end of Hispanic churches. I long to see Christian worship to be so intrinsically linked to racial unity that we couldn't imagine one without the other. If this were the case, everyone who witnessed the actions of these terrorists would know: these are obviously not Christians. Sadly, too many ignorantly associate this with Christianity.

This is the antithesis of America. We are a nation of political ideals, not ethnic pride. Our nation has had plenty of white supremacy in its past, but it was not founded on ethnic or religious lines. It was founded on the inalienable rights of all men. If we take the Declaration of Independence and Constitution seriously, our nation was created to protect

our liberties and to establish the equality of all people before the law. Yet, I'm seeing people forsaking our sacred ideals and doing "hail Hitlers" in the street. Seriously, I cannot believe that this kind of thing goes on in the land that sacrificed so much to defeat this tyrant.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Hitler has become the ultimate hyperbole and comparisons to him are used far too often to denounce political enemies. The conscious decision by the Charlottesville protestors to associate with the Nazi war machine, however, makes this a chilling, but fitting comparison. As a nation, we seem to be reliving 1930s Europe, where it seemed like the world would be won by one of only two options: fascists or communists. Who's it going to be 2017 America: Hitler or Stalin? Maybe we should insist on better options. Maybe we can unleash hell on the one and still tear down the walls of the other.

America may fail us. Certainly, it will not last forever. How long can a Republic last when its citizens lack virtue and know nothing about how it works? As a history teacher I will strive to promote civic knowledge, virtue, and commitment to those American ideals that transcend race, class, and gender. I can only have so much impact.

The Church will not fail. It will march into hell and take no prisoners. It will do this because it is not maintained by its own might but by the will of God. Pastors, empower your church to be The Church. Call it to be the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-generational eternal body united in celebrating the Kingship of Jesus. You can do nothing of greater impact.