



Further thoughts on Inter-Racial Dating and Marriage:

Just a few thoughts, let me start with a few practical applications of the *"you should show your pride in your ethnicity and only marry within your kin"* argument. And then move to a theological consideration.

First, instructing your children to marry within ethnic lines inevitably communicates strong disapproval for failing to do so, and a sense that the people outside of our ethnicity, no matter how good a Christian they might be, are in some sense not quite as good. Non-discriminatory ethnic pride, while a nice idea just doesn't occur in a fallen world. And my experience has been that whichever group adopts it, be they White, Black, or Asian ends up practically discriminating against other ethnicities. Indeed to favor one thing or person over another is to discriminate between them. If we apply the teaching to the bible, it makes Miriam and Aaron right in some sense to disapprove not only of Moses' marriage to the Cushite (Ethiopian) as they did in Numbers 12:1, but also they would have been right if they had objected to his marrying Zipporah a believing *Midianite* (Exodus 2:21). It also would have meant the townsfolk and kin of Ruth, far from blessing her (Ruth 4:14), would have strongly disapproved of Boaz's decision to marry her and would have encouraged him instead to choose an eligible female from good Jewish stock. Indeed, she would have been an unsuitable marriage partner for any of the men of Bethlehem. Naomi would have had to answer her speech (Ruth 1:16) with something along the lines of, *"Well that's sweet honey, but the my people/your people thing isn't going to work out. We Jews have a certain ethnic pride and don't approve of marriage and such to Moabites."* Thus she would never have become an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:5), or even have been fully integrated into Jewish society and a means of blessing Naomi. Actually, the example itself is moot, as Boaz wouldn't have existed. His father Salmon, being properly instructed by his parents, would have known Rahab would have been an unsuitable wife as well (Matthew 1:5). So that union wouldn't have taken place.

Also, trying to instill a sense of absolute fellowship, so that your children eagerly play with, eat with, have sleep-overs with, and do everything with Christian children from other ethnic backgrounds and then telling them you should not court, date, or marry them will inevitably break down. Show them they are one in Christ and let them live that out, and they will realize that their fellow Christians are suitable marriage partners regardless of skin color, accent, or eye shape. The only way you'll manage to keep the "we don't marry them" barrier up in the modern world, is if you eliminate or sharply limit their access to ethnically different Christian children and do all you can to instill a sense that ethnicity comes first and Christianity second.

Further, theologically the ethnic pride argument undermines the essential oneness of the Covenant community, it forgets that we are sojourners and pilgrims here on earth, that our citizenship is in heaven, not a particular earthly country, and that the real division is between believers and unbelievers.

For instance, in reminding Christians that they were sojourners "just passing through" earth on the way to heaven, Peter states:

"having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12)

Those, "gentiles" would have been their fellow countrymen, and yet he separates Christians from them. The church is the primary bond.

To see proof that we really are one in every sense with our fellow believers, regardless of ethnicity, just read the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:11-22. The middle wall of separation is gone, God has built one man from the two, they were aliens, but now they are fellow citizens of the same country and one holy temple without gaps, dividing walls, and separations:

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands --

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Frankly, also I'd say in our country, finding a strong, godly, orthodox Christian mate is hard enough. Further limiting that dwindling field for the sake of racial pride is self-destructive. Would you really rather your child married a marginally pious antinomian Pentecostal because they were American Caucasian than a strong godly Reformed Asian? I know I wouldn't.

Personally, I had the heartbreaking experience of watching a beautiful sister in Christ marry an unbelieving State Trooper, because her Christian mother liked him, knew his family, and because as she put it, "I just haven't met any strong Christian black men and I'm tired of waiting." I said to her, "But you KNOW and FELLOWSHIP with strong Christian single men who work at this company!" Her answer was, "But they're all white, my church and my family, would never approve of that." She took the marriage "they approved of" telling herself that he sometimes went to church and might become a Christian, and after the honeymoon period faded found herself treated poorly and cheated on by the person her people approved of. So much for the fruits of obeying the dictates of "ethnic pride".