

Confessions of a White Male

I confess. I am guilty. Guilty as charged. No, guilty by birth. I am, after all, a white male. What could be worse than that?

It doesn't matter that my father's parents came to America as poor Russian immigrants, my grandfather dying in his 40s from cancer related to unsafe work conditions as a painter. Or that my father became the family breadwinner when only 11 years old, then working his way through college and law school.

It doesn't matter that my mother immigrated from England as a little girl after her mother died and her father abandoned the family, to be raised here by relatives.

No. I am white. Therefore I am privileged. Therefore I am guilty.

It doesn't matter that my father was a liberal Democrat, as "tolerant" as can be by today's standards.

That's why my first organ teacher, when I was barely 7 years old, was an openly gay man, and he and his partner would often stay for dinner with our family.

And that's why my second organ teacher, a few years later, was a black man married to a white woman.

My father bemoaned the fact that this couple had family members and friends turn against them because of their interracial marriage, asking out loud how people could be so cruel. They too were frequently dinner guests at our house.

But none of that matters. I am white. My parents were white. Therefore they were guilty too.

Of course, the fact that my parents were Jewish and that I'm a Jewish believer in Jesus counts for nothing.

To the contrary, Jews are the worst supremacists of all, plotting to take over the world and responsible for all the world's evils today.

This only makes me more guilty. I have so much confession to make!

To be sure, there are some things that puzzle me. For example, if we Jews control the world, why can't we stop people from slaughtering us and exiling us?

But it's silly of me even to ask such questions. The answers are obviously above my paygrade. After all, I'm just a white male.

Of course, it doesn't matter that the church I served in from 1977-1982 not only cared for the local poor but sponsored refugees from Vietnam and then Ethiopia, inviting many of them to live in our homes for years, becoming part of our families. In fact, when Rev. John Perkins, a true Christian social justice warrior, came to speak for us, he admitted he could not get angry with us. We shared his heart.

But no matter.

Skin color is what counts. Not how you live. Now what your values are. Skin color determines it all.

I guess it would be the same thing for my German colleague, Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, who fought apartheid in South Africa. No matter. He's white. And male.

And it would be the same for American Christian leaders like Charles Finney (1792-1875) or British Christian leaders like William Wilberforce (1759-1833), who fought to abolish slavery.

They were guilty of white privilege. Can't escape that!

Getting back to my own confession, it doesn't matter that I've

gone to India 27 times in 27 years, serving there with one of my best friends in the world, himself Indian.

I have to accept that my friends and associates don't change my skin color. Or maleness. Oh, the shame of it!

As for the fruit of my ministry, that too does me no good.

It matters not that our ministry school grads are fighting against human trafficking. If they are white, they are guilty too.

It doesn't matter that some of our grads have adopted African children or that others have adopted Filipino or Indian children or Chinese children.

The only question is: Are these grads white? I'm afraid to say they are.

As for my maleness, where do I start?

The truth be told, I'm a heterosexual male, happily married to a woman (oh, the crime!) since 1976, a proud husband, father and grandfather.

That makes me doubly and triply guilty, since I am by definition a misogynistic patriarch supporting the oppressive nuclear family.

Is there any way to atone for my sins?

But there is something far worse, and I hesitate to mention it.

After all, all I've done so far is whitesplain and mansplain and cisplain. I have simply confessed to the guilt of who I am.

But now, the really ugly confession: I voted for Donald Trump. This means, by extension, I am a white supremacist. After all, as I was reminded by a commenter this week, Trump said Nazis

were very fine people.

I must be a Nazi as well. And a Klansman. And, obviously, not a follower of Jesus. Oh yes, and not actually Jewish either, even by birth. (Yes, I've been told this in the past week as well, all in response to this article.)

Alas, then, it appears there is only one viable solution. I will accept my status as only three-fifths human. That will demonstrate my true repentance for my crime of being a white male.

(In all seriousness, may God have mercy on America. We are going down a really dangerous path.)