

Racism Is Racism—Black or White

Author's Note: I originally wrote this editorial on racism for my high school newspaper during my senior year on Feb. 13, 1969—five years after the Civil Rights bill. My Lakeland, Florida, high school was beginning to integrate black and white students, so I wrote this piece as a way of helping the integration process. While writing my Perspective column for Charisma's February 2019 issue, I pulled this article out and was struck by how much has changed over the years—and yet how little has changed too. I shared part of this editorial in my print column, but I wanted to share it with you in full online. I hope you enjoy my editorial from senior year!

The dictionary defines racism as the action or practice of racial discrimination. Everyone knows that. Racism, however, goes deeper. It involves attitudes, not just actions.

Since integration has been forced upon us the past several years, most blacks and whites have quietly accepted integration as inevitable and mix congenially with each other. Most blacks and whites do not oppose attending school or eating in the same restaurant with members of the other race as they once did. Most are more liberal now in their attitudes toward the other race than they were five or 10 years ago. It would appear prejudice and bigotry are slowly disappearing. Overt actions of racism are less frequent now than they were at one time.

But what about attitudes regarding racism? Are they, too, changing? Are blacks and whites willing to accept each other on a personal level, other than just mixing impersonally with each other on a business level in public?

These are questions facing this school as we approach total

integration next year.

Are whites willing to accept blacks as individuals into their clubs? Are whites willing to look on their black classmates like they look upon other whites? Are they willing to put away all prejudice and racism?

Are blacks, too, willing to disregard racism toward whites? Are they willing to put aside their resentment toward the evils suffered by their people in the past caused by whites? Are they willing to realize the whites living today are not the ones responsible for the slavery of their ancestors? Are blacks willing to quit trying to prove their equality and understand whites are usually ready to accept them if they just prove themselves? Are blacks willing to accept whites too?

Racism is racism no matter what color or who is prejudiced toward whom. Only when members of both races are willing to accept each other as equals will real racism truly be absolved. {eoa}

Stephen Strang *is founding editor and publisher of Charisma and author of Trump Aftershock (FrontLine/Charisma House). Follow him on both Periscope and Twitter (@sstrang) or Facebook (stephenestrang).*