

What We Must Remember From America's Racist Past

Donald Trump brashly announced this week that he believes all Muslims should be barred from entering the United States in order to stop radical jihadis from carrying out another attack on American soil. He stopped short of demanding the deportation of Muslims already living in this country, but his comments were outrageous enough to be denounced by almost all Republicans running against him.

Marco Rubio called Trump's comments "offensive and outlandish." Jeb Bush said Trump is "unhinged." Christian physician Ben Carson—who was criticized for saying in September that a Muslim should never be president of the United States—said he believes it would be wrong to bar Muslim immigrants or tourists from the country.

Mr. Trump made his divisive proposal on Dec. 7, which was—ironically—the 74th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Even Trump, at age 69, is not old enough to remember how that act of war in Hawaii triggered an ugly backlash against Japanese-Americans living in the United States.

It might be time to remember this sad chapter of our history before we find ourselves repeating it.

After the Japanese killed 2,403 Americans in the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, hatred of Japanese people boiled over here at home. Americans, especially on the West coast, put up signs telling "Japs" they weren't welcome. In an archived photo of that era, a woman points to a large banner that says: "JAPS KEEP MOVING. THIS IS A WHITE MAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD."

U.S. Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, poured more fuel on this fire when he announced, "The

Japanese race is an enemy race.”

Soon the U.S. army was empowered to move 110,000 Japanese-Americans from their homes to internment camps in remote areas. Some of these people were only one-sixteenth Japanese, but they had no choice than to be herded into captivity. Most lost their homes and businesses.

They lived behind barbed wire from April 1942 until they were set free in January 1945. And it wasn't until 1988, under President Reagan, that the United States offered an official apology for the degrading way innocent Japanese people were treated. The U.S. government also gave \$20,000 payments to survivors of that awful blunder as restitution.

Fast-forward to 2015, and Donald Trump is not acting like Ronald Reagan—whom he claims to admire. Trump suggests that all Muslims are responsible for the actions of radicalized Islamic terrorists. To stop more attacks like the one that killed 14 people last week in San Bernardino, California, he wants to close the borders, bar all Muslim tourists and refugees and turn the United States into a fascist bully.

I honestly don't take Mr. Trump seriously because he talks off the top of his head and shoots his verbal bullets carelessly. But what grieves me is that so many evangelical Christians shout “Amen!” when the eccentric billionaire says things about foreigners that are completely contrary to the gospel.

I want to shout it from the housetops: Jesus calls us to love foreigners, and the gospel we preach is for all cultures! There is no room for racism or xenophobia in God's house. When Jesus was born, some of His first official guests were foreigners (Matt. 2:1-2). I find it fascinating that the magi who brought their gold, frankincense and myrrh to Bethlehem came from either Persia or Arabia—nations that are now Muslim.

If Donald Trump had been around at the time Jesus was born, would he have suggested that the Wise Men be barred from

visiting the manger?

I'm not saying we just drop our guard and let ISIS terrorists shoot up our malls and bomb our courthouses. Obviously we need stricter surveillance, better security and wiser immigration policy. But stirring up anger and demonizing all Muslims is not the answer to this dilemma.

- If you are a Christian yet use racial slurs or demeaning language to describe certain ethnic groups, including Muslims, ask God to break your heart and expose your hatred.
- If you are a Christian yet don't like to be around foreigners, ask God to give you His compassion. And remember: Revelation 5:9 says when we get to heaven we will be surrounded by people from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Muslims can't be a part of that number unless we can reach them with the gospel.
- If you are a Christian yet would rather see Muslims go to hell than get a chance to hear the gospel, your heart is hard, and your anger grieves the Holy Spirit. How we treat Muslims now will determine how open they will be to the gospel tomorrow.

1 John 2:9 says, "Whoever says he is in the light but hates his brother is in darkness even until now." Please check your heart and make sure you have not allowed hateful political rhetoric—of the red or blue variety—to turn your heart cold.