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Letter Regarding Race from Roy R. McCown

Roy R. McCown

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Mr. W. F. Cawyer,
P. O. Box 2439,
Abilene, Texas. 79604.

Dear brother Cawyer:

To say that I am greatly disturbed by recent developments is to put the matter mildly.

In an effort to recruit key men, I contacted brother Eugene Lawton of Newark, New Jersey, one of our dedicated and capable Negro evangelists here in the Northeast. Brother Lawton's reputation in this area, both among the white and colored, is one of integrity and honor. He is living and working for Christ in an area that is racially-torn and sees, I suspect, more clearly than some of us the dire need for Christ and Christianity in this area of race problems.

Last Saturday I received a reply from brother Lawton stating that he could not conscientiously assist us in our efforts in behalf of the HERALD OF TRUTH. He stated that he felt the administration of the program was afraid to discuss America's number one domestic problem and to present the Bible answer to that problem. He further stated that he had been advised that Highland elders had in the past deleted from proposed manuscripts teaching on the race issue. He further stated that when racism was deleted from the HERALD OF TRUTH and its administration, that he would be willing to support and promote it.

Upon receipt of this letter, I immediately telephoned brother Lawton. He stated that his position was predicated upon the fact that he felt the proposed series on race would only touch the edges and would not deal with the problem openly and honestly. He based this position upon past performance.

I have carefully reviewed the material given to us in Dallas. The information contained therein would seem to negate brother Lawton's position. I would like to know why Highland proposed the series if they do not intend to fully explore it and state
the teaching of Christ on the subject.

When I learned of the series, I was thrilled. I rejoiced in the fact that finally our great brotherhood was going to speak out in a real way against racism and that the vast radio network of stations was to be utilized to make known to the world at large the Biblical position.

Too long we have withheld the presentation of the truth of the gospel in a positive way on the issue of race. Too long we have been guilty of treating our Negro brethren, not as second-class citizens, but as INFERIOR BRETHREN! It seems to me that the attitude of some of my white brethren has been that the Negro element in the church must be tolerated as a kind of necessary evil in the society of Christians.

I have prayed for the day when my brethren would wake up to the fact that we are responsible for the souls of ALL the lost and that EVERY PERSON saved by the blood of Christ is BROTHER to EVERY OTHER PERSON saved by the blood of Christ, in every sense of the word, without regard to skin-color, national origin or ethnic background.

It seems we have left it to the denominations to speak out against racism while we have "held our fire," if indeed we had any fire. I honestly thought that the proposed series was going to remedy that lamentable condition.

I preach for a congregation of 80 members. In our membership are four Negro families. With our Negro brethren I go into Negro homes to conduct studies and rejoice when one obeys the gospel. I am not concerned about the color of his skin. After all, neither he nor I had any choice in the matter of to whom we would be born.

I have been further advised by brother Lawton that the HERALD OF TRUTH administration practices discrimination in that, when it determines a response is from a Negro, that response is referred to a Negro congregation, even though there may be several white churches much nearer. I hate to think that he is right in this and pray that he is in error. I am sure that you can tell me. I would be ashamed to learn that my brethren had stooped so low!

I would also like to know, brother Cawyer, that the Highland elders HAVE NOT rejected in the past nor plan to reject at any time any sermon or any reference to race, provided the material is scriptural.

If such deletions have been made, I feel that I am entitled to know what the deletions were and the basis upon which they were made.
If manuscripts were rejected, I feel that I am entitled to view those manuscripts.

You may reply that I am not an elder of the Highland congregation and thus must trust their wisdom and discretion. It so happens that the Highland elders have asked me to help promote the program and to assist in raising funds for it. To that degree, I am entitled, as is every other person who promotes and supports it, to know these facts.

I trust that you will see my motive in this letter. I love the church more than I love anything else. I have always respected the Highland eldership and have appreciated the tremendous work they have done with the HERALD OF TRUTH. Frank Reese was one of my dearest friends and we had a long association in the Lord’s work, beginning in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in the early 40’s.

However, brother Cawyer, I must state that I cannot conscientiously support and promote the HERALD OF TRUTH if the Highland elders are "dodging the issue" on race just to get the support of some, be they few or many, racist brethren in the South.

I will appreciate your reply and will be waiting for it. Too, if possible, I would like to have copies of the manuscripts to be used in the July series.

Praying for your efforts to get the whole message of Christ before the whole world, I am

Cordially and sincerely,

Roy R. Mc Cown

cc: Mr. Eugene Lawton

cc: Mr. John Allen Chalk
From the Desk of

Roy McCown
19 June 1963

Dear Chuck,

This disturbs me most. If you can keep clear of the air, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Roy

I am still disturbed by recent developments. I contacted brother L in our efforts in the White and colored, is one who is working for Christ in I suspect, more closely to and Christianity in.

Brother L stating that he felt the need to discuss America's need the Bible answer to e had been advised that from proposed manu- further stated that Of Truth and its ad- to support and promote it.

Only telephoned brother L. He stated that his position was predicated upon the fact that he felt the proposed series on race would only touch the edges and would not deal with the problem openly and honestly. He based this position upon past performance.

I have carefully reviewed the material given to us in Dallas. The information contained therein would seem to negate brother L's position. I would like to know why Highland proposed the series if they do not intend to fully explore it and state
the benefit of the whole of the church.

When I began in the ministry in 1951, I believed in the
fact that the Bible was the inerrant word of God. In 1962,
I had another realization that led me to return to the
scriptures as the foundation of the church. This letter is
dated June 1963.

The purpose of this letter is to explain one of the
truths of the Bible.

Mr. W. F. Canyon, 72384
P. O. Box 2430
Abilene, Texas 79664

Dear brother Canyon:

I am greatly disturbed by recent developments. As
an effort to recruit key men, I contacted brother
Eugene Lanton of Newark, New Jersey, one of our
dedicated and capable Negro evangelists here in the
northeast. Brother Lanton's reputation in this area, both
among the white and colored, is one
of integrity and honor. He is living and working for Christ in
an area that is racially torn and sore. I suspect, more clearly
than some of us, the dire need for Christ and Christianity in
this area of race problems.

Last Saturday I received a reply from brother Lanton stating
that he could not conscientiously assist us in our efforts in
behalf of the FOUND OF TRUTH. He stated that he felt the
administration of the program was afraid to discuss America's
number one domestic problem and to present the Bible answer to
that problem. He further stated that he had been advised by
Midland elders not to solicit from proposed manuscripts teaching on the race issue. He further stated that
when racism was deleted from the FOUND OF TRUTH and its ad-
ministration, that he would be willing to support and promote it.

Upon receipt of this letter, I immediately telephoned brother
Lanton. He stated that his position was predicated upon the
fact that he felt the proposed series on race would only touch
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I have been further advised by brother Newton that the HERALD OF TRUTH administration practices discrimination in that, when it determines a response is from a Negro, that response is referred to a Negro congregation, even though there may be several white churches much nearer. I hate to think that he is right in this and pray that he is in error. I am sure that you may can tell me. I would be ashamed to learn that my brethren had stooped so low!

I would also like to know, brother Carson, that the Highland elders HAVE NOT rejected in the past nor plan to reject at any time any sermon or any reference to race, provided the material is scriptural.

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W. R. Cnwyer,  
19 June 1963,  
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Praying for your efforts to get the whole message of Christ before the whole world, I am

Cordially and sincerely,

Roy R. McCoun

cc: Mr. Eugene Barton

cc: Mr. John Allen Chalk