

The Gospel in Black & White: Theological Resources for Racial Reconciliation by Dennis L. Okholm, InterVarsity Press, Downer's Grove, IL: 1997
(20 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

Sayings by: Eugene Rivers

1. On My Way to Heaven

And so I speak to the family, the people of God. I am saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost and a mighty burning fire, on my way to heaven and enjoying the ride. (Page 13)

2. Loving Functional Family

Before we get deep, I want to establish my credentials as a member of the family, because in a loving, functional family, once you are clear that you are dealing kin, you can listen to the hard sayings. There's an old adage, "I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care." So I speak as your brother, as a member of our family, the people of God. God calls us to deal with some hard stuff, and we are going to deal with it in a loving way. (Page 13)

3. I Love You

Now when I say loving that doesn't mean that I am not going to say it the way you would say it. Some of us are very parochial in our outlook on love, which means that if I don't say it the way you said it, I didn't say it right. Well, since you love me, you'll permit me to say it the way God told me to say it. (Page 14)

4. Always Give an Answer for Your Hope

God has called us to a challenge, and the integrity of our witness before the world hangs in the balance. "But in your hearts set apart Christ the Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). This is an apologetic challenge. (Page 14)

5. Reconciliation

Reconciliation—the language and the rhetoric of reconciliation—divorced from a commitment to truth and justice in a sham. (Page 14)

6. People and Christians Lie Every Day.

People lie every day. Christians lie every day. We tell stories about things that aren't true. We say reconciliation, but we don't live it. We talk reconciliation with our lips, but we don't walk reconciliation with our hips. There is something very important at stake here. Louis Farrakhan is the major force he is today because of the hypocrisy of the church. That boy is up to a lot of mischief because he recognizes that the black church is talking a big Jesus with no cross: I want to live large preach big and drive fine, but I'm not going to the cross. (Page 14-15)

7. Farrakham, the False Prophet

God is using Farrakham as judgment on the church. He's a false prophet that God has permitted to expose our hypocrisy—the hypocrisy of the white church and the hypocrisy of the black church. And despite Black preachers' best efforts, Farrakham brought one million men to Washington, D.C., and six hundred thousand or more of them were Christians. God's talking to us. (Page 15)

8. Result of Teaching People to Hate!

You teach a people to hate themselves for 385 years, calling them everything but a child of God, and you don't have to pull the trigger. If you program that child for so long to see himself a certain way, he'll self-destruct. This isn't rocket science. Let me grab your daughter and tell her for 350 years she's the ugliest thing since dirt. She's going to hate herself and anybody that looks like her. I don't have to pull the trigger. I just let the gun come in the neighborhood. She'll pick it up and do the job for me. Then I'll lock up the one who was standing next to her. (Page 16)

9. Racism, White on Top and Black on Bottom

When we talk about racism we're not simply talking about attitudinal bad faith ("you don't like me because I'm black, therefore you're racist"); racism as the presupposition of the superiority of that which is western and white is preattitudinal at the conscious level. It is so deep that we almost preconsciously articulate this presupposition. Angel food cake is white; devil's food cake is chocolate. Good guys wear white cowboy hats; bad boys wear the black hats. There are black lies and there are white lies. There is black magic and there is white magic. There is an entire constellation of symbols and images that permeate every dimension of our thinking. Racism evolves historically and may be expected appear in different phases in different eras and locales. White supremacy is the dominate ideology that undergirds all of Western civilization. In North America it's white on top and black on the bottom. In South America, or what some call Latin America, it's white on the top and black on the bottom. (Page 17-18)

10. America's Prayers Are Hindered

Daniel 9 and 10 suggest that the prayers of the people can be hindered. In the same way, I submit to you that the prince of America is the demonic ideology of white supremacy, and that is what blocks America's prayers. The thing that keeps America from being what it wants to be—the thing that keeps America from realizing its promise—is the fact that it was born in sin and shaped in iniquity and has not repented. And every other form of oppression and domination is mediated through the lens of white supremacy. (Page 18)

11. White Justice Vs. Black Justice

The O.J. Simpson verdict blew all the whites away. The fact that a black man got away with what white boys do every day brought to the surface the racism. Ted Kennedy drove a girl at Chappaquiddick into the water, and the first thing he did was call his lawyer. He didn't even call the hospital; he called the lawyer and let that girl drown. Then he was reelected senator! He even considered running for president! His nephew William Kennedy Smith was suspected of raping young women in the Kennedy compound at Palm Beach, but nobody marched outside of Hyannisport in protest. Claus von Bulow was suspected of killing his wife. There was no drama over Ted Kennedy, William Kennedy, Smith, or Claus von Bulow like there was over O.J. Simpson. Some old ignorant Negro with bad taste got out there with somebody he shouldn't have been with, and then there's a big drama. My point is this: it highlights the depth and the power of the white supremacy that says it's okay to play God and dominate others. But this a sin bordering on violating the Holy Ghost. How many white people got as upset about Kennedys or von Bulow as they did about O.J. Simpson? (Page 19)

12. Psychology That Is At Its Base Demonic!

What is my point? My point is that there is a psychology that is at its base demonic, and we in the church must repent of this thing and see the deception and duplicity on both sides. (Page 19)

13. Authentic Reconciliation

Us to the unique position that we as Christians are in today. We now have the opportunity, because the society has fallen down in a vary corner, to play a unique role in terms of bringing about authentic reconciliation that is rooted in a commitment to the gospel truth, justice and compassion. (Page 20)

14. Poor Blacks Are Politically Disposable Population

Conservative policy elites (whether Republican or Democratic) perceive correctly that poor blacks are politically disposable population. And this is the thing that is dangerous. We now have a context in which poor blacks who live in the domestic South West of this country are being increasingly isolated, and the process of segregation is twofold. Not only are black people being segregated from the larger society, but also black middle-class and professional people are now resegregating more black people and isolating them too.

In that context we have a volatile situation. In that context the black church must be challenged because the blood of innocent women and children is dripping from the hands of the black male leadership of the black church, which has failed to respond adequately, which has failed to tell the truth and speak honestly regarding the spiritual condition of America, which has refused to articulate with integrity the larger society the truths that are so painful yet must be executed if America is to be healed. God has given America a unique opportunity to heal itself. More important, God has given us, the church, the opportunity to provide leadership. There is no other quarter in this society that has the institutional, moral or spiritual capacity to bring this country back together again. The secular mechanisms do not work. The Republicans aren't going to do it. The Democrats cannot do it. The secular civil society can't do it. The only hope that this country has is for the church to become in fact the body of Christ. That means that we must enter into a dialogue as family that is committed to truth. (Page 21)

15. The Black Community Must Stop Lying and Smiling

The black community must stop lying, smiling, profiling and putting on fronts for the white folks. We play the race card when it's convenient. Anytime I want to duck my sin I call the white boy racist because he doesn't understand my contradiction. We need to get out of that. We need to be dealing with integrity and honesty. We need to be calling our own black church leadership to account for our indifference. How do you explain the fact that there is sixty-five thousand black churches in America who represent twenty-three million black people and we've got more problems now that we had forty years ago? Why is there an inverse relationship between the proliferation of black churches and the growth of crime? Why aren't the black churches and the leadership dealing with that issue? Why aren't we providing more leadership for our young people? (Page 21-22)

16. God is Calling us to a New Level of Understanding

I'm challenging you as Christians to expand the parameters of your thinking. God might free you from your whiteness so you might be able to live a more saved life, freed from oppression to your own demonic conceptions of what counts for beauty and

human nature. God is calling us to a new level of understanding. God is asking us to pray and to intercede so that we can pull down the stronghold of the prince of America and be free to become the people of God. God is calling us to get off our ego hype, because what really makes this thing demonic and indicates it is straight from hell itself is the fact that it feeds on idolatry and pride. We manufacture a pack of lies and myths by which we can put everything under our control. The white man plays out the God-complex as a control freak who has been socialized to believe that he must dominate and be the lord of the world, supervising the planet. And then all of our relationships are sick. And we look sick to all the world. Yet we call ourselves Christians. (Page 23)

17. The Suffering Servant is Better is Better Than Idolatry

If you, my white brother and sister, who created whiteness, who created the white race, who created the anthropological ranking system, who created the visions of beauty that many of us adhere to, who created these distorted notions of humanity—if you fail to renounce this sinful idolatry you bring shame on the church, and the world will continue to reject us as credible expressions of the gospel of Jesus Christ because we chose idolatry over the Suffering Servant who gave His life for us and shed His blood that we could be free from sin. (Page 24)

Sayings by: Roland C. Potter

18. Problem of Color Lines

Myrdal's assessment of America's racial crisis at the end of World War II echoed W.E. B. Du Bois's evaluation at the dawn of the century. In prophetic candor Du Bois states that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color lines." (Page 28)

19. Liberty for All Except for Blacks

Noted African-American C. Eric Lincoln poignantly described this nation's origins:

Two centuries ago, despite the moving rhetoric of the revolutionary impulse, and despite the fact that thousands of black patriots fought and died for the cause of American freedom, the American Commonwealth, which was conceived in liberty for some, was born in slavery for others. The stage was therefore set for this strange dilemma which today mocks our cultural pretensions, enervates our national purpose, and challenges the moral commitments implicit in our claim to be "one nation under God." As a nation, we were conceived in the most patent of political contradictions. We asserted that all men are created equal, with certain inalienable rights, as we casually stripped vast numbers of Africans of every vestige of their rights, both human and political. We were holding men in abject slavery, and were remarkable oblivious to

the moral and rational incompatibility of what we were saying with what we were doing. (Page 28)

Saying By: Michael G. Cartwright

20. Problems with Dispensationalist Hermeneutic

The problem is not just the hermeneutic of Darby, Scofield and other dispensationalists is overly tidy, abstract and narrow focused in terms of inductive patterns of common sense reasoning. The real problem with the dispensationalist hermeneutic is that it constitutes a way of disengaging from the historical struggle between the church and the world. More serious still is the way this hermeneutic enables Euro-Americans to escape from history, particularly the history of human suffering. Further dispensationalist premillennialism promises that Christians will not have to suffer. This is to say, what we are dealing with is a kind of cultural fantasy in which the way that Euro-American Christians are taught to read the Bible leads them to disengage from the history of earthly struggle in the church and in the world. (Page 95)