



VOLUME 27, September 2010

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Be Ye Perfect

In the Western scriptures, Jesus gives a hard teaching. He states, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."¹

At first one might think, using modern interpretations and understandings, that the Christ is against family values and self esteem. Thankfully, this is not the case or indeed it would be hard to digest. What is being referred to here is that we must move beyond blood ties onto universal families if we are to reach Christ consciousness. We must begin to identify with the whole of humanity as a family. Now, that is a real tough understanding considering there are people who will fight you tooth and nail to prove to you that you are not related.

Symbolically, we are directed to move beyond family, state, religion, and egotism. This does not mean you must give up these things, only that you must grow beyond them. What we are striving for is altruism.

Hatfield-McCoy Family Feud

Two families who valued their blood ties more than the law and justice were the Hatfield and McCoy families. Asa Harmon McCoy was murdered on January 7, 1865. The next incident took place thirteen years later, in 1878, after a dispute about the

ownership of a hog. As a result Stanton Hatfield was killed by McCoy brothers, Sam and Paris. From here the feud between these two families escalated and continued until 1891 when they agreed to end the hostilities.



Hatfield Clan of 1897

This family feud lasted nearly twenty six years. It finally ended when they recognized that both family clans are part of something bigger. They moved a step towards altruism. They were able to build a relationship between each other. Mahatma Gandhi use to say that taking an eye for an eye only doubled the amount of blindness in the world. This seems to apply here. We need more than just family values based on blood ties.

Nationalism

Albert Einstein describes nationalism as an adolescent disease. Adolph Hitler and the Nazi movement took nationalism to its

ultimate conclusion; racism and war. Hitler wanted to renew what he thought was the origin of the German people. He wanted to purify his master race in order to rule over all other races. He considered his race to be superior to all other races. However, Afro-American Jesse Owens in the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, Germany, achieved international fame by winning four gold medals: one each in the 100 meters, the 200 meters, the long jump, and as part of the 4x100 meter relay team. Hitler was so outraged; he refused to shake Owens' hand, and would not acknowledge his victories.²



Jessie Owens, 1936 Olympics

Hitler considered Africans to be primitive and inferior. He felt that they should not be allowed in the Olympics. Hitler's nationalism led to World War II and the persecution and execution of millions of European Jews in gas chambers. Mass execution and mass graves were the outcome of nationalism. To be a patriot is one thing, to be a nationalist is quite another.

American Crisis of Heart

We currently see in America, a crisis at the very heart of our constitution and values. I refer to the proposal to build a mosque on ground zero in New York. Since the events of 9/11/2001, the feeling about allowing good and decent Muslims to build a mosque on ground zero has caused major political divisions in the American culture.



If we believe our own constitution, then we must allow freedom of religion, and freedom of worship. But, in order to do this, we must transcend our own unconscious prejudices towards the Middle East and the Muslim community. What greater gesture could America make to the world then to allow the mosque to be built? It would send the strongest message of fraternity and brotherhood to the Muslim community and the world at large. It will not be popular with every American, but doing the right thing seldom is. We must not let the small percentage of dissidents in the media, and those that are in terrorist groups, steal our freedom, our values, and our constitution.

Some Conclusions

If we believe all of these declared truths and inalienable rights to be self evident, then we must live them so that they live through us. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said that Christianity's core teaching ethically was to

forgive our enemies. Even though America has become a pluralist nation, there are still Christian teachings that will always and universally apply to all.



Finally, from the Master Himself, in the book of Matthew, Chapter 5:43–48, Jesus the Christ is made to say:

43 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

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¹ Luke 14:26

² <http://www.biography.com/articles/Jesse-Owens-9431142>