

Bible and the Headlines: Male Problem

David Bachelor, PhD

October 22, 2024

Like bell-bottom pants, everything comes back in fashion. It seems like 1982 this week. That is the year “Real Men Don’t Eat Quiche” became a best seller. The book’s subtitle proclaimed, “A Guidebook to all that Is Truly Masculine.” Recent headlines reflect a return of the battle for what it means to be a “man.”

The Times of India on October 18th carried the headline, “Why Trump Isn’t Bothered by ‘White Dudes for Harris.’” The article covered the remarks former President Trump made at the annual Al Smith Dinner in New York City. Insinuating that these ‘white dudes’ may not be ‘real men,’ Mr. Trump said, “ I’m not worried about them at all, because their wives and their wives’ lovers are voting for me.” The article quotes the founder of ‘White Dudes for Harris’ who said his group offers men an “alternative.” Poll results indicate the majority of white males prefer to be ‘men’ rather than ‘dudes.’

The October 16th edition of the Nation contained, “Black Men Will Vote for Harris—White Men Are the Problem.” The writer was responding to media coverage of polling results among black men, and states “I refuse to engage in a conversation that paints Black male support as the “problem” for Harris in this election.” Inferring a lack of intellect as well as a lack of real masculinity in men of any race who do not support Vice President Harris, the writer asks, “Could it be that too many cis-hetero American men are pathetic little rump creatures who have been taught by their fathers and movies to view women as prizes?”

The focus of the October 16th Wall Street Journal article “Boston’s New Women’s Soccer Team Apologizes for ‘Too Many Balls’ Ads” was not on race, but on male anatomy. In a jibe at the dominance of men’s sports teams in Bostonian culture, Boston’s new women’s soccer team, BOS Nation, launched its “Too Many Balls” marketing blitz. The franchise quickly had to retract all its material because it was deemed ‘transphobic.’ To demonstrate the jingle’s inappropriateness for women’s soccer (since a prominent ‘woman’ player was assumed to be among the ‘too’ category), the article quoted a transgender fan who stated, “Reducing players to their genitals is transphobia and gender essentialism.”

The Bible does not use race to define what makes a “man.” In this sense, the Bible is more like BOS Nation than political pollsters. Or at least the King James Version of the Bible is like BOS Nation. The discriminating biological feature for men in the Old Testament was the ability to “pisseth against the wall.” Since Hebrew, like English before the Sixties, includes both males and females when ‘men’ is used as a collective label, the phrase “pisseth against the wall” was used six times to indicate that only biological males are included in the reference (1Sa 25:22; 1Sa 25:25; 1Ki 14:10, 1Ki 16:11, 1Ki 21:21; 2Ki 9:8). For example, King David planned to attack an enemy’s encampment, and slay all “. . . that pisseth against the wall.” In modern translations, this biological discriminator is removed and rendered simply as “males” or “men” (NKJV, NIV, TLB, RSV, NRSV).

The good news is that through the Gospel, the definition of a man is not by race or by anatomy: “Seeing that ye have put off the old man . . . and have put on the new man . . . where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col 3:9-11). Believing in the Messiah is the mark of true masculinity.