On Black History Month

As I stood in History of Christianity II class, a couple of things occurred to me. First, it would be an honor and an opportunity to share with my fellow seminarians my thoughts on the development of formal Christianity among African-Americans. Secondly, however, I realized that for the vast majority of these students, what I had to say concerning the history of Christianity among African-Americans would be all they would hear on the subject during their time at seminary. By any estimation, this was disappointing.

This month has been designated as Black History Month. It is a time in which we intentionally reflect upon the lives, influence, and contributions of African-Americans to the story that is America. It remains an unfortunate reality that we still have a month designated as Black History Month. Black history is American history. It is impossible to tell the story of America without also telling the story of African-Americans. And when we fail to incorporate in our history the contributions and sacrifices of African-Americans to the story that is America, we not only create drastic holes in our national story, but as Christians we dishonor God.

All true history is God’s history. All true history is His story. Therefore, Christians, above all others, should desire to know the whole story. Just as it would not be possible to tell the story of redemption without the “minor” prophets, so we should never endeavor to understand the history of America without understanding the indispensable roles African-Americans played in making America what she is.

As we recognize Black History Month, let us do so with a mind toward eliminating the need for it. Let our discussion of America become so inclusive and mature as to talk of her history with a dexterity that naturally includes all of her sons and daughters, who so beautiful compose her melting pot.

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