



Lesson 111

Culture and State

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- **Culture and the Sunday Law**
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Religion is not the source of sexism. Even with all of its sexist passages, the Bible is not the source of sexism, and neither is any other religion. In this lesson, we will learn why religion is not the cause of sexism, and what the true source is. We'll examine the evidence that proves this claim true, and lastly see what the new found root of sexism tells us about the Sunday Law.

Sexism and Culture

What is culture?

According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, culture is “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively” and “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group”. Culture is an ideology that surrounds us every day and influences how we act. It is what a group of people consider normal. For example, in the United States, when people greet one another, they shake hands. That’s part of American (and other countries’) culture. But in some countries, such as Russia and Mexico, air kisses (three and one, respectively) are how people greet one another. It’s a part of the Russian and Mexican cultures. A whole country doesn’t have to have the same exact culture because different groups of people live there. The word culture comes from a Latin word that means “care” and a French word that means “to till”. Essentially, culture means “to cultivate”. Just as people train plants to grow a certain way, culture influences people (which we know can be represented by plants) to grow a certain way. Culture cultivates us to agree with, and do certain things because it’s “normal”. Another closely related word is cult, which is an organization that has a strong influence over its members, so much so that they can be influenced to do things that they normally wouldn’t do. Culture is a lesser degree of that. It influences people to do things that they might not have otherwise done. For example, if an American traveled to Russia, as a form of greeting they might air kiss the other person instead of shaking their hand because they are respecting Russian culture. While all parts of culture aren’t necessarily bad, some parts are.

The Tower of Babel

We know that there were three sins that resulted in three curses that are still being dealt with today. The first was Eve’s sin of eating the fruit of the tree on knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden, and sexism developed from that. The second was Cain after he was banished and false worship developed from his descendants. Third was the sin of Ham; based on that his descendants became the subjects of racism. Right after the story of Ham in the book of Genesis we have the story of the tower of Babel. At first everyone was the same and had the same language. But then they were dispersed across the world. Their language was changed and with that their culture changed - because your language is closely tied to your culture. Language is essentially the most important part of culture, and language is how we are taught what actions are and are not part of our culture. But even though the language and culture of the people at the tower of Babel changed they still took three fundamental things that they had before with them around the world; those were sexism, false worship, and racism and they were the foundation of how they behaved. There is no religion in this story. The people at the tower of Babel did not have false gods, as we can see from *Patriarchs and Prophets* page 119.1, “The dwellers on the plain of Shinar disbelieved God's covenant that He would not again bring a flood upon the earth. Many of them denied the existence of God and attributed the Flood to the operation of

natural causes. Others believed in a Supreme Being, and that it was He who had destroyed the antediluvian world; and their hearts, like that of Cain, rose up in rebellion against Him.” Instead many were atheists, so the only thing that changed at the tower of Babel was their language and their culture, and what happened there spread around the world.

The root of sexism

Sexism is rooted in culture not religion. From the tower of Babel, we saw that humanity divided up into the different cultures that progressed into what we have today. Regardless of where you are, or even what time period, all cultures share the same curse; the curse of sexism. This is because sexism isn't rooted in religion, it's rooted in culture. We might normally think that the reason people are sexist today is because the Bible is sexist, and they believe what the Bible says. However, this only appears to work for Christians, what about atheists? They reject the Bible completely but are still just as sexist as Christians. The atheism of today is new atheism, and as we saw in Lesson 109 they are very sexist. In 2014, atheist leader Sam Harris said atheism's critical approach to religion was “to some degree intrinsically male.” That being only one example of the sexism in new atheism. So since sexism is prevalent in both religion and atheism, the root can't come from religion. It comes from culture, babies are taught to act a certain way or like certain things based on their gender from the moment they're born, and it's not because the Bible says so, it's because that's just what society expects- the sexist culture of society. And again, it doesn't matter which culture we look at, they all originated from one culture at Babel and they all stayed sexist even as they took on other unique attributes.

India and China

India and China are both sexist countries. In India, for example, it is believed that men should have first rights to a job, simply because they are men and not because they are more qualified. About 90% of Indians think that wives should always obey their husbands. About 43% of Indians think that men should be earning the income of the family. About one-third of Indians think that women should be responsible for raising the children. A majority of Indians believe that sons should be responsible for taking care of their aging parents, and their parents' wills. In India, sons are more “valuable” than daughters. Dowry is paid to the daughter's husband while the sons stay at home and make money for the family. Also, women are more likely to get an abortion if they are pregnant with a girl. (All of the previous information is from the Pew Research Center.) China is just as sexist as India. For example, because many employers in China do not want to cover maternity leave, they either make women sign a paper stating that she cannot have children for a certain amount of years while working there, or, they simply hire a man. Many businesses now advertise “men only” signs. In addition to that, the women that have found a job have been earning about 40% less than men. The current President of China has told women to embrace their role in the family by taking care of the children. In divorces, the homes usually go to the husband because of the recent law stating that the house went to the buyer, instead of the person wronged (which is usually the wife). The reason that the house usually belonged to the man is because it is commonly believed that the man has to provide for the family, and that a woman wouldn't marry him unless he owns a home. Like India, many Chinese prefer sons over daughters and are more likely to get an abortion if they are pregnant with girls. (All previous information is from *The New York Times*). Those are just a few examples of the sexism within India and China. In both countries, less than 5% of the population is Christian. In China, the majority of the population is non-religious. Both China and India are

sexist but not religious. Therefore, it cannot be said that sexism stems from Christianity or religion; it comes from the culture.

Culture and the Sunday Law

Culture and state

We have seen the importance of culture. Sexism is rooted in culture - not religion, we can see that from the tower of Babel where there were no false religions yet sexism was spread all over the world when the people were scattered. We also looked at some countries today: China and India, and saw how they are sexist and they are not Christian (China is also essentially atheist). So what about the Sunday Law? As Adventists, and even for a long time in this Movement, we have said that the Sunday Law happens because of the combination of church and state. But we now know that the Sunday Law will be about sexism - and sexism is not a religious issue. Sexism is much deeper than religion, it is rooted in culture. This shows us that the Sunday Law will happen because of the state and because of culture, not the church. The church is not where the foundation of sexism is, and like India and China, countries don't need Christianity to be sexist.

Sunday Law in 1850 and 1888

The 1850 and 1888 Sunday Laws were focused on culture not religion. We previously learned that since the Sunday Law is an issue of sexism, it's an issue of culture and state, not church and state. But what are some examples of this? We can look back to the Sunday Law in Millerite history; the Fugitive Slave Act. Obviously, the act was not an issue of enforcing religion, but it was enforcing slavery, which was part of the south's culture. The 1850 Sunday Law, was combining the culture of the south, and the government to enforce it; it was culture in combination with state, not church and state. Questions then arise about the 1888 history's Sunday Law. It was a literal push to enforce Sunday keeping, which sounds like church and state. Luckily, this does not destroy our model of culture and state. When we look at the 1888 history, we understand that the main point of passing a Sunday Law, was to enforce Protestant culture. The Sunday Law was targeted at Jews, who had large numbers in the United States at the time, and Protestants were going to amend the Constitution to target the Catholics, who also had large numbers. The goal of the Sunday Law wasn't meant to force everyone to go to church, it was meant to extinguish other cultures who were gaining numbers. So even though religion played a part in the 1888 history, the core issue was culture; and so we realize that based on 1850 and 1888, the Sunday Law is the combination of culture and state, not church and state.

Sunday Law in 2014

Another reason we know that the Sunday Law is culture and state is the Sunday Law in 2014. We did not see any church and state laws passed in that year, which is how we know that the Sunday Law isn't about church and state. It's about culture. The laws against gender will stem from culture not a religious viewpoint. We can mark the beginning of the culture war (or a new phase of it) in 2014. According to Wikipedia, "A culture war is a cultural conflict between social groups and the struggle for dominance of their values, beliefs, and practices." In 2014, the culture war began to focus on issues such as climate change, transgender rights, and the Gamergate issue. (Starting in 2001, the culture war had been focusing on issues such as abortion.) LGBTQ+ rights are an issue of gender, and so is Gamergate. In the Sunday Law in 2014, gender equality was a focal point, but it didn't come about through religion, it came through culture.

Local to world wide

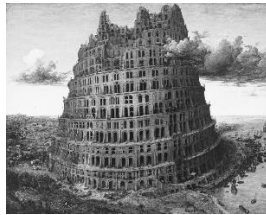
Another example of this point is the fact that the Sunday Law test doesn't have the same reach today as it did in the past. In the Millerites' time the Sunday Law was just for the United States. Their Sunday Law was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, as we know, and that only affected the people in the United States - people of other countries and cultures weren't really included. But in the 1880s the scope of the Sunday Law was different. Ellen White says, "The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world. In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark" (*The Great Controversy* 449.2 and 450.1). Here we see that she puts the third angel in the context of Christendom. Christendom is not the whole world, it is just the Christian nations, and we know that the third angel is warning against receiving the mark of the beast at the Sunday Law. *The Great Controversy* was written in the 1888 time period so this passage is talking about the Sunday Law then, and it says the issue will divide Christendom - not the world. In our time things are even more different. This Movement itself is global and so we know the Sunday Law test will be too. Sexism is a global problem - all countries have this problem, but not all countries are Christian: so Christianity - the church - cannot be a requirement for the Sunday Law. Instead, something all countries have is a culture, and like we saw earlier, sexism is a foundational part of all of them. The concept of local to worldwide is another proof that the Sunday Law isn't a church and state issue, but a culture and state issue.

In summary:

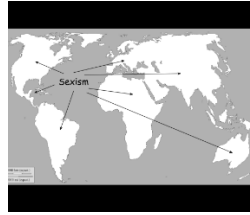
Sexism and Culture



What is culture?



Different cultures
and no religion



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culture not
religion



India and China
are sexist without
religion

Culture and the Sunday Law



The Sunday Law is
culture + state



The Sunday Laws
in 1850 and 1888



The Sunday Law in
2014



Local to
worldwide

Official Youth Prophecy Group website:

youthprophecygroup.org

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us at:

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Find all the YPG lesson videos at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq_g

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>