

A raceless God-man?

By [David Heim](#)

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Brian [Bantum](#), a theologian at Seattle Pacific, was mentioned in the Century's recent [article](#) on the new black theology. Readers intrigued by that topic will be interested in Bantum's [comments on a book on racial reconciliation](#) written by a white Minneapolis preacher, John Piper.

Piper is a rather unexpected figure to address this issue, being best known as an ultra-Reformed defender of God's sovereignty, which for Piper entails [insisting](#) that God directs the path of tornadoes and oversees the collapse of bridges.

Anyway, Piper apparently asserts in his book *Bloodlines: Race, Cross and the Christian*, that racial differences don't matter in God's work of electing people to salvation, and that the power of racial difference has been overcome in the cross.

Bantum says that Piper's theology is full of good intentions, but-and this seems a characteristic move of the new black theology-in trying to overcome racial difference Piper ends up denying the reality of racial difference. This means denying the reality of the body and the particularity of Jesus' physical existence as a Jew.

It's decisive, for Bantum, that Piper does not take seriously the writings of black, womanist or liberation theologians "for whom the reality of difference, as it was forced upon them, is always a theological dilemma."

"Piper's Christ," declares Bantum, "is a raceless God-man, focused intently on a violent sacrifice that achieves the salvation of our souls with the happy consequence of taking our bodies along for the ride."

Bantum's review of Piper is available [here](#).