



Spiritual Profiling

Matthew 7:6

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." (NAS)

The definition of "politically correct" seemed to reach a new height back in June of this year when a police dog was taken into custody and accused by a McKees Rocks, PA councilwoman of racial profiling. The following item was posted on the FoxNews.com website at: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,55010,00.html>

McKEES ROCKS, Pa. June 11, 2002 — Dolpho, a 5-year-old German shepherd can tell the difference between marijuana, heroin and cocaine but whether he can differentiate race could mean life or death for the police dog.

A McKees Rocks councilwoman said the borough's lone police dog targets blacks and should be put to sleep.

The dog was imported from Europe two years ago and is trained in drug detection and patrol.

On Friday, while K-9 officer Schawn Barger wrestled with a drug suspect, he said a quick-release button on his belt was activated, inadvertently opening a door to the K-9 wagon.

The dog bolted from the vehicle and bit a 9-year-old boy on the leg, not the suspect, and dragged him for about 20 feet, family members said. The boy is black.

Councilwoman Wanda Jones Dixon told the city council that she has received six complaints about Dolpho in the past year. Three involved people involved with drugs, who complained about attacks, but three others were black people who believe the dog jumped at or attacked them because of their race.

"I had received complaints from African-Americans saying they believe the dog only attacks African-Americans," councilwoman Wanda Jones Dixon said Monday. "I think the dog makes the distinction."

Barger, who has worked with Dolpho for more than two years and takes the dog home with him at night, said the dog has never gone after the wrong person before.

He said Dolpho has never gone after the wrong person and that he misses his partner.

"He's part of my family and it's disturbing," Barger said. "He's a police officer just like I am."

No decision was made on Dolpho's future Monday.¹

Levity aside, there are serious issues involved in the controversy that swirls around racial profiling that have yet to be resolved. But what about what we might call "spiritual profiling," that is, assessing by external data (since we cannot see the heart) whether it is wise for a Christian to share the gospel with certain, shall we say, "resistant" people? God desires that all people be saved, but does this mean we must put ourselves at risk of life and limb to approach those who make it clear by their words or actions that they don't want to hear it?

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:3. What is God's desire for people who are lost? How universal is God's desire for man's salvation?

2. Read Matthew 7:6. How does this verse temper our conclusions about God's desire to see all men saved? How would you harmonize this passage with 1 Timothy 2:3?

¹ The following partial report was posted later in the year on the same website:

Investigation Finds No Evidence of Dog's Racial Profiling

McKEES ROCKS, PA: August 18, 2002 — After a two-month investigation, officials say they have found no evidence that Dolpho, a 5-year-old German shepherd, was singling out blacks while on patrol.

A McKees Rocks councilwoman in June sought to have Dolpho put to sleep, claiming the dog attacked people based on race.

"Simply stated, there is no evidence that Dolpho was dangerous or uncontrollable in the past," the report said.

3. Looking again at Matthew 7:6, what do you think Jesus meant by "*what is holy*" and "*your pearls*"? What characteristics do dogs and swine have that would help us understand the meaning of this verse? In your own words, what is Jesus teaching us here?

4. Discerning that certain persons fit the characteristics and limitations of Matthew 7:6, and that we are not required to force spiritual truth upon such people, we have, in a sense, a kind of spiritual profiling. What should be the limits of such profiling? Is it possible to take this teaching too far?

1 Samuel 16:7

Mark 2:15-17

Luke 19:10

1 Timothy 1:13-16

Do any other limits come to mind?

5. Read Acts 13:40. Are there some people who will never be saved no matter how much evidence is presented to them? According to this verse, what characteristic will show in their lives?

6. What are some possible examples of this kind of "spiritual profiling" taking place?

2 Chronicles 25:14-16

Matthew 10:14

Acts 13:49-51

2 Timothy 4:14

Can you think of any others?

7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement by Bible commentator Matthew Henry?

"Our Lord Jesus is very tender of the safety of his people, and would not have them needlessly to expose themselves to the fury of those that will turn again and rend them. Let them not be righteous over much, so as to destroy themselves. Christ makes the law of self-preservation one of his own laws, and precious is the blood of his subjects to him."
(from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible.)

8. Write your conclusions from your study of this lesson here: