

Navigating a biblical response...

“What Can We Do?”

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(NOTE: The purpose of this is not to be a comprehensive secular thesis on all aspects of social justice. Rather, this is a personal response to a question that people have been asking me as I serve as a pastor for our church. This question has also been a topic of conversation in our church's small groups.)

*Therefore in hopes of being helpful to our small groups and to others, my goal here is to offer some personal thoughts meant to give the reader a general **biblical foundation that will then serve as the basis for future conversations and subsequent planning.** I hope this can help you as this important topic comes up in your small group, or in other contexts and conversations.)*

In light of the nationwide protests surrounding racial injustice, one of the questions that has been frequently asked is **“What can we do about what’s happening?”**. That’s a really good question asked by many sincere people. As an immigrant, I received my own variety of racial slurs and malice from both total strangers and neighbors, starting in my childhood. It forced me to ask many of the same questions being asked today. Those painful experiences drew me to pursue undergrad and graduate program degrees in Cross-Cultural Studies to better understand it, and thus fight it. So I personally believe that something should be done. I also observed something important

very early on in those studies, **which is the following:**

“What’s happening” has tragically been happening for a very very long time; the ugliness of racial animosity and malice is unfortunately nothing new. It’s well documented in both world and American history from centuries ago, and it still affects us today.

... it’s those private inner thoughts and desires that move the heart of a person, and thus, ultimately, moves the world.

This blight of racial malice which ought to have no place in the world, has been rearing its ugly head since ancient times, all around the globe. People of all cultures on every continent condescending upon and hating other neighboring tribes, provinces, states, nations, peoples; white on black, black on white, white on white, black on black, French on English, English on India, Indian castes on Indian castes, America on Native-Americans, Christian on Muslim, Muslim on Christian, Japanese on Korean, Korean on Japanese, Egyptians oppressing Hebrew slaves, Jews devaluing Gentiles, Seleucid emperors persecuting Jewish subjects. There’s no shortage of examples of these animosities from all around the world, **as far back as history can go, and nobody is innocent.**

The Legacy of Hate-culture

So when we look for a way to *effectively* address the racial hate that’s being protested here in America in 2020, we

actually need to get more ambitious and search for a remedy for hate, at large. That's the longer and more effective endgame. **Otherwise, as seen above, we're just playing musical chairs of hate; the positions may change, but the hate's still there.** And in the interest of getting a more permanent remedy, it's better to address an overarching issue which will then take care of everything from which it flows.

So what is an overarching issue here? Simply: People often default to hate. Hate shows up everywhere people are. History has shown this. It has also shown us that **any and all people can be BOTH the victim AND the perpetrator of hate at various times in various degrees.** History has shown that no skin color is immune to harboring hateful attitudes towards their fellow man.

How does hate form? Hate can come from a variety of sources, sometimes a combination of. Hate can come from being taught to hate by your family and/or friends, both explicitly and implicitly. It can come as a result of hurtful experiences and then lack of forgiveness. It can come from fear of the different and unfamiliar. It can come from disagreement. It can come from plain ignorance and prejudice. It can come from our own insecurities and jealousies. To name a few. As you can see, **hate comes from the inside. It comes from self-obsession and our failure to love the "other"**. This is the *culture of hate*, and this culture is blooming.

Replacing "Hate-culture" From the "Inside"

So this hate-culture needs to be replaced, or in a more nuanced biblical understanding, our present culture corrupted by sin needs to be repaired and redeemed by Christ and His culture. But that isn't an easy task, and because sin and culture is so deeply ingrained in both individuals and in a collective conscience, it often takes time. Many of us see what's going on in 2020, and understandably we

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want a fast solution today to fix what is the result of literally millennia of hate-culture. But that's simply not a logical expectation to hold. What we need to understand is that culture and people are intricately tied together. Thus, repairing a culture means effecting a change *inside the people's heart and thinking*. And then those changed people begin to change the culture, and vice-versa. The cycles can then feed into each other. **And this takes time.**

Now some may feel that coercion by intimidation-force or by shame-force is a faster, efficient way to effect a change of heart in a person. But history has shown that coercion is not an effective longterm solution.

It's my personal belief that the way to change a heart is to win the heart...a heart won is a heart changed from inner conviction. Inner change is superior to coerced change, and it's not even close. Coerced change is more likely to coerce a change in someone's external behavior than lead to actual sincere change on the *inside in* one's inner thoughts and desires, where hate can often hide undetected. **It's those private inner thoughts and desires that move the heart of a person and thus, ultimately, moves the world. I'd prefer to pursue that kind of more powerful inner change. How?**

"Christ-culture"

Jesus Christ offered an invitation to all to receive His love and forgiveness, to walk with him, and to be with him as the only pathway to winning and birthing a new heart in such a way that it will be injected with the needed set of desires that will lead to the unique generosity (grace), patience, mercy, forgiveness, wisdom, and will required to redeem all the millennia of Darkness and

hate that we're all so sick of. **This is how to repair and effectively root out the culture of hate with the *culture of Jesus*. This is the only culture that provides the kind of environment, grace, and nutrients that humankind needs to transform. It's the "kingdom of heaven" which Jesus ushered in and proclaimed in His gospel, and offers to every age, tribe, tongue, and nation** (for more on this kingdom, see Matt. 4:23 - 7; Revelation 7:9; Galat. 5:22-26).

So when the question, "What can we do about what's happening?" is posed, I, as an imperfect but willing follower of Christ, can only point to what **His Word has already taught us on that important topic**. We need to humbly, faithfully do what we have already been doing...doing our best to start with myself, self-assess, and **build my own identity upon the person of Jesus and on what He did and taught**: 1) **Remember and love our merciful, faithful Lord YHWH with all our heart, soul, and strength, and** 2) **Love my Neighbor as Christ loved me, with sacrifice, generosity, forgiveness, power, patience, healing, and endurance.**

Have We Seen this Christ-culture Repair Other Cultures?

Our congregation has been committed to this kind of mission of enjoying and then sharing the culture of Christ and His Gospel for several years, and as a result, we have been blessed with opportunities (both here in Silicon Valley and with a Paiute community in Bishop, CA) to share the culture of Jesus with people across different cultures, backgrounds, and socioeconomic situations. It took time, but we began to see the fruits from sharing the loving culture of His Gospel. **We have literally witnessed lives and hearts and hatred get healed and change** (we have records of testimonials testifying to the power of Jesus to heal). This was a result of Christ winning our own hearts, us enjoying the love and new life that He gave, and then turning around and sharing this experience with other fellow human beings. And that

has been so filling and beautiful for us to be a part of that our church is now actively pursuing more opportunities to share the fruits of Christ's culture in our community right here in Silicon Valley where God has placed us. So we're going to continue loving God and loving our neighbors, and as we do so, **God will organically guide us into exactly those opportunities that He's planned specifically for us to address**, doing our part in the greater fight of replacing the culture of hating others and hating God. **Look, no single church can do everything, but every church can do something. And so we will keep seeking and responding.** And we pray and trust that our neighboring churches will seek and follow God's will into whatever context and manner that He has planned for them as well.

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This is not meant to be a flashy, easy answer, but for this issue which

has caused so much pain in our world, I'm no longer interested in flashy and easy. When it comes to pursuing a remedy for hate, racism, and any other social ill (**all fruits of Sin**) I'll take the deep and lasting solution every time. And that's what Christ proclaimed when He preached about the fullness of the kingdom of God as opposed to the thinness and temporality of the kingdom of this world. As a follower of Christ, I choose to take Him at His word about that.

I can take His word for it because I've seen a person come across a person of another skin color that they fear, or dislike, or hate, and when that person does as Christ, then there is only room for patience, and loving that person in front of you, and having a generous heart towards one another, even towards those who sought to kill and torture you (there are many well known cross-cultural forgiveness stories that we can read about, such as Corrie Ten Boom or Louis Zamperini). **In Christ's culture, there's no room for hate for one**

another. The culture and cycles of hate are replaced by the culture and cycles of Christ's grace and truth.

I also know that many horrific things have been done all throughout history and even today by people in the name of Christ, but this will be judged and held accountable by Christ Himself. Christ gave us teachings, but He doesn't *coerce* people to follow them. So when someone perpetrates evil under the guise of following His name, Christ proclaimed that He will judge that with full justice and righteousness (Romans 12:19, Luke 17:1-2).

But when followers of Christ do truthfully and humbly walk in accordance with His steps as He taught us, then miracles *have* happened; abolitionists (both black and white) like Sojourner Truth, William Wilberforce, Harriet Tubman. Other followers of Jesus who had roles in effecting change for the oppressed are Martin Luther King, Jr., Amy Carmichael, David Livingstone, Florence Nightingale...and of course many more.

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Summing up,

What our church is going to do isn't going to look dramatically different in principle from what faithful Christ-followers of the past have already done before us for centuries, and what we as a local church today have already been doing, and commit to continue to do. We will respond based not on human wisdom, but on God's Word and wisdom, both as individuals and as a church, with the two most powerful commandments undergirding Christ's culture: We will remember and love the **God who created all tribes, tongues, peoples, nations, and** We will **love our neighbors as Christ loved me.**

In addition, just as God gave plans of action and words to our humble and faithful historical predecessors listed above, God also promised to give to all who seek Him, **including us, creative and humble minds**

that can germinate plans of action based on those 2 commandments, which will help replace a culture of hate with the culture of Christ.

This is how humankind will bloom, in all its nations, just as God intended, all through Christ. This is and will continue to be what we at REVIVE do.

Next step: So What Now?

Racism is just 1 of the many symptoms of our Sinful condition. **And the 1 remedy for our Sinful condition is the Gospel.**

I hope it becomes evident, therefore, why we've intentionally designed **all of REVIVE's ministries (GLF, Education, Praise, Mission, LOLMD, etc.) to help you grow and thicken in the culture of Christ and His all-powerful Gospel. By taking part in these Gospel ministries, our goal for all REVIVE members is that you grow Gospel-robust, loved robustly by God, and thus robustly being used by God to help replace the culture of sin in this world with the culture of Christ.** And if you happen to be missing these opportunities right now, don't let that discourage you; just take a step of faith now, participate in these Christ-culture ministries at our church and Christ will bless you, and He'll equip you to bless the people around you (Hebrews 10:19-26).

Then, **from this common foundation of developing the culture of Christ's Gospel within our church, then we can ask God, talk, brainstorm, and dream together about how to more *specifically* spread the healing culture of Christ and His Gospel in our particular context. That could be our next step.**

Brother, sister, we've done a lot of beautiful work together in these past years, and there is still much beautiful work yet to be done. But let's base our work on God's Word, not on man's, and let's take steps of faith together, let's spur each other on, and let's see into what adventures and future joys our Father leads us.

Feel free to talk to me anytime.

Shalom,
Pastor Yung