



CALVARY MONUMENT BIBLE CHURCH

LOVING, LIVING, LEADING FOR GOD'S GLORY

POPULAR BANDWAGON OR PERSONAL BURDEN

Pastor Bob Reid | June 3, 2020

The car caught my eye on my early morning walk. It was plastered with painted slogans on every window except the windshield. A cardboard poster inside the window read, “Black lives matter.” On the porch by the driveway where the car was parked sat a 30-something man. He was sitting wrapped in a blanket, reclining on a lounge chair, and typing madly on his laptop. He only paused to take a sip from the beverage travel cup. I greeted him, “Good morning!” He looked up and then quickly, without response, returned his gaze to the laptop. His house and car are regularly passed by on my morning walks. I am always intrigued by the proliferation of stickers that flow from the back bumper and up the rear of his SUV. I never took time to read all the issues advertised but concluded that he was a man of many concerns and causes. I wondered if these were all personal concerns or simply bandwagons that had caught his momentary fancy. I trust that “black lives matter” was more than a bandwagon upon which he had jumped.

The phrase “jumping on a bandwagon” was hatched back in the late 1800’s. When P.T. Barnum’s circus came to town they used a bright ornamental wagon to drum up business. It was large enough to hold the circus band as they played. This attracted people’s attention and they began to follow the parade. Politicians saw how bandwagons grabbed people’s attention and started to use bandwagons in their political campaigns to ride through town and to attract attention of potential voters to their causes. Eventually the phrase “jumping on the bandwagon” took the meaning of beginning to support something after it has become popular or successful. Too many people are “bandwagon jumpers” rather than people of genuine burdens. This is not new. Remember the “bandwagon jumpers” at the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (Cp. John 12:12–19).

As I passed the man on the porch I thought of another family. Their car was not festooned with bumper stickers. They probably have never been to a protest march or carried a sign for any cause. However, personal burdens moved them to act on the belief that for them black lives do matter. They encountered an African American single mother with a troubled teenage son that needed a place to live. They opened their home and gave them rooms in which to live.

They shared meals together. They shared the laundry and refrigerator. The family’s three children played and related to the woman’s teenage son. Their house became the house to welcome new friends. When the single mother and her son left after about a year, the two families cried together. A sign was not carried. A bumper sticker was not attached to the car. Lives were lived together that made it obvious that “black lives matter.” Why? Because this family had a personal burden that the Lord had laid on their hearts. Life together was not just a personal bandwagon upon which to jump. It was the right thing to do.

Does “black lives matter” really matter to people who seem to indicate that it does right now? Does this mean that every family will bring a family to live in their home? Not necessarily. What might it look like? Perhaps it means finding and helping a child from another culture that needs tutoring in their schoolwork. Maybe it means adopting a family from another racial background to assist them in some of their unmet needs. Could it mean something as simple as inviting a family from another background over for a meal and with genuine interest to get to know them – not just once but occasionally? Does it possibly mean inviting a person from a different racial background to church with you? Is it possible it means not to make assumptions about someone or a culture that you know nothing about? It certainly does mean living out what Jesus said when asked, “What is the greatest commandment?” He replied, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Simply stated, “While loving God; love others.” That is not jumping on a bandwagon. That is living out Christ through our lives.

Perhaps I am guilty about making unwarranted assumptions about the man with the “black lives matter” sign in his car. Perhaps I should go back and ask him, “How are you showing that black lives matter to you?” This may make for an interesting conversation! It may be an even more interesting conversation if he asked me the same question! We need to live our lives beyond slogans and bandwagons.