

Peace with Justice and the Economy of Abundance

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In our work for peace with justice I think it is really important to (in the words of Audre Lorde) “not dismantle the master’s house using the master’s tools.” The master’s tools are violence and competition based on an assumption of scarcity. Jesus came to show us another way is possible.

He did not defeat violence with violence. He stood with the poor and oppressed against the powerful (flipping tables in the temple for example) and he was not working for an economy in which the “tables were turned” so to speak. He was just as interested in the humanity of the oppressor as he was the humanity of the oppressed.

People assume that removing the Confederate symbols of oppression (statues, flags, etc) will reduce (erase?!?) the humanity of southern culture and heritage. That’s an assumption of scarcity, not abundance.

People assume that violence and fear is the only language that will transform a hardened heart of an oppressor. (This is the basis of all our national defense policy in this country, by the way).

There is another way. There is a life that is abundant for both white southerners like me who’s ancestors fought in the civil war, owned slaves, flew the confederate flag and grew up watching the Dukes of Hazzard and for black southerners who have born the weight of this oppression for over 400 years with little progress.

The way I’m talking about is not salvation for souls only in the sweet by and by. I’m talking about abundance for bodies and souls here and now and beyond that. I’m talking about being an answer to that prayer “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth... as it is in heaven.

As a white southerner who identifies with confederate heritage, I lose nothing by acknowledging and working to heal the “hidden wound” of racism that is woven through the culture that I was born into at personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels. It is not a loss for me and my identity to put these symbols of the confederacy in museums and private cemeteries rather than in the center of our cities public space. What I’ve

found is that doing this allows me space to heal as much as my black brothers and sisters.

I am assuming abundance and not scarcity. I'm assuming that we do not have to operate a "zero sum game" with winners and losers. My faith gives me that hope.

This quote from Nelson Mandela from his book, "Long Walk to Freedom" sums it up best for me.

"I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is being taken away from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity."

Let's act like we are all set free. Because we are through the grace of God.