

CUTTING THROUGH THE CULTURAL FOG – Session 2 **Being a peacemaker in an Uncivil War**

Gray areas, **banner**, first line makes one think or react or reject

Gen 2.15 – God appointed humans to care for His creation.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” Gen 2.15

What on the **banner** is not found in the Bible? Still reacting/rejecting?

From the web: We . . . stand in solidarity in rejecting racism and violence. We are committed to building a better future where opportunity is real and just for all, where the message and power of Christ and the gospel has its full impact in our churches and on our society. “Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with our God.” **Vernon Tannahill**

Things I would not have known if I **had not listened**, read, sought to understand.

When conversation is race, I ask about the “The Talk.” DWI you know. Do you know DWB?

Racial issues – Had “the talk?”

Republican response: I know what it is like to be pulled over for now reason, to be followed while I am shopping.

BLM – To say, “All lives matter,” is insulting.

“BLM does not mean that only black lives matter; it means that black lives matter too . . . it is not obvious to many black people that everyone values black lives.” CofC, p 179

BTW, difference between the movement and the org.

Social justice –

Don't let the word scare you. God says, "Do."

Jeremiah 22.3 "Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do not wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place."

COVID controversy – Is a **Political** & **Fake News** issue

Political Upheaval – "**White Evangelical**" is a political designation.

Pro-life/Pro-choice – It is **more than the** abortion issue. Climate change, Healthcare availability, elder care, poverty, racial injustice, economic issues, immigration, migrant crises, the homeless, the unemployed, and even just wearing a mask.

Media Dis/Mis information – Depends on **if I like** what is said. My opinion trumps facts.

Facebook last night

Gun Control – It is more than **the second amendment**. Ghost guns. WITF interview, 3/31/21

6,000 ghost guns sold in 2 months in PA. On track for 3,000 arrests for illegal possession of firearms in Philly this year.

Economy and Stock Market are **not the same**.

Neither are **weather and climate**.

Kneeling was **never about** the flag or the anthem.

Did you want to contest anything, or everything, I just said?

Then there is this: "people bind themselves into political teams that share moral narratives. Once they accept a particular narrative, they become *blind to alternative moral worlds.*" J Haidt

Conclusion: Opinion is **divided**, and we have lost our ability to have civil discourse.

How can we be peacemakers in this uncivil war?

Remember this? **“Seek to understand**, then to be understood.” (St Francis of Assisi, not Covey, quote)

To be a peacemaker starts with **seeking to understand**.

We don't know what we don't know and won't know unless we listen.

*“A fool takes no pleasure in understanding., but only in expressing his opinion.” **Prov 18.2***

*“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”
Pro 18.13*

And, as James wrote: “. . . let every person be quick to hear . . .” Jas 1.19

“If there is any one secret of success it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from their angle as well as your own.” **H Ford**

Empathy: Ask! Listen! Read! Think!

To be a peacemaker involves **seeking to be understood**.

James, again: “. . . slow to speak, slow to anger . . .” **Jas 1.19**

check your bias at the door. **“In order** to have important conversations, you will sometimes have to check your opinions at the door.” Headlee, p123

“It's hard to overestimate the power of conversation. **It's hard** to say too much about the gaps it can bridge and the wounds it can heal . . .

Our world has become so fractured *by politics* and distracted by *technology* that having a meaningful conversation about anything has become a challenge.” Headlee, pp. xvii, xviii

To be a peacemaker involves building relationships.

The key to persuasion is relationships.

We must earn the trust of the person with whom we disagree on a level that lowers the defensive barriers to genuine discussion and debate.

This requires that we listen to the other person, not to point out where they are wrong but to learn why they think as they do and to find places where we can agree. From J Haidt

Find the common ground and build from there. Easier to talk to a Muslim than some ‘others.’

“When people know you disagree with the choices they are making, *but also know* you love them in spite of them, it can change everything. Seeds can be planted for the Lord to grow and hopefully collect a harvest later on.” J Dennison

To be a peacemaker involves **taking the focus off yourself. (Not in notes)**

1 **What causes** quarrels and what causes fights among you? **Is it not** this that **your** passions are at war with **you**? 2 **You** desire . . . **You** covet . . . **you** fight . . . 3 **You** ask wrongly James 4.1-3

7 **Submit yourselves** . . . Resist the Devil . . . 8 Draw near to God . . . Cleanse your hands . . . 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep . . . 10 Humble yourselves James 4.7-10

I have never heard anyone say, I know I have a beam in my eye but you have a speck!

Steps to take,

1. **Stay calm** and listen on

“ . . . let every person be quick to hear . . . ” **Jas 1.19**

*“There is one whose **rash words** are like sword thrusts . . . ”* Prov
12.18

2. **Ask open ended** questions, clarifying questions, listening,
paraphrasing, and affirming you hear.

3. **Be empathetic**, both to understand and to be understood.
Empathy is one of the most important elements in communication.

4. **Start with** a base of agreement first and then build on it.

For those within the body of Christ

And for those not

The one book I am recommending: We Need to Talk by Celeste
Headlee

The bottom line: Talking Matters