



When Justice Means ..."Just Us"

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"Those who make peaceful evolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable" are poignant words spoken by the late John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States of America. After watching this blatant miscarriage of justice displayed before the world in Ferguson and New York, my modicum of faith in the criminal justice system has been crushed. After two parallel federal investigations are

concluded, my faith in the American system of jurisprudence is reeling. Rodney King, Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown and now Eric Garner is reprehensible in a nation that is supposed to be a template to the world what a democratic experiment is supposed to look like. Accused officer Darren Wilson could easily win a Grammy for his well coached testimony regarding the final confrontation with the deceased victim, Mike Brown. He had enough time (three 3 months) to rehearse this speech. The irregular presentation of the case by the prosecutor with a jury of (12) twelve consisting of nine whites and three blacks which was not reflective of the immediate community is troubling. There is a divide among attorneys on the way the case was litigated that reflected racial bias. I will not get into the legalities of the process, I leave that to Mark O'Mara (prosecutor for the Trayvon Martin case and now an analyst for CNN on legal issues regarding deadly force by law enforcement officers). Do you see how the system works? O'Mara has been rewarded for litigating a case that was decided before the trial began by the social media and has become a temporary expert on the legal process. In the social chaos of the moment across the nation with rioting in the street, there exists an element of hope. Most of the demonstrators around the nation are not people of color and are youthful. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated that *"a riot is the language of the unheard."*

In 1995, Joe R. Feagan & Herman Vera, argued, *"that white racism has the potential to array white and black Americans against each other in ways that could eventually devastate the social and political structure of the United States"* in **White Racism**, 1995. What they did not tell you is that white racism is a faith. What the Justice Department and the White House are proposing is the old institutional approach to resolving the epidemic of out-of-control law enforcement behavior in killing unarmed people of color that has turned this nation into a war zone. A dentist must first treat infection before proceeding with teeth cleaning in order to achieve the best results. You cannot develop working relationship with law enforcement officers in any local community until you can get them to understand that their behavior is rooted in white racism and a flagrant misuse of the authority of their badge. Some two decades ago I worked as a consultant with the Oakland Police department under the supervision of Assistant Police Chief Odell Sylvester who later became Police Chief of Berkeley. I was tasked with the job of instructing officers on race and affirmative action mandates and policies. Most of them did not have a clue about racism until we fully defined it and did role playing and other ways of teaching. We began to see modification of police behavior in rewarding ways.

The fundamental problem is that this new generation of law enforcement officers assume as previous ones did that they know what constitutes white racism. Unless you understand it you will invariably practice it unconsciously. Until we understand that negative law enforcement behavior is rooted in white racism which is a faith, it will not diminish. That is why in my book, ***Kingdom Beyond Color, 2009***, (Amazon Kindle version), I specifically defined racism and talked about the DNA of the religion of racism. Just as every living organism has a genetic make-up, so does racism. Several decades ago, ethicist, George Kelsey, professor of ethics at Drew Theological Seminary, described racism as a faith. Racism as a religious faith has a certain DNA. From a theological-ethical perspective, racism is a moral and spiritual problem. It is the pervasive worship of the self-rooted in spiritual pride. Racism is self-deification in its purest form. Self-glorification and arrogant ingratitude constitute the essential notion of sin. Racism is much more than ingratitude. It is more than religious indifference which is endemic to humankind. It is itself religion. Racism is prejudice linked with power in order to subjugate persons we deem inferior to us. This is a partial explanation why religious cults can openly practice racism under the guise of religion. Google ***Church of the Creator*** and ***Aryan Nation***. It is a decisive act of turning away from God. It is life *according to the flesh (Romans 8:5)*. It is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. God is displaced by human machinations. As a faith, like religion, white racism is bound up with one's emotions. It is this emotional tie to racism that makes it so entrenched. The late Dr. William Sloan Coffin, college chaplain, Yale University, once described racism as *"a congenital deformity in our body politic."* Victims of this viral epidemic come to believe that black life is trivial and does not matter.

Justice means *"just us"* when we see a blatant double standard in our criminal justice system. Justice means *"just us"* when we see people of color charged for lesser crimes while whites commit greater crimes avoid indictment and prison, plea bargaining and often given probation. This double standard for whites explains why people of color sit in jail for decades for crimes they did not commit and was wrongfully charged by aggressive prosecutors, who need to *"clear up their books."* **Proverbs 21:2ff.** *"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts". "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."* Simple justice was more important to God than all the pious meaningless words and prayers poured out to God. It was the doing of justice particularly in the interest of the poor which would often mean widows and orphans. **Micah 6:8** *"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."*

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