

In Between Sundays

September 9, 2015

In the Question Box service on Sunday, August 16, Anthony pulled this question from the box: *Will there be an opportunity to truly debate “Black Lives Matter” vs. “All Lives Matter”?*

From behind him at the lectern, I said, “No.” No further explanation. Just “no”.

However, I truly appreciate your willingness to ask the question, despite how vocal I might have been in expressing my support for #BLM. You deserve more than a terse “no” from me.

As many others have articulated far more eloquently than I, saying “Black Lives Matter” is *not* to say “Other Lives Don’t Matter”. However, as [Washington Post columnist Petula Dvorak noted](#), responding to “Black Lives Matter” by saying “All Lives Matter!” is “like defacing ‘Support Our Troops’ stickers to read ‘Support Our People’ and wondering why military families would be offended.”

Of course all lives *should* matter. But our faith promotes *justice, equity and compassion in human relations* and *the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all*. Therefore we are compelled to be bold on behalf of those who do not experience justice, equity, compassion, peace, or true liberty in their lives.

I do believe that the [Black Lives Matter movement](#) is arguably the most pressing and important movement of our time here in America. There have been and will be others, but right now, this is it. Because of the history of slavery and civil rights in America. Because of White Supremacy (the enforceable belief that Whiteness is inherently better than Blackness or any other racial or ethnic identity). Because of the disproportionate deaths of Black men and women in police custody. Because Black people are literally saying, “Stop killing us!” and there are people saying, “But...”

Because of all of this – the reality we live in – now is the time when we must be willing to quiet our White defensiveness and stand, scream, fight, and pray in solidarity with those who are Black.

There is plenty of evidence in America that Black lives don’t matter as much as other lives. And we who are in positions of power and privilege – and especially we who are White – must look long and hard at ourselves before criticizing the tactics of the Black Lives Matter movement, before defending ourselves as being “not responsible” for White supremacy, before convincing ourselves that a diluted and risk-free public witness is adequate in addressing very real oppression and injustice in our neighborhoods, our country, and our world.

In my years with UUCG, the sermons and programs that have brought me the greatest satisfaction are those to which you respond, “Wow, you really made me think / feel uncomfortable / get angry.” I have long felt that you called me to bring not only comfort,

but challenge; to observe the world and try to articulate what the consequences of complacency will be; to be a public witness for justice, even when staying quiet would be more comfortable.

And this ministry is the one to which I am called – to have convictions and to express them. Black lives matter. The world needs to hear it. We need to say it.

On Thursday, October 15, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., some of us will gather at OBIC for respectful conversation – not debate – about why the congregational leadership and individual UUCC members are choosing to say “Black Lives Matter” rather than “All Lives Matter”. Please join us if this dialogue interests you.

Yours in faith,

Paige

#BlackLivesMatter