

Editorial: Black lives must matter to all Americans

August 17, 2016

Maybe the reason Texas enjoyed unseasonably mild weather in mid-August is because the temperatures in hell slid toward the freezing mark. At least that theory seemed plausible when tea party toastmaster [Glenn Beck urged fellow conservatives to understand “Black Lives Matter.”](#)



Marv Knox Surely, hell is freezing over, political junkies nationwide agreed: The right-wing firebrand expressed empathy for the movement that sprung up around police-involved shootings of young African-American men.

Beck, who gained a national following on radio and online, showed up at the annual RedState Gathering in Denver, acknowledging he had been doing some “soul-searching.” Prompted by his inability to vote for neither Republican presidential standard-bearer Donald Trump or independent #NeverTrump candidate Evan McMullin, Beck set out to discover what he did not know about America.

Good point ...

Perhaps his most-surprising lesson: The Black Lives Matter movement has a point.

As the Washington Post reported, Beck has been a longtime Black Lives

Matter adversary. He called BLM racist and exclusionary. He led an All Lives Matter march and affirmed people who proclaimed, “All lives matter.”

But the police shootings in Dallas, Beck’s adopted hometown, caused him to think differently about the BLM movement.

In Denver, he used an “All Pies Matter” metaphor to describe African-Americans’ situation. “All of us are sitting around a table, and we’re all friends,” the Post reported him explaining. “It’s time for dessert, and everybody gets pie except for me and you. And you say, ‘I didn’t get any pie.’ Everybody at the table looks at you and says: ‘I know. All pie matters.’ You say: ‘But I don’t have any pie! What about my pie?’”

The metaphor explains how most white Americans—the folks with pie—don’t understand what black Americans have been saying about their treatment by police.

Beck still doesn’t respect the “communists and anti-capitalists” he called the “leaders” of the BLM movement. “But they’re not the people walking behind them in the street,” he said. “We’re all speaking different languages, and we need to talk to each other.”

Legitimate point, too

Amen. Extremists can, and often do, latch onto any major public movement—and whether “communists and anti-capitalists” actually are the “leaders” of BLM is a debate for another day. But even the presence of polarizing political people does not negate the legitimacy of a movement such as BLM.

Just as members of any church would not want their congregation judged according to their hypocrites and reprobates, so any movement should not be judged by those who would usurp the campaign for personal purposes. In this case, discounting the pain of victims’ loved ones and the agony of

victims of injustice based upon the motives of hangers-on is illegitimate.

Moreover, Beck's point about needing to talk to each other is on target. If you've ever talked to people who witnessed the same event from different perspectives, you understand the concept. People see and understand experiences based upon their own vantage points.

Same country, different experiences

Race in America is that principle writ large. African-Americans, Anglos, Asian-Americans, Latinos and others all live in the same country, but our experiences often vary widely because of the color of our skin. So, we see and describe our country differently.

Here's the hard part for many people to understand: Those descriptions—often contradictory—do not negate each other. A person of one race may see America as a place of limitless possibility, and a person of another race may view it as a land of limitations. And both can be true.

So, too, with chants of "Black Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter." Yes, all lives do matter, but proclaiming this to be true does not eliminate the need to insist black lives matter. As African-Americans have proclaimed for generations—and horrifying video clips have demonstrated recently—black lives apparently do not matter, at least very much, to some Americans.

When we talk about our nation, we must cut each other some slack. We must be quick to listen and slow to speak. And when we listen, we must pay attention and not spend our mouths-shut time formulating our next argument. We must seek to understand as fervently as we wish to be understood.

Privileged act first

Finally, we must acknowledge the privileged need to initiate the process.

Over lunch, a new African-American friend described differing expectations laid upon our shoulders. "If you make a 'B,' then I must make an 'A-plus' to be considered as intelligent as you," he told me. "If we attend the same event, you can wear whatever you want, but I must be the best-dressed person in the room not to be considered under-dressed."

White Americans must not require everyone else in this country to climb two levels above in order to be considered on equal footing. We must work diligently, tirelessly and passionately to create a righteous society and ensure justice for all people.

If anyone doubts this responsibility, consider Jesus' warning: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48).

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