

“The Time is Now for Our Beloved Community”

The Beloved Community was a dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s as well as many other peoples. Especially the ones who have openly fought for justice in the world. Now when I first heard the theme the Beloved Community I had no clue what in the world that was. Then once I researched it I realized. What Dr. King wanted was something so many groups before and after him wanted and fought to achieve just like he did. The Beloved Community was a place where only justice is found. Now hearing that I know it sounds like an impossible fantasy but for the Beloved Community to become a reality we don't need the impossible to become possible. We as human beings need to use nonviolence to fight the injustices of the world and all come together as one in a place of love and acceptance. Though saying that out loud does sound a little crazy, but I assure you it isn't.

The Beloved Community is built around agape love. If you are Catholic you may have heard this term, agape love, before. As Dr. King put it agape love is “understanding, redeeming goodwill for all,” “overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative.” “the love of God operating in the human heart.” In other words, agape love is the unconditional, purely from the deepest depths of the heart kind of love. There are no underlying motivations or selfish reasons behind it. It is the purest kind of love you will ever encounter in life, and it is rare. Agape love isn't the typical romantic love or love between friends. It is way more than that. This is the kind of love you need to build the Beloved Community.

There are so many people working towards this end goal and there have been for years. People who fight injustice and work towards desegregation. People who do these things out of the kindness in their hearts. The problem is people don't welcome change which is something that is crucial to the Beloved Community. It is almost like it is human nature to be against

change. Now I don't mean small changes like cutting your hair or painting your room a different color. I mean big changes that can affect the rest of your life like your mom getting remarried after a divorce or you moving houses.

I understand how hard change is. Many times, when I experience change I feel off balance, and I don't like it. Instead of embracing the change I fight back. I try my hardest to hold on to anything and everything I still have of the before and try my hardest to ignore the after, the now. This is what so many of us do when the time for change comes around.

Change is hard. It is hard to accept that one moment everything is normal and the next your world has been tilted on its axis. I think the hardest part about change is that you're not in control. You don't always get a say in what happens next in life and when that happens you are out of control. Many people, myself included, like to believe we hold our world in the palm of our hands. That we get to decide our fate. The hard truth is we don't. We don't really have a say in a lot of things in our life. Sometimes we are just handed unfortunate situations that we can't control no matter how hard we try. This means that when opportunity comes where you do have a say in whether or not change comes about most of the times we resist.

This theory is proven in history many times again. If you go back and look at the 1880's through the early 1900's when many people from Asia, specifically, the Chinese were immigrating into the country people segregated them. They treated them with hostility and let them know they were not welcome. People fought to push the Chinese out of the country. The reason was fear. They were afraid of the change that the Chinese people brought with them because they did bring change. The Chinese were a completely foreign, strange group of people coming into the country by the hundreds having their own culture and customs and forcing their way into the American way of life. The main reason that the American people succeeded in

excluding them was people exploited the country's deepest fear. The fear that life as they knew it was going to change. Whether it was for better or for worse people took that fear and used it to create outrageous assumptions and do very impulsive things.

The hard fact is we as humans very much dislike the idea of getting out of our comfort zone. Of playing with the status quo. People like to stick to what they know even if what change may bring is better than what we have now. That is the problem with the Beloved Community. People aren't willing to make a change. They aren't willing to put aside prejudices and discriminations that are hundreds of years old. Right now, we live in a comfortable little bubble and the moment that someone tries to pop it we panic and we resist.

If we can't let change in then we can't begin to make such a huge change in the world. I mean the world has been the same way for so many years that no matter how awful and unfair it is sometimes nothing will change unless we decide to make that change and allow that change to happen. I mean sure segregation laws haven't been in effect for decades, but aren't they still there lingering? White people see an African American and think that they don't want to associate themselves with them or that they are so much better than them because they have a darker pigmentation of their skin. We are so closed-minded that even though the world around us has evolved our minds haven't. I'm not saying that everyone is like this because of course you have many people advocating and pushing for change, but so many people are that the ones who aren't do stand a chance.

The other problem is that it is hard. I believe that all people are good at heart, but so many times it is just easier to be mean and cruel than to be kind. People are lazy and so they are mean and make bad decisions because they're easier than putting in the effort to make good ones. I know that a lot of people believe that because of all the bad decisions they have made in

the past and all the terrible things they've done they aren't redeemable so what's the point in trying to be better. Well let me just say that I think that anyone who wants it bad enough and who works hard enough for it can find redemption, but they aren't going to get it by giving up. I'm not saying by any measure that we need to strive for perfection that doesn't exist. I am saying that we should strive to be the best person we can possibly be. I mean sure we will make mistakes because who doesn't, but we can try to the best of our ability and I believe that the best of our ability is enough.

I know that Dr. King's dream can be a reality. All we need to do is open ourselves up to the idea of change and let it happen. Don't resist it. We also need to remember that when the choice comes to do the easy thing or doing the right thing to choose the right thing which I know sounds cliché. That's because it is, but it is also true. We can become one people free of hatred and segregation and full of freedom and happiness. We just need to do it, and I believe we can one step at a time.