Dear Wendy,

Looking At The World Through A Glass Eye - / Hate and the events at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina

When did the sub-human feelings of hate begin in a young boy who entered a church, a church, a place of rest and assurance, a church, to bring into fruition evil, like a dysfunctional weed in a beautiful garden of gorgeous flowers? It is simplistic to simply give the excuse of some sort of emotional illness conveniently found in the pages of the DSM (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.)

Did his embryonic hate begin while playing with Lego's on the wood floor of his home, while overhearing relatives whisper or shout evil words against a neighbor? Was it a snark remark made by someone in his family against another race, or perhaps the news that a man of color had become President of the United States? Was it in a school lunch room munching on a candy bar as most children do? Perhaps it was something he heard in his head, read in a magazine, or
heard on the radio, that kept repeating, and became a truth found in some lie that someone suggested to him while at a ballgame.

There is simply no clear indicator of what or how evil finds it's way into the molecules of one's brain. One might even place blame on a misreading of the Bible or other "religious books" after all slave holders once read to their "property" from the "Good Book" twisted ideas, convincing themselves that the evil they were a part of was, after all, "God's plan." If in fact it was God's plan, then their god was wrong and is wrong.

Some of you who read my hot-air statements from time to time, know me from my days in advertising, others from my stand-up routines where I met you in the green room before a show. Still others know me from my radical sermons I try to give in response to what I see in my church and pit what I see against what I understand to be the teaching's of Jesus Christ, a Jewish carpenter that kept on correcting scholars of his day, and I would suggest the so-called scholars of hate in our day.

I am angry today. I am sickened today. I am reflecting today. I am remembering today, that evil comes in many forms, and I must snuff it out when I see the embers of it begin in my own life.

Nine people are dead this morning. Nine wonderful, talented, young and old people are dead, four having been ministers of love to a world that desperately needs all the sermons on love it can take time out to hear.

Some times evil and miss-information is efficiently delivered by the United States Post Office. This past week I received on my desk, two different books regarding the current silly, almost childlike, yet hypocritical scholarship of fools who are trying to debate and convince me and through me, my church members, that women are unfit to serve as pastors, after all, in their sick misguided minds they are women. These books also contain what I already understood as the writer's and publishers of these quickly printed books, hate of the LGBT community, and in some warped evil, why "they" are not loved by God. Forgive me for using the original Greek here; but what bullshit!

It is difficult for me to understand the thought process and the energy it takes to write, create, publish and then mail out this kind of evil, and make no mistake that it is evil. It is not the same kind of blatant evil that occurred in Charleston, but maybe it is. In my opinion it creates a divide against others, and anything that creates a divide is evil, because it begins a cycle of intolerance and acceptance of the other. A seed of hate that is once placed in the mind is almost impossible to remove. The remarkable thing is the evil spoken against others, the writer's point out, is defensible and found in the pages of their warped and selective reading of their favorite book. A Holy book, which makes it all the more frightening.

Where does this kind of misguided thinking begin? Does it start while sitting on the academic, fundamentalist knee of those who with itching and unquestioning ears listen to stories, handed down from generation to generation by other misguided teachers? Does it start with the concept that they know the "truth" and must teach everyone else to conform to their truth, which if truly understood, would be seen for what it is, a lie?

Evil. To explain it, is to excuse it. I certainly can't explain it, all I know is the deep sadness of lives lost, and hearing the voices of those who would divide us by spewing their version of "truth." There are endless things to say on this subject, but enough hot air from me for now. I am left simply with the hope filled statement and admonition from a Jewish carpenter that he kept repeating and repeating to his own disciples, in the hope that this remarkable concept would somehow get through to them and each of us to "Love one another." Not a bad idea.
In remembrance of those who lost their lives in a church, I share a story and song by my favorite Seventh-day Adventist artist, Whitley Phipps, who shares his gift in many faith based traditions all around the world. Perhaps this story and music will lift your soul today.

Whitley Phipps shares a song and an inspiring story...

May God bless you today, and give us all peace.

*Best regards - Tony Romeo, Executive Pastor / REACH-NYC*
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