

URBAN CURRENT

No justice, no peace

I was shocked! Not by the video, but the scripture staring at me days after the video had been released. The mayor had warned the city, it would be difficult to watch. The video would show 17-year-old Laquan McDonald being shot by a white Chicago police officer 16 times. All the police reports filed after the incident said the black youth had been facing and moving toward the police officer with a sharp object, possibly a knife. The video would show the black youth walking away from the officer. Also, it was revealed Laquan was killed by the second bullet, though he was shot 14 more times while he lay on the pavement.

The heart-wrenching clip was played over and over on every media outlet for several days. I watched Laquan stumble after the first two shots, falling in the street.

The city was outraged. No one believed the mayor regarding his timing of the video release. What people assumed was he delayed release because it would have impacted his faltering campaign for re-election. Nobody believed the State's Attorney's claim that it took 400 days to prepare and file charges.

During this same week, I was preparing to preach "The Global Glory of God" from Isaiah 60 for World AIDS Day. In preparation, I was reading the preceding chapter. I have read Isaiah 59 many times, but with the video playing in my head, I was jolted!

"The way of peace they do not know and there is no justice in their paths. They have made their roads crooked. No one who treads on them knows peace (verse 8).

"Therefore justice is far from us and righteousness does not overtake us ... (verse 9).

"Justice is turned back and righteousness stands far away. For truth has stumbled in the public squares and uprightness cannot enter" (verse 14).

I stopped. Re-read. I read again. "Truth has stumbled in the street." Laquan in the street. The political maneuvering. The deception. Familiar with the street chant "No justice, no

peace," I began to see the scriptural link between truth, justice, and peace. The missing element is truth. No truth, no justice.

We've rejected God. We've thrown truth overboard. We want political correctness, never mind the hard, cold, restrictive, fun-hating, life-quenching, freedom-stomping reality of truth.

I made the following statement that Sunday:

"Every now and again, the ugliness and corruption Chicago is known for around the world, erupts in a way that leaves the most calloused among us shaking our heads and holding our hearts.

Laquan McDonald's death is a tragedy as surely as his life was and both are equal cause to cry out to God in desperation and agony.

The power structure in this city has no credibility in this matter. The actions of all involved play to our deepest suspicions and greatest fears. To remove a figure head or two is nothing more than political expediency and does nothing to bring transparency and integrity.

As citizens we must face up to the reality that this is the power structure we support every time we go to the polls. We keep this system in place and functioning.

Our hearts break over Laquan's tragic life and its terrible end.

We pray for the mayor and other public officials to "change their minds" about how they do their jobs. The Bible word for changing your mind is "repent."

We pray that the citizenry will change their minds about who they allow in office.

We are thankful we live in a land where we still have choices."

I'm sorry, (when people use this phrase they're not sorry for what they're saying, they're sorry for saying something upsetting to someone), but when I hear "No justice, no peace," I ask myself "Who runs these cities?"

Chicago, New York, Baltimore, New

Orleans, Cleveland, Detroit, anyone?

The party of the people. The party claiming to champion civil rights. The party that creates jobs. The party that creates wonderful school systems. The party of compassion.

Last April, Baltimore was in an uproar over Freddy Grays' death in police custody. Everybody in power was under fire. All in power were Democrats. Democrats who received \$1.8 billion from President Obama's stimulus just a few years ago. Did Sandtown become a paradise? Did the schools improve? Was poverty diminished? Money does not bring truth, buy justice, or purchase peace.

The Democratic machine has promoted and preserved housing segregation in Chicago for two generations through the federally funded Chicago Housing Authority.

What party runs these cities? What's that? I can't hear you. Who votes for these people election after election?

Republicans, while sniffing at Democratic urban disaster, like Lot, got up and took their herds to the "well-watered lands." Their realtors block-busted, their bankers red-lined, their landlords leeches, and their preachers preached the American Dream instead of "the kingdom of God." Just saying. There's enough guilt to go around.

Without truth, there is no chance of justice. Peace will be elusive. I'm so glad our hope is not political. There is a Redeemer! (verse 20).

Jesus is truth. He is justice. He is peace. He is coming. Meanwhile, we will be salt, and light, and hope by living out truth in a desperate world.

*No Justice No Peace, Isaiah 59 exposition,
C. Lyons, 2.28.16, armitagechurch.org/resources/media*

*by Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois
charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org*

