



'Black Lives Matter', Don't They?

By David Hawken

Do black lives matter? Of course! So surely a movement called "Black Lives Matter" (BLM) would be a force for good, wouldn't it? African Americans and in our context, Aboriginal Australians, have no doubt suffered historic injustices and even today have higher rates of incarceration and poverty as well as lower average life expectancy. I can understand why Aboriginal Australians may feel as if they are not valued and how a movement like BLM would be appealing. But beyond the slogan, the BLM movement stands for many unhelpful things.

The movement's co-founders have publicly admitted they are 'trained Marxists' who voice their support for other violent, radical Marxist movements such as the Black Panthers. Their website declares their desire to undermine the foundations of our society, including the nuclear family. The BLM movement's adherence to cultural Marxism should be concerning to us because even non-Christian progressive scholars recognise its problems. Prominent American BLM critic, Bret Weinstein claims 'it [cultural Marxism] is a Trojan horse that uninvents progress in other fields.' And 'Black Lives Matter is a motto that has become a front for critical race theory... that threatens all.'

Critical race theory came to the fore during the 1980s as it became clear that traditional Marxism had not led to the kind of utopian society it had promised, in fact, quite the opposite. During the twentieth century there were approximately 100 million deaths attributed to communism globally. Therefore, given the failures of communism, proponents of the philosophy ceased being concerned with the economic means of production and instead re-applied Marxist principles to Western culture and the cultural means of production. Now the oppressed classes are not the workers but people who are coloured (not white),

homosexual or female. The argument was that these groups have been excluded from and oppressed by Western society and culture because the culture was predominately produced by white, heterosexual men.

BLM's solutions to the problems faced by ethnic minorities are in stark contrast to the gospel-centred civil rights movements of history which led to the abolition of slavery. It is even far-removed from Martin Luther King Jr's campaign against segregation. In his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech King denounced any distrust of white people and instead sought to promote harmony between all groups. He could even foreshadow the sons of slaves and sons of slave owners sharing fellowship at the same table. In contrast, the Marxist philosophy behind BLM drives a wedge between whites and blacks by claiming every white person is a racist and every black person is a victim. BLM denies that the destinies of blacks and whites are intertwined. Instead, BLM philosophy holds that the desires of each group are irreconcilable.

I have called it a philosophy but, as some have commented, it has almost become a secular religion in which outward displays of support for its tenets are viewed as a form of piety and the rejection of dissenting views is akin to heresy hunting, resulting in excommunication or 'de-platforming'. In essence, cultural Marxism offers a false gospel, one where salvation comes from our own efforts to reorder society rather than by repentance and reconciliation.

Reconciliation is particularly poignant for me since my wife is an Indigenous Australian, one who is a descendant of the stolen generation no less. I am committed to reconciliation in Australia for this reason. Also it is because I know all people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), God knits

us together in our mother's womb and we are all fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:13-14) no matter our skin colour. That's why when God established the church he designed it to be a place where the gospel goes out to all! Christians ought to be keenly interested in improving relations between people groups, seeking to reconcile people to God and each other, no matter the challenges we face. In Christ, our identity and our worth as humans is not tied to skin colour or culture (Colossians 3:11) but BLM believes it is. This unhelpful foundation leads to unhelpful

solutions to genuine problems. However, these problems will not be overcome nor true reconciliation be achieved by radically restructuring society. Rather, it will come by Churches and individual Christians proclaiming and preaching the reconciliation of people to God and to one another.

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