https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/do-no-harm/article_4c321fa9-cdfe-5d7f-87c5-f727ce987f2a.html

Do no harm

By Carol Williams the Bystander
Jun 6, 2020

MORE INFORMATION



One of "Them"

People are very good at deciding who to like and dislike on their own. But when legislation favors, or disfavors, a group of citizens, it's difficult to undo the damage it causes. And our country, while making it easy to create inequality, does a poor job of trying to fix it.



The World Health Organization — the United Nations agency that we recently pulled out of — defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation." Using that definition, the United States has a long history of violence against its Black citizens. Yet, watching the protests across the country this week, only the rioting and looting are referred to as "violence."

We're all disgusted by the many acts of alleged "protesters," stealing merchandise and threatening the safety of their cities, in the name of civil rights. But we need to remember that many acts of our Courts and Constitutions have stolen the labor of, threatened the safety of, and deprived the civil rights of an entire people based on their color.

We're even more disgusted by the cause of this current situation; a Minneapolis police officer filmed in a position reminiscent of "taking a knee;" not to peacefully protest against violence towards Black Americans, but to mortally wound one.

It isn't ancient history that our government has used its power to violate Black Americans; much of it has been done in our own lifetimes. We can hardly blame our ancestors. In 1934, the newly-created Federal Housing Authority published manuals specifying which homes would be underwritten for government-backed mortgages. Its maps were coded by colors of green (for good neighborhoods) to red (for areas considered "risky"). Black neighborhoods were Red; banks withheld funds for homeownership because the government not only allowed it but ordained it. It wasn't until 1977 that Discriminatory Banking Practices like this, called "Redlining" were made illegal; but it still happens — it's just kept out of view.

People blame residents of public housing projects for the high crime rates, but forget the crime of Redlining that barred those same people from buying homes of their own.

Segregation was legal until 1954 when the Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education ordered schools to integrate. In spite of that ruling, even federal military bases in the South flagrantly disobeyed the law; as of 1965, children of Black service members were still not enrolled in the local (White) public schools. It took many decades and several more Supreme Court decisions to stop segregation of schools; but it still happens — it's just kept out of view.

Affirmative Action programs, which were created by the government to reverse the damaging effects of segregation, instead led millions of White Americans to believe themselves to be victims of

discrimination. And while there is poverty, poor schools, and crime in our White population, no legislation — aimed specifically at them, based on their color — created those problems.

Still, people condemn the low education levels of inner-city students, but forget the crime of a “separate but equal” education system.

“White Collar Crime” is far more extensive than street crime, causing an estimated $1 Trillion in economic damages per year. But that is generally the jurisdiction of the FBI, not a local police force. These less visible crimes — defensible with high-priced lawyers — are more often perpetrated by White people who can “pass” as respectable bankers, politicians, and businessmen. And even though our government promises “equal protection of the law” to all citizens, Black Americans are clearly subjected to a different set of standards. It’s not law-enforcement who created this inequality; it was our government that bequeathed them the power to enforce it; and enforce it they did, often with their own biases. Today, what’s different is the camera and the internet, destroying the belief that Black people deserve the violent treatment they get. But it still happens — it’s just not kept out of view anymore.

However, it’s easier for people to blame them for their high incarceration rate and forget the documented crime of police profiling in that same community.

The goals of good government, especially one claiming to be based on Judeo-Christian ethics, should be the same as the oath we follow for Healthcare: “Do no harm.” That means to balance the potential for damage that an action can do to a body, or to a body of citizens, with any good it could do. People learn to hate by example; again, that example has often been provided by our own government, which is not only incapable of atoning for its sins, but expects the victims of its violence to fix themselves.

We have the power to change that because, after all, the government — and our police — is us.

Carol Williams lives in Berkeley County, and is a US Army veteran and former ER nurse. Her archived columns from the Journal are published in a book titled “the Age of Uterine Law.” She can be contacted through her website, www.anothercarolwilliams.com.