

February 21, 2013

Racism raised its ugly head in Fortuna a couple of days ago when a prison parolee ran into a party shouting "White Pride!" then, along with his dad and another guy, proceeded to beat up a two women and a teenage boy. This guy sure has a lot to be proud of: he gets drunk, shouts "White Pride" then, with plenty of help from other men, beats up a couple of ladies and a teenager. As far as I know all of ~~his~~<sup>their</sup> victims were white. A more apt exclamation would have been, "White Morons." All this makes no sense, but then racism makes no sense. Racism is ugly and irrational. Sadly, it is proving harder to eradicate racism in America and the world, than we had hoped. I read several surveys taken last year just before the national election that showed racism had actually increased since the election of Barak Obama in 2008. How might we tackle racism head on?

Perhaps there is something innate in all of us that feels threatened by differences: different race, different skin color, different language, different side of town, different religion, hair color... you name it. Differences can breed fear and fear is the groundswell that sends the waves of hatred crashing on the shores of our lives. I read one study last year that claimed a lack of intelligence is to blame for racial hatred. The study was conducted by researchers from Ontario, Canada's Brock University. In sum, they wrote, "right-wing ideologies, which are socially conservative and authoritarian, represent a mechanism through which cognitive ability is linked with prejudice." Another authority, Dr. Brian Nosek from the University of Virginia explained <sup>in that article:</sup> to the ~~Huffington Post~~: "Reality is complicated and messy . . . Ideologies get rid of the messiness and impose a simpler solution. So, it may not be surprising that people with less cognitive capacity will be attracted to simplifying ideologies."

The logic here is that dumb people are attracted to "us and them," black and white ideologies and smart people ~~don't~~<sup>do</sup>. Since racism is an ideology, let's get rid of ideologies, and especially the dumb people who believe them, and the world will be a happier place. ... Problem, liberty and equality are also ideologies. Hatred, on the other hand, grows out of the baser ~~of~~ instincts. If we are going to make any progress against racism, we need to hold on to the nobler ideologies and reject the baser ones. How might be do that?

Some might say we turn to the State? I am doubtful; for one example:, Our prison system is run ~~not~~ by the state, but most often takes a simple criminal and rehabilitates them into a racist criminal.

Schools? Teachers and administrators can have a big influence on students and I hope they will continue to take a lead role in ~~attempting to overcome~~<sup>fighting</sup> racism. But the values taught at home are more likely to stick in the long run.

The real antidote to hatred and prejudice is love.

Any religion, institution or ideology worth its salt must increase our capacity to love.

Love, is just the only thing that there's just too little of.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment