

OPINION

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Ushering In a New World Community

True justice will respect differences

BY MATTHEW JOHNSON

It is unfortunate that in the 21st century we are still subjected to the kind of propaganda that positions white people and white men in particular as the chosen ones of history and, indeed, the future.

It's no secret that white nationalism is resurgent under Trump, who recently identified himself as a "nationalist" as opposed to someone who cares about all the world's citizens. It is far from a stretch to assume that this was a signal to his base and that the only reason he left out the word "white" is because even he's not prepared to go that far — at least not yet.

His far-right supporters likely got the message, and some do not even bother with coded language — e.g. the Rise Above Movement or the Proud Boys — while others hide behind a pseudo-intellectual veneer. Racist views have become so mainstream that even a black teenager shamelessly disparaged her own race on a recent episode of Dr. Phil.

I recently came across a dis-

turbing yet significant example of white nationalist ideology and was shocked to recognize its author from an old social circle. I omit his name because my goal is not to single out an individual but an ideology. His writings were not an example of a lonely voice shouting through the wilderness — or I would not bother to comment. I fear that his is a view shared by many white men and the women



White men and women have an opportunity to (finally) break their own chains of oppressor status in an increasingly interdependent world. They have access to information that can lift them out of ignorance and toward a new enlightenment that goes beyond reformation within Western societies and emphasizes how the privileged center can relate more peacefully and justly to those on the margins.

who rely on them from all social strata. The Trump administration and its supporters would doubtless approve.

His talk of the so-called 'white man's burden' is a dark remnant from a past that lurks at the highest levels of government in the United States and currently threatens much of the world. Brazilian Pres-

ident-Elect Jair Bolsonaro, advised by ex-Trump handler Steve Bannon, is the latest political triumph of white nationalism. This is an ideology that promotes imperialism as a Social Darwinian imperative and confuses civilization with barbarism: its proponents fail to see that it is an indictment on a race if that race succeeds by riding the backs of others — not a source of pride.

I propose another burden that is far more noble: the burden of

privileged center can relate more peacefully and justly to those on the margins.

Moreover, in the information age the very concept of whiteness (or race, for that matter) is evolving into one that is far more dependent on ideology or self-identification than physical appearance or genetics. This is a positive development in the sense that many people — myself included — no longer feel the need to identify with an exclusive club based on

ures belong to humanity because nothing happens in perfect genetic isolation. (Don't take my word for it; read the acclaimed writer Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*.) But this is not to say that all cultures or peoples are identical — it's the concept of interdependence that white nationalists fail to grasp.

Unlike the extremes on both sides of the spectrum, I am not one who believes that any skin color represents good or evil — or that the answer to history's inequities and inequalities is to condemn the ancestors of those who came out on top. There is more rage than logic behind these views. However, justice must be done for the benefit of humanity: white, black, brown, red and yellow. It is the lack of justice that not only stokes the rage at the bottom, but also buttresses the fear at the top. The rise of Trump was predicated on this fear. But rage alone will not defeat him.

True justice will not only usher in a new world community that includes everyone while respecting differences — but will also ensure that burdensome white men will never again have to justify their privilege.

Matt Johnson, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is co-author of Trumpism.

This Holiday Season, I'm Standing with Migrants

Our shared humanity demands it

BY KERRI KENNEDY

This holiday season — a time so often associated with bringing family together — my thoughts keep turning to the families in the migrant caravans making their way to the U.S. southern border.

I had the privilege of spending four days in Mexico last month with my organization, the American Friends Service Committee, to assess the needs of participants in the caravan and expand human rights monitoring.

As I crept into my children's bedrooms to give them a kiss when I got back, resisting the urge to wake them up for cuddling and conversation, I thought about what would make me pick up with them and flee, with little notice and even less information about what would lie ahead.



Over and over again, our delegation heard of the need for more strollers for the migrant caravan. Could I even imagine dropping everything to walk 3,000 difficult miles with my children in my arms — without even a stroller?

Watching coverage of the U.S.

Like Mary and Joseph, who fled to Egypt when King Herod's government threatened their newborn child, Maria and so many other parents have picked up everything and undertaken a harrowing journey to save their children's lives.

firing tear gas at migrants at the border, and hearing the harrowing reports from my colleague who witnessed that violent repression, I thought again about the mothers I'd met in Mexico. What could push me to take the risk of facing this violence to protect my chil-

dren?

I met so many people in Mexico who joined the caravan because it was their only way out.

I think about "Maria" (not her real name), a young mother of four I met. Maria is from El Salvador, where violence and a complete lack of opportunities put her family at risk. One of her children had already been killed by gang violence.

When word spread of the caravan, Maria made a spontaneous choice to join. She told me she was in search of opportunity for her family, and the hope of seeing her children grow up in a place without constant danger.

Like Mary and Joseph, who fled

to Egypt when King Herod's government threatened their newborn child, Maria and so many other parents have picked up everything and undertaken a harrowing journey to save their children's lives.

Caravan participants I met expressed so much faith — both in God and the idea that United States is a place that embraces those fleeing violence and pover-

ty. What else can they do in the face of such an existential threat but hope and pray for a chance for their families to live?

In the season when many celebrate the birth of a child whose family had to flee to another country to keep him alive, what does

our shared humanity demand from parents making the same difficult choice today?

In the face of our government's cruelty, I feel called to stand up for the people of the migrant caravan. That's why the American Friends Service Committee has called for action under the name Love Knows No Borders: A moral call for migrant justice.

We mobilized faith leaders to the border earlier this month as groups lined up to host actions around the country expressing love and solidarity with migrants.

We are demanding that our country open its doors to people like Maria, and thousands of others, instead of meeting them with violence.

In this season of giving, I hope people of conscience across the country will join us in standing up for families in need of aid.

Kerri Kennedy oversees humanitarian and peacebuilding work in 17 countries for the American Friends Service Committee. Distributed by OtherWords.org.