

11/9/2016

It is the day after an election that surpassed almost everyone's worst fears and expectations; that is anyone who share's any of Community Democracy Workshop's beliefs and values (you know what they are, but look to cdworkshop.org for clarification) or that of any of the nation's other social justice organizations or movements: The election of a president exemplifying hate, bigotry and misogyny beyond any elected president in this or the last Century; a Republican party controlled by extremes of White Supremacy and societal exclusion followed by a large cheering and seemingly uncaring white crowd reminiscent of other countries and other times; a Republican party controlling both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court.

Like many, I have spent the day on social media, email and the phone with loved family, colleagues and friends processing thoughts and feelings in the immediate aftermath. Over hours, days and months a movement response will build. This has already begun, but for right now there is only raw reaction.

In North Carolina my grandson Micah, upon hearing from my daughter-in-law that Trump won the election, responded with "We all need to be white now, mama." He is six and an American of half African and half European ancestry. My daughter-in-law and grandchildren are Muslim.

In Freshwater, California my mother, a spritely 93, woke to memories that raise the emotional horror of flight from Europe in 1941, as a Jewish refugee. My aunt and cousin who remained behind in Marseille, unable to get visa's to leave, both died in Auschwitz.

Aged friends who have spent their entire adult lives working for justice tell me of experiencing the deepest depression of their lives, of feeling hopeless and immobile. I pass along wisdom shared by Bernice Johnson Reagon to a crowd of activists similarly despondent many years ago, that ended with: *"The only mistake we ever made was believing that we go into struggle for justice every day in order to win, when we go into struggle every day because it is the right way to lead a life"*.

The most difficult discussions today have been with close friends and work colleagues that are American Indian or African American. Almost to a person the sense of betrayal by white America is both hard and molten. It comes to something like this:

*We have been playing by the rules of building equality in America and when we have made progress despite the odds, you have, once again, changed the rules. It will be different from now on. We don't know how, but this is a turning point.*

As an American of European descent, all I can say is that I am by the side of all who join in both resistance and non-violent action to change the proximate trajectory of our country. I always have been and always will be, even though unlike friends of color, I can always choose to walk away. It is a commitment and a trust built by action, shared values and beliefs, not words. As I have understood John Powell to be saying, among many other things, it is time for a conscious movement of white's to join *with other people of color* in a movement under a banner of love and fierce commitment to equity.

With deep love for all in a troubling time,

Peter H Pennekamp