



The Spirit of Truth

Thaddaeus Elliott
Justice and Peace Fellow

There are times where my soul starts churning. A discomfort, a tumultuous sensation that rises from my gut desiring to be released as a cry of righteous indignation. It happens in moments when I am confronted with profound injustice, this need to speak truth and say, “enough is enough!” But it also happens when I am confronted with injustice in the mundane of everyday life.

Like the other day when I was scrolling through my Facebook feed and came across a post from one of my trans friends from back home in Florida. It was an announcement that they would be leaving their home, their friends, family, the community they gave so much to not because they got a better opportunity elsewhere or just wanted a change of pace, but to preserve their very life. The hateful and twisted rhetoric of “eradicating transgenderism” and of “demons and imps” painted a target on them and made the threat of violence against them real and palpable. This was not the first post of this vein from a trans friend in Florida and probably will not be the last to come across my feed. Still, it struck me in such a way that I feel compelled to lift it up and affirm the truth it breaks forth.

While not trans, I as a black queer person made the same assessment a year ago that I wouldn’t be able to truly live unless I left. So, I made my move. But unlike my friend who was courageous in naming their vulnerability publicly, I hid my disheartening discernment under the happy guise of moving for a great new opportunity to serve God and the church I love in a new way. The joy was true, and it was important to name and claim. However, it is also important to name and claim the uncomfortable and painful truth that the place I called home for 23 of the 32 years of my life is no longer hospitable to me and many others.

In John 14:16-17, Jesus tells the disciples he will ask the Creator to give us

an Advocate—the Spirit of Truth—to be with us forever. An Advocate that abides with us, is in us and acts in the world through us. This onslaught of policy attacks on not just trans bodies, but women and birthing bodies, poor bodies, disabled bodies, black and Indigenous bodies, the body of the earth—is meant not only to blind us to our common humanity, but to smother the flame of the Spirit in us as well. I believe it vital that we keep that flame alive because it is the source from which we draw to do the work of justice in our world. Every time we receive another’s truth, it adds fuel to our flame. And in turn, when we speak out what we know to be true, we can spark the Spirit in those who hear it.

What I know to be true is that my trans siblings like all people are wonderfully made in the image of God and are beloved by them. I pray all of us harmed by the pens and tongues of legislators blind to that truth find refuge, care, and love however and wherever they can. And I also pray that those of us who know the Truth and abide by it keep our flames fueled however and wherever we can so that the Advocate within may work through us.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thaddaeus Elliott is the Justice and Peace Fellow for the United Church of Christ.

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