

# How You Can Love the Church in This Culture of Hate

I am astonished at how Christians interact with one another

In fact, “astonished” may not even be a strong enough word. I am dismayed, heartbroken and at times even shaken when I read how Christians comment to each other on social media, blogs and Christian news sites.

Okay, I know that not everyone who engages in these forums is a Christian. But when this person claims the name of Christ while simultaneously making fun of and belittling the person they are commenting to, it leads me to wonder how it is that those who claim to be Christ’s disciples are so little like Christ.

We are living in a culture of hate.

Not only is murder on the rise and bullying taken on a whole new dimension my generation can’t relate to—and thus often shrugs off as being something normal kids just need to cope with (In our generation, we could find shelter behind the four walls of our home. Today’s generation has no shelter and has no walls to protect them from the insistent bullying that hunts them down no matter where they are and whether or not they have social media accounts).

**Even the church has bought into this culture of hate. We see:**

## **1. Name-calling:**

The old adage I used in preschool still applies: If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.

Or how about the verse, “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to

be so" (James 3:10).

## **2. Perpetual offense:**

I see this so often on Facebook. Someone expresses their opinion, and either the person commenting is offended by the post, or the one who posted it is offended by a comment. This often results in someone encouraging people to unlike or unfollow them.

"The discretion of a man defers his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (Prov. 19:11).

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19).

Christians should be known for giving grace, even when it's not deserved. *Especially* when it's not deserved.

Scripture instructs us to be slow in being offended, quick in offering forgiveness, slow in speaking our minds and quick in listening to what others have to say.

And in the verse in Proverbs it is says that it is our credit when we choose to overlook an offense.

## **3. Publicly calling people out:**

I often see Christians on social media call others out publicly for something they didn't agree with: either someone they personally knew (and thus should have handled it according to Scripture, and not publicly on social media) or a celebrity/political figure.

- Publicly calling out people's political affiliations or vote
- Publicly calling out someone's theological belief or practice
- Publicly calling out a pastor we don't agree with

There are times when the church at large needs to be warned about a false teacher or false prophet, but this should be handled through the proper channels; and steps should be taken that while public rebuke may be necessary, it is done in a spirit of love and restoration.

#### **4. Dredging up old offenses:**

Sadly, in light of the #MeToo movement, we see this happening more and more among Christians.

I have sympathy for women who have truly been sexually assaulted, and out of fear have kept silent, but now feel enough protection and strength to finally come forward so that justice can be served.

I can fully understand how a woman 20, 30 or 40-plus years ago would have felt enough intimidation and fear to remain silent: especially women with children to clothe and feed who feared for their reputation and ability to keep/find a job to provide for their home.

However, I also see a lot of Christians dredging up past offenses that don't require justice. It's as if they simply want to get things off of their chest while at the same time gathering around them people who support them in their anger and bitterness.

This isn't pleasing to God.

If you have truly forgiven, there is no reason to bring up the past.

### **How to Love the Church in This Culture of Hate**

If there ever was a time when the church needed to be reminded of Christ's command to love one another as He loved us, it is now.

In 1 John, we read that if we say we love God and yet hate our

brother, we are liars. Those are some strong words.

Jesus said that when we're angry at our brother, when we belittle and demean them, and call them names, we are murdering them in our heart because we are harboring hate in our heart toward them (Matt. 5).

## **We cannot be a part of this culture of hate and love God at the same time.**

As children of God, we must separate ourselves unto a new culture: a culture of God's love and grace.

- A culture that embraces those who have opinions that differ from our own
- A culture that allows Christians to have differing theological beliefs—as long as the gospel remains the same
- A culture that gives room for our brothers and sisters to grow in their understanding of Christ and His Word
- A culture that forgives immediately and fully, knowing that unforgiveness is a cancer that will destroy our relationship with Christ and His church
- A culture that considers that those who have offended us have likely sought Christ's forgiveness, and received it immediately and fully, therefore we are obligated to do as Christ did ... and allow it to remain in the sea of forgetfulness. {eoa}

**Rosilind Jukic**, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together, they live with their two active boys, and she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call*, where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can

*follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.*

*This article originally appeared at .*