

Positive and Negative Results From the Present Civil Unrest

During national crises, specific segments of the political and ideological spectrum attempt to capitalize and push their agendas.

Although this is unfortunate, after the horrific murder of George Floyd, there is potential for both good and bad results.

Good Results

1. **Police reform is being seriously considered.** Having more training for the police and making significant shifts in community relations are good things. They could result in systemic changes in law enforcement. Police are trained to maintain law and order, not to be chaplains and pastors. For example, one possible change in policy is: "if a non-weaponized emotionally disturbed person is causing problems, a chaplain and or a social worker should be called to respond initially." Chaplains, pastors and social workers are trained to connect with people on an emotional level, not just on the level of law and order. Having non-police personnel respond in certain situations can undoubtedly help to de-escalate volatile situations and may lower the number of police shootings and forcible arrests.
2. **Whites and blacks are marching alongside one another.** Mid-20th-century civil rights marches were populated primarily by African Americans, which illustrated the vast chasm between white and black communities. However, contemporary protests represent various ethnic groups working together. The racial diversion in these protests has given many black/brown communities hope as they believe the Caucasian community is finally entering into

their narrative and understanding their historical pain.

3. **There is an honest dialogue about ethnic relationships.** Now more than ever, it seems as if white and black people are entering into honest dialogue related to past and present race relations. This dialogue gives us great hope for a more genuine understanding between both people groups.
4. **Young people are obtaining a sense of purpose related to societal change.** For the most part, the Millennials have been branded as the “me” or “selfie” generation (self-obsessed, spoiled, soft and narcissistic). Perhaps both Generation Z and Millennials will get a dose of reality, which will hopefully expedite their journey towards becoming mature adults.
5. **Black voices are being heard loud and clear.** Although I cannot entirely agree with the ideology, goals and solutions being put forth by all black voices, I am delighted that at least they are being taken seriously. In the past, the only black people listened to were famous black athletes and a few activists. Now, however, that voice has expanded to include all thoughtful people of color who have something to say. I believe all humans deserve dignity because they are image-bearers of God. It is good to pause to hear the personal narrative of many for collective consciousness, whether we agree or disagree with their conclusions. However, the only way the collective voice will result in human flourishing will be when each individual (regardless of ethnicity) takes responsibility for the part they play in either making their community better or worse.
6. **Pastors and churches are at the forefront of peaceful, prayerful marches.** While many in the white church remained silent during the Civil Rights marches in the 1950s and '60s, many of the present-day marches are led by black and white pastors and leaders. Generally, these marches are for prayer, repentance and a call for police reform. Whether we agree with all the proclamations by

pastors, many of whom are ignorant of the biblical worldview and the cause of systemic poverty, I am happy that the church is at least active being silent and standing against racism.

Negative Results

1. **The civil unrest is exposing racism.** Unfortunately, extremists on the left and the right now have an excuse to politicize, promote and perpetuate their evil ideologies. Right white nationalists, certain militias, the KKK and other white supremacist groups are growing in number and raising their ugly heads.

Extreme radical expressions on the left like antifa, black racist groups like the New Black Panther party, who spew violent rhetoric against Jews and whites, and the Nation of Islam, with its theology of innate black superiority over whites and Jews, play on the fears of distinct ethnic groups. Civil unrest has enabled them to thrive even more in these turbulent times.

2. **Cities, including black and brown communities, have been decimated by mob violence.** When people don't think they are being heard, they protest. Rioters filled with anger and rage take advantage of the protest and use the opportunity to loot stores or cause violence. If these violent looters were truly upset over the murder of George Floyd, why would they burn down black and brown owned stores and communities, which require greater police presence in their communities? Those using this crisis to destroy rather than build up their communities demonstrate that they are not sincere in their protestation against the murder of George Floyd.
3. **Anarchists and ultra-liberals are attempting to abolish the police force.** It is one thing to call for police reform, but abolishing the police will only enable gang members to carve up their neighborhoods to become the

warlords and drug lords of their community. There is no such thing as a vacuum. Somebody or some group is going to enforce their brand of law and order. Abolishing the whole police force instead of taking measures to rid it of corrupt cops, will become a failed social experiment that will further harm at-risk communities. While many on the far left point to the abolishing of the police force in Camden, New Jersey, as a good portent of possible outcomes, the truth of the matter is Camden achieved most of the police force after it was shut down and had made sweeping reforms.

Of course, the police are not the root of high crime. Doing away with them will not solve the issues in our at-risk communities. People cannot blame the police for fatherlessness, family fragmentation, poor quality public education and economic challenges that have to be dealt with at both a systemic and an individual level. The police are only called to be “peacekeepers” and are not the ones assigned to be the peacemakers.

4. **Social justice advocates are still advocating for policies that worsen systemic poverty in at-risk communities.** While marching is rightly calling for “social justice,” unfortunately, the term “social justice” has been hijacked by those with a socialist/Marxist ideology. The socialist/Marxist has never historically lifted a nation or a community.

Data doesn't lie! Many of the so-called “Great Society” programs launched by Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s have failed to improve systemic poverty in at-risk black and brown communities. Thomas Sowell, a leading economist and black public intellectual, explains that welfare damages the poor. “When from work, welfare is paying him [the poor man] not to do what he needs to do...” He says regarding welfare, “It does encourage teen has been a massive increase of teen pregnancy among blacks in the era of increased welfare...” Regarding

anti-poverty programs, he said, "The problem with the that the No. 1 incentive of a bureaucracy is to enlarge itself, and it cannot do that by allowing its constituents (the poor) to become more independent."

5. Extremists and self-serving leaders utilize civil unrest to further their agenda. Since human nature is fallen, nobody's agenda is entirely pure (Ps. 14). That being said, there is a tendency for self-serving leaders to use civil unrest as a smokescreen to mask their true intentions. Some political leaders will cry against racism primarily to stir up their base so they can be re-elected. Others will focus only on the looters to stir up their base. Furthermore, if we review activism after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life, some have hijacked the civil rights movement for their political ends. I believe some have become rich and famous and have garnered a vast media platform even though they have not successfully elevated even one at-risk community. Many thrive when there is unrest since their fame depends on marches and getting in front of television cameras. This does not demean the whole civil rights movement or the noble work of Dr. King; it merely means that we have to have the discernment to know who to trust to lead during this time.

In conclusion, it is incumbent upon the church to nurture a new generation of prophetic social activists who will reflect biblical justice. God called the church to function as the light of the world and the city on a hill. No secular nation or political system can do this. If the church doesn't raise community leaders in every aspect of society, then the evil one will highlight his brand of justice, reform and economics that will continue to enslave the very people for whom they purport to advocate for. {eoa}

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