

Black History Month

By Katrina Pekich-Bundy

If you've been paying attention to the news or social media, chances are you've seen plenty of information on the Super Bowl Halftime show. The rapper, Kendrick Lamar, began with a reminder to white people – "this isn't about you." Many took that to say that it wasn't for white people at all. And, in most ways yes, but I think there is something else we should pay attention to from the Halftime show.

My hot take is that it wasn't there to entertain me – the performance wasn't meant for me, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't pay attention. As a white woman I have been sitting and listening to the voices of Black people, hearing their beautiful exegesis on Uncle Sam's words, Kendrick Lamar's choice of songs, Serena Williams's Crip Walk, and more. In the past week I've learned the history of the Crip Walk, by Henry "Crip" Heard. (Note that he gave himself the name "Crip" as a way of reclaiming what has been used as a derogatory term for disabled people. You can read more here: https://blacklistedsaint.substack.com/p/the-crip-walk-a-dance-rooted-in-black?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web) I heard the lyric "Forty acres and a mule," knowing the reference, but not knowing why that was never fulfilled (short answer is Andrew Johnson, read more here: <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/the-truth-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule/>). The great Poet Laureate, K Dot reminded me to "be humble, sit down." This wasn't my time to criticize the dancing or marching or rapping or whatever I didn't understand (but also, can we talk about how amazing the set, the dancing, and costumes were?). None of this was "for" me, but that doesn't mean there weren't important things within I needed to learn.

The Mission Committee has been working diligently on creating a policy beginning to foster Antiracism in our presbytery. It is a living document that will continue to be improved over time, but it is a starting place. It is an imperfect document, and we are imperfect people, but we must begin having conversations, learning, and repenting of the sin of racism.

Why are we only focusing on Antiracism, when there are so many justice issues out there? The very uncomplicated answer is that we have been mandated by the 2026th General Assembly to create an Antiracism policy. The more nuanced answer is that we have to begin somewhere, and the Mission Committee has had many conversations on ways we can create trainings that focus on a variety of justice issues, including LGBTQIA+ and hunger and immigration issues and health care. These days we are in no shortage of justice issues, unfortunately. We have plenty of room for growth. And much yet to learn. So we're starting here.

If you watched the halftime show and didn't understand the Antiracism references, I encourage you to go back and listen to Black voices. If you didn't watch it at all, I encourage you to sit with it to learn more. It truly was a work of art. Not everyone appreciates or understands all art – and that's ok. But it doesn't make it any less art.

Too often I think white people have two approaches - we either appropriate something (that's when we take someone else's culture and make it our own) or we ignore it and say, "that's not ours," pushing it to the side and essentially attempting to devalue it. When white people shrug our shoulders and say, "I don't get it," we are also saying, "and it's not worth trying to understand." The richness is realizing that we still have so much to learn. Yes, we aren't always the center and need to step out of the spotlight - and we need to learn from those who have been pushed out of the spotlight for so long, who have been explaining this to us for generations.

Before you shrug this off as another Millennial article, recognize that the halftime show is one of the mediums that truly the world is listening to right now. Think about it - more people are still talking about this powerful message than my sermon on Sunday, or your sermon, or your pastor's sermon. Lamar had an audience, and he didn't waste his time. He saw the need to talk about how this country was created on the backs of enslaved Black people - and did so in a way that we must recognize and acknowledge. Black History does not owe white people anything - and doesn't need to look the way white people want it to look - that's how we have ended up with white-washed history to begin with.

If you aren't into parsing the Super Bowl halftime show, there are plenty of articles, books, and podcasts available. Don't walk away from this article without new knowledge - seek it out. Have a question or want to have a conversation about this? Send me an email -

Rev.Katrina@firstpres.net. I don't have all the answers, but I'm happy to help you process and learn. It is our responsibility as Christians to work together to end injustice. As Lila Watson said, "If you've come here to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, let's work together."

More Resources:

Oh, My Shepherd - a hymn of Repentance by Amanda Udis-Kessler

<https://youtu.be/WnnUH1yE1bA?si=lGnIvDxesezK3cX5>

Watch the Super Bowl Halftime Show here- <https://youtu.be/KDorKy-13ak?si=GIGPYJ6uwJ2oB8Kq>

Justice League GLM: Racial Justice & Reparations in Lansing, MI - <https://www.justiceleagueglm.org/>