

Strangers No Longer

July 2, 2020

An Evening with Rev. Tellis Chapman

Introduction

Wm. O'Brien

Pastor Chapman, we've seen your bio. We want to thank you. Galilee Baptist missionary Church is a great place on the East side, over on Outer Drive. I also got to know Pastor Chapman as a 'pastor of pastors,' and is known for his ministry, his preaching. Pastor Chapman, take your time and please bring a message. Pastor Chapman:

Pastor Tellis Chapman

Thank you, Bill, and to each of you who joined tonight's talk, Strangers No Longer, and trustingly we will have some allies in our effort to bring about social justice in every respect and for everyone. And until everyone is OK, no one is OK, as others say, feel, or contend that because of where they are, politically, socio-economically, that all else should be the same, or is the same, where it's all actually, it is not. That's why we are on this call tonight.

Thank you, Bill, for convening us; and I greet you with brotherly love. Several things you guys pointed out: hate verbiage, racists posts on social media, immigration, and discrimination in that regard, and your efforts to meet with police chiefs in your respective cities. I believe I have captured all of them, and if I have missed any of them, you can, you know, let me know what they are.

As for what I am doing presently, I have organized a coalition of pastors throughout Michigan - that's all over Michigan - imams, rabbis, pastors - Protestant and Catholic - white, black, male and female, for the sake of drafting proposals to recommend to the Michigan legislature, to the governor, to the attorney general, relative to social justice and equal treatment under the law, against the backdrop of the United States Constitution. We're not necessarily into integration, but immigration reform is a social justice issue, as illegal immigrants, families of legal immigrants in the United States, and, hopefully, we can make some connection there.

Our objective is to move from protest to public policy. Since the George Floyd death, which was pretty much the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, if

you will, that woke America up relative to injustice, police misconduct, and the strength of police unions, and the misuse of coverups that police unions indulged.

I do not mean to suggest, infer, or imply, or insinuate that police are bad; but technology has caught up with rogue cops and their treatment of people; and, from my vantage point, particularly people of color. My people are dying because of police misconduct and have been for a very, very long time. And I want to say thank you to my Jewish brothers and sisters, Moslem brothers and sisters, white brothers and sisters, Catholic brothers and sisters, Methodist and Lutheran for coming and rallying around the issue of social justice. If, and it's all right to protest, and we thank God for protests; it raises awareness. But, if protests do not result in transformation of public policy, we're just walking streets and holding up signs, yelling and screaming. All of that's fine if it draws attention; but the attention must go to action to effect public policy. And this is where we are at an impasse with the Michigan legislature.

As you very well know, it is pretty much controlled by the Republican, right wing conservatism that's pushing an agenda from the Federal level down, which makes it very hard for a Democratic governor and grass roots to get anything done.

There are several things I could talk to you guys tonight. These are the things we took to the governor - we met with the governor virtually - we've met with the lieutenant-governor; we went to Lansing. Some of you guys saw the interfaith council during our press conference in Lansing last Thursday (June 25, 2020). We are calling for the following:

- Residency: police living where they receive their paycheck; and therefore, tax dollars away from the tax base where they live. If the killers of George Floyd knew George Floyd, all they would have had to say was, "George, you know better; go back and make it right." If Eric Garner had been known by the police, who choked him to death, would have said, "Eric, go home; you can't sell cigarettes on the corner in front of the store." When I was growing up as a kid, I grew up in a segregated community and society. I read the signs that said, "White only," "Black only." I was turned away from doors and told, you know, "We don't serve your people here;" you know, the Ku Klux Klan marches, crosses burning, etc. These types of optics remain. And to see this recurring through the media and television only reopens old wounds. But the police who live in our town, they knew us, and we knew them. And when we saw them coming, we said, "OK." It was all

right. "This is it; you don't do that. You know better. I know your parents, etc. I know where you live;" that sort of thing. So I believe residency will not only keep tax dollars within the city, but I believe residency will bring police and people closer together, particularly with forums on a regular basis, whereby police can hear the venting of the people in the neighborhoods or districts, or beats where they serve.

- Also, we have discussed decertification of police who have been found guilty of misconduct. If a lawyer can be disbarred, if a doctor can have his license revoked for the sake that they cannot practice medicine anymore, why not an what about the policeman who has been a bad track record of police misconduct: leave Detroit, go to Royal Oak; leave Royal Oak, go to Farmington; leave Farmington, go to Novi. There is no database to track the record of that bad cop. So, in fact, a doctor's license can be revoked, the lawyer's license can be revoked, then, I believe, those who serve the public should suffer the same consequence.
- We're also arguing for a review board, occupied by the public with something of power. Just observing what police are doing is one thing is one thing; but review board that can hold a policeman accountable with adequate data and information as of what that policeman has done incorrectly, or misrepresented their badge, their bars, their oath of office, they can be held accountable. In other words, we need now someone to police the police: body cams are often inactive, no audio, distorted video, order for arrest predicated on active body cams, no firing into moving cars or a leaving suspect. Now, the general government, last week, or shall I say the House, passed the George Floyd bill, which is designed to hold police accountable. The governor, as of Monday (June 29, 2020), I believe, rolled out her police reform that she would support. But, in her reform statement, there are no consequences stipulated for police misconduct. So, we're in conversation with her about that as of last night (July 1, 2020). And we're going to continue that as we go into next week, to see if she is willing to receive our requested or recommended addendum to her policy reform rollout.

We are also, and if your guys, if I am carrying it too fast, just ask me to slow down. It's quite a bit, and I'm just giving you a few of the things we're asking for

- We do not believe in defunding the police. We do believe that the funds can be redirected to a more community involvement, i.e., review board or police. Now, much of the cases that are fought, the charges, those who would attempt to prosecute the police, the funds come from the taxpayer. Our argument is: it should come from the police fund, particularly, when they lose the case.
- This also brings up indemnification, if in fact, I have been assaulted by a policeman, I go to court. There should be some kind of indemnification to help me cover my financial loses. That does not exist now. We are also requesting that the police who have been found guilty of misconduct will lose their benefits, etc., and that a special prosecutor will be assigned to the case, who argues the case on behalf of the citizen who has been assaulted.

I could go on and on with this, but this is a summation of our argument and our proposals with the governor and with the Michigan legislature. As for concerns you brought up tonight, I believe that since we now are a legitimate interfaith coalition, wherever your county is, or your city is, if you could pass that information onto Bill (O'Brien), written form or typed form, e-mail, he will get that to me and we will locate those pastors or pastor in that area to put you in touch with those pastors or with that pastor, so that we can support that pastor collectively, as they help facilitate your meeting with the chief of police, or with the sheriff, etc.

Otherwise, with respect to immigration, that's another issue that, I think, we can discuss aside from police reform. So, I think, Bill (O'Brien), what we shall have discussed on police reform, we could Segway into what we could possibly do relative to immigration.

I hope I didn't give you guys too much at one time. This is so grossly affecting our community. And I know we are asking for a whole lot. And the attorney general is going to help push this agenda. Some of what's going to be done will be done by

executive order by the governor; and some of it is going to have to happen in a referendum. And we can discuss that if you guys like.

I'll entertain your questions.

Transcribed by

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