



“What is Wrong with You People?”

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I am writing this article from New York City as I engage with CSW, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The annual Commission is the world’s largest conference on women and meets to address widespread inequalities, violence, and discrimination against women. This 2025 CSW marks the thirtieth anniversary of the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#), which was held in China in 1995, and the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#).

The Beijing Declaration is considered the key global policy document on gender equality and the advancement of women. The Declaration addresses [twelve critical areas of concern](#) by setting strategic objectives and actions for achieving gender equality. The focus of CSW this year is the Beijing Declaration thirty-year review to ascertain the attainment of objectives and to evaluate progress.

The meeting is in full swing and we’re less than halfway through the two-week session.

It is also Lent... and Ramadan, and the Jewish holiday Purim.

There are many voices filling the space, not only here in New York but across the country and world, as we speak of women’s rights and their intersection with economic development, climate change and global disasters, armed conflicts, gender-based violence, food insecurity, refugees and displaced persons—including large numbers of children and families—current policies on immigration, tensions in political agendas, and conflicts at home and abroad.

The common consensus... we have a long way to go. The [UN Women’s Review 30 Years After Beijing](#) provides a

detailed analysis.

I hear the cacophony of voices, the current crises, the movement for women's rights that in many places, including the US, seems to be moving backwards rather than forward as we:

- Revoke the White House Gender Policy Council.
- Slash global funding for maternal health.
- Halt PEPFAR, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS

Relief, suspending global treatment and prevention services.

There is one voice that I hear loudly and distinctly. It will not leave my mind.

The voice doesn't come from the UN webinars, sessions, and side events but from a ten-year-old boy who I met in the early days of my ministry, more than three decades ago.

As a young mission intern in south Florida, I was responsible for running a camp for children, all of whom had been referred by local support and service agencies. They came from troubled and traumatic backgrounds. Benjamin was no exception.

The last night of camp, Benjamin was especially disruptive, and I invited him to take a walk around camp during the evening program. We walked in silence, the air around us heavy with heat and mosquitos. Finally, Benjamin broke the silence with a bit of a snort and the question that has lived with me over the decades. Benjamin asked, "What is wrong with you people?"

I braced myself for a scathing diatribe as I said, "what do you mean, Benjamin?" I wasn't prepared for his reply: "I've been mean all week, didn't listen to anyone... and you knooooowww those names I called those male counselors. I didn't do what anyone told me to do..." He paused before continuing, "Nobody hit me. All week. No one even yelled at me. You people even say you like me. I don't understand people like you. What is wrong with you people?"

It's Benjamin's voice that is loudest in my head these days.

The work of justice in the world requires an unusual type of love. A

Jesus kind of love—radical, inclusive, welcoming, and unwavering. A kind of love that people don't understand. A kind of love that accepts nothing less than justice. A steadfast love. A love that doesn't give tit for tat but loves beyond understanding. A love that unwaveringly demands justice. A Love that overcomes evil with good. A kind of love that makes people ask...

What is wrong with you people?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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