

Ep #10: ICE Violence, Righteous Anger,
and Christian Peacemaking



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Tracie L. Morgan & Ashley Glimasinski

[Hope In Action: Navigating Immigration with Faith and Care](#)

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Ashley: In all of this, I keep thinking about Jeremiah 29:7, where God calls us to seek the welfare of the city. And seeking the welfare of our communities means listening, especially to those who are most impacted by harm and injustice, not just after tragedy and not just when it's trending, but consistently before things reach a breaking point.

Tracie: And that kind of listening requires humility. It asks some of us to sit with discomfort and to acknowledge that our experiences aren't universal, and that justice and safety can't be defined only by those who've historically had the most protection and who have also defined who is worthy of that justice and safety.

Welcome to Hope In Action, where we offer clear insights, practical tools, and inspiring stories to navigate immigration with confidence, compassion, and faith. Each week, we break down the law, share real-world examples, and help you speak up, live out your values, and make a difference in your community.

Whether you're looking to understand immigration through a faith-driven lens, have courageous conversations with those who matter to you, or take small steps toward justice, you're in the right place. Let's dive in.

Tracie: Welcome to Hope in Action. We want to begin by acknowledging that this is a hard episode to record and likely a hard one to listen to. We're recording this in late January 2026. Over the past few weeks, our country has witnessed two deeply troubling deaths connected to federal immigration enforcement. Earlier this month, Renée Good was killed during an encounter involving ICE, and just this past weekend, Alex Peretti was killed during an ICE operation. These are two different people, two different situations, and two stories that are still under investigation. But what they share is this: two human lives were lost, two families are grieving, and many communities are left shaken, asking, how does this keep happening?

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Ashley: And for many people, hearing these stories back-to-back has stirred a complicated mix of emotions, like grief, shock, anger, fear, confusion, and exhaustion. If you're listening and you feel unsettled in your body, heavy in your chest, or angry in a way that you don't quite know what to do with, we want to say this clearly: that response makes sense.

Tracie: There are moments when the news doesn't just inform us, it confronts us head-on. And for many of us, this is one of those moments.

Ashley: Especially for immigrant communities and for communities that have long experienced state violence, these deaths do not feel isolated. They feel like part of a larger pattern, one that deepens fear and erodes trust.

Tracie: We also want to be clear about what this episode is and what it is not. We are not here to speculate about details that are still unfolding. We are not here to assign criminal guilt or to inflame fear.

Ashley: But we are here to ask a deeper question that people of faith cannot avoid. How do Christians respond when state power results in the death of a civilian?

Tracie: And what does it look like to grieve honestly and to hold anger faithfully without shutting down and without losing our moral grounding?

Ashley: That's the conversation we're inviting you into today.

Tracie: Now, before we talk about policy, before we talk about theology, before we even talk about what should happen next, and before we introduce today's guest, we have to talk about the human reality of what has happened. Renée Good and Alex Peretti were real people. They are not headlines. They were not political talking points. These were human beings who were deeply loved. They belonged to their families and their

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communities, and their lives have now been permanently altered. Again, their stories are not identical. The circumstances of their deaths are different, and investigations, we're hoping investigations, are still unfolding. But in both cases, a life was lost in an encounter involving federal immigration enforcement, and that alone demands our attention and care.

Ashley: When someone dies violently, especially in a moment involving law enforcement or federal agents, there's a strong temptation to move too quickly to explanations, to ask what went wrong or who's responsible. Those questions matter, but they're not the first questions we should be asking.

Tracie: The first thing that scripture calls us to do is to see the people who were lost. Genesis 1:27 tells us that every human being is made in the image of God. That means Renée's life and Alex's lives, they carried inherent dignity and worth, not because of what they did, not because of legal status, not because of how the story is framed, but because they bore God's image.

Ashley: The deaths of Renée Good and Alex Peretti have sparked grief, vigils, protest, and deep public anguish. And that response isn't irrational. It's a collective recognition that something profoundly serious has happened.

Tracie: When lethal force is used by a government agent against a civilian, it should stop us in our tracks. It should unsettle us, and it should provoke hard questions, not because we already know the answers, but because human life is sacred.

Ashley: And it should also provoke emotion. Anger in the face of injustice isn't sinful by default. Ephesians 4:26 tells us, "Be angry and do not sin." That verse doesn't command anger, it actually assumes it. And scripture acknowledges that anger will arise when harm is done.

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Tracie: Anger can be a moral signal. It can tell us that something sacred has been violated. It can alert us to the fact that a human life was lost in a way that demands attention, care, and accountability. And pretending that we don't feel that anger doesn't make us more faithful. Often, it just makes us more disconnected.

Ashley: So to help us think through how Christians can hold grief, anger, and a commitment to peace together, we're joined today by a special guest, Dr. Jer Swigart, co-founder and executive director of Global Immersion, a peacemaking training organization that equips everyday people to mend deep divides. So Jer, thank you so much for joining us today, and we heard that you've been really busy recently.

Jer: Oh, listen, it's great to be with you. And yeah, I mean, if we're not, if we're not moving from the streets of Minneapolis to the streets of our own cities right now, you know, or at least that's what my life looks like at the minute. So moving fast, but the moment, the moment requires it. So what a gift to take a breath with you two.

Tracie: Well, thank you so much. I would love to hear about your last week. I can't imagine that it started and ended the way that you imagined it would. So can you fill us in?

Jer: Yeah, yeah, not on the cards. Well, you know, I mean, my work takes me into war zones, whether battlefields or boardrooms all over the world. And so it's kind of an odd life to find myself moving toward where the heat is most intense. And in those spaces, be with the people who are either at war or at trying to figure out how to protect folk or mend what's broken between us, you know? And so, so I never know what a given week is going to look like, frankly. And but obviously, we, like you all, we've been watching what's going on in Minnesota with heavy hearts and deep concern. You know, this what's happening there, you know, from my friends, from their perspectives who are on the ground in the front lines,

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there's some pretty significant breaches of just even our constitutional rights. So and more importantly, there are very, very vulnerable people who have worked really hard to be on this soil, who have been characterized into violent and dangerous people that are being ripped from their homes, abducted from our neighborhoods.

And what we see in Minnesota is a movement of organized nonviolent resistance saying, no, no, no, this is our city and this is wrong. And so watching that unfold and then, you know, it was a week ago Friday, a call went out, a national call for clergy to show up. I think there was a real understanding, especially in the wake of the execution of Renée Good, that this was growing more dangerous. And is as is always the case, right? In the midst of the danger when clergy are called upon to fill the streets, it does something. It does something to the movement, right? When you have people with stoles and collars and kippas and all of the other beautiful regalia that our clergy across traditions wear, show up and put our bodies between the violence and the protesters, things change. And that was the hunch. And so a call went out last Friday.

Over 1,000 of us responded from all over the country, including 11 clergy here from Spokane, Washington, where I live. And we went there to witness what was happening on the ground. We went there to be in solidarity with the people who are vulnerable and being hunted, as well as those who are protecting them. And we went there to learn because the strategies of contemporary nonviolent resistance are unfolding in the streets of Minneapolis, right? They're writing the contemporary playbooks for us. And they invited us there to learn real time so that we could bring these strategies back home to our own places. We arrived on Wednesday. We trained all day Thursday, and then we flooded the streets and we did sit-ins that shut down Target headquarters and shut down the airport for a while. There were 100 of us that got arrested, you know? So again, when and we all arrived recognizing that the violence that our most vulnerable kin were

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absorbing real time, we were there to absorb it on their behalf. And we were prepared to do so.

And what we witnessed was both a breathtaking, a suffocating violence, and an astounding nonviolent response, you know? And so, and then, of course, on Saturday, 50,000 people are marching in the streets of Minneapolis at -22 degrees, and we all knew that there would be atonement for that kind of nonviolent action. And we were very sober about that. We were very aware of that. And of course, in the morning hours of Saturday, as we are literally departing, wheels in the air, we learned that a young man had been executed. We later find out that's Alex Peretti, you know? So this is the reality. And now we're home. And now, now the work is to is to storytell, it's to organize, it's to equip, it's to grow the movement because what we saw over there was Republicans and Democrats standing side by side.

I brought a conservative evangelical pastor and a progressive Catholic minister with me from Spokane, right? Like this is what I'm talking about. And so these myths around like ideological divides are real, but like these myths that they're stronger than us are just being debunked real time. I'm standing next to a Republican brother holding up a sign, he's like, I'm Republican and this is nonsense, right? And so what we're seeing, it's taken tragedy again, but what we're seeing is people waking up to what is a massive overreach, the further weaponizing of our government against us, not Republicans or Democrats, us collectively. And people standing up in mass, getting in the way. And so we're here to raise the capacity of that work here in Spokane and hopefully through this conversation, many more of you, the revolution is upon us and it's a restorative one.

Ashley: It really is, Jer. That's just so empowering. As you were talking about the movement that you had, the connections that you made, and the conversations, the actions that took place there in Minnesota, I just got

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chills just thinking about that many people coming together, rising up together, knowing that this is the moment when we cannot sit back anymore and that calls for change. And I know that you've spent time in many different places. You alluded to this as well in Israel, Palestine, and in Northern Ireland. You've been in places where conflict has gone on for generations in some places. And did you ever expect to see that here in the United States? Did you learn anything from those encounters, from those relationships that you think could be useful here in the United States as we've come to face somewhat similar moments now in our own times?

Jer: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, I mean, this, I think what's happening right now is an inevitability. This isn't surprising. This has been in the works for years and years. And I think that what this particular administration underestimates is our collective will as people, as neighbors. And I think there's a there's a significant miscalculation of we who have eyes and brains and hearts and hands that we can no longer, we're no longer being duped to reach for power so that we can win. We're starting to recognize that we've got wingspan and fingers to reach for one another. And that's actually the beautiful way forward, right? And so and I think that those are the lessons that can be learned from places of conflict all around the world that I've had the privilege to be in and to learn from some of the best reconcilers on the planet.

Authoritarianism isn't undone by a stronger military or more violence. It's undone by moms who are figuring out what are the tools and the resources in their hands and deploying them. You know, it's people making food. It's people opening up their basements. It's people making art and singing songs, right? It's we who are actually saying to our politicians, you don't have power, we have power. You don't work for some kind of figurehead. You work for us. And in very, very tangible and creative nonviolent ways, bringing them to and holding them accountable to that, right? Like that's what's worked. You look at the history of the public curbing of authoritarian

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reach, and it has always been nonviolent. It has always been hyperlocal. It has always been deeply relational, and it has always taken all of us recognizing that we're in this together. You know what I'm saying?

And the other thing I think I would just say very quickly on this is one of the cautions that we received while we were on the ground in Minnesota, especially from our black and indigenous kin, was a caution about making too many comparisons to World War II and Nazism and Gestapo and all those types of things. While there's truth to that, I mean, you look at the former field commander and even his attire was very, very intentionally selected. The caution was like, don't be so aggressive at making these parallels from World War II because what is happening here is deeply American. This is an American story. This is a slave patrol reality, right? You have a deputized white government standing up a militarized, a paramilitary force to hunt down people of color. I watched it with my own eyes. 12 ICE agents pile out of these vehicles to harass a Latino pregnant woman in her vehicle, simply because her skin color was darker than theirs. They had no idea who she was, right? I'm watching this happen in real time. And yeah, there are parallels to World War II. This is deeply American. This has happened on our soil for hundreds of years. And I think it's important for us to give heed to the counsel of our black and indigenous kin in that regard.

Ashley: So we're excited to bring that conversation to our listeners later in this episode. I want to come back to our topic of the episode as well, because we're talking about righteous anger here. And you know, some people may wonder why did we invite a peacemaker to a conversation about anger. And I really do believe the two are connected because when we talk about peacemaking, for me, I assume that there's been a divide somewhere, a split that has occurred that has driven people apart from each other, whether that split is emotional or physical or spiritual. But it feels like these disagreements, maybe they're small or they're large, they're often accompanied by anger. So before peacemaking can happen, we

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have to address that anger is what I'm assuming in this case. Can you speak some to that?

Jer: If I could be so bold to quote one of my literary mentors, Stanley Hauerwas, he says this, and forgive my language, it's his, not mine. He says, I'm a peacemaker because of the violent *** that I really am. I think we have to understand first and foremost, friends, that peacemaking and peacekeeping are very different. Peacekeeping means we maintain an unjust status quo, we just help people be quiet about it. Peacemaking is disruptive, and I want to be, I resonate with Stanley Hauerwas, befriending anger is the active work for us, for we who in all sorts of different ways, and we all have different risk thresholds and we all have different front lines of conflict, right? Like, but if we're going to be people, if we're going to become everyday peacemakers, it means that we're going to see things, we're going to witness injustice, and if it doesn't make us angry, we're not close enough to it.

And I think that many of us, especially speaking as someone groomed in a conservative Republican Midwestern evangelicalism, I was taught to tamp down anger. Like anger wasn't necessarily an emotion that I knew how to befriend, much less recognize that anger is some really good juice. It's important. It's important that we get angry. You know what I'm saying? And so I'm sitting here with you today angry, and I don't know what my face looks like, but behind the crinkled eye whimsical grin, I'm angry. And it's very, very important for me to understand and befriend that anger. And by befriend, I mean, allow it to be a companion in my life. I'm not running away from it, but I also recognize that anger is not a sustaining fuel. It's like the ignition. A friend of mine just gave me this illustration. It's like the ignition that gets us off the launchpad, but anger is not going to sustain us in the restorative revolution. Love does. Love is the sustaining fuel, right? Like I and so that's like I'm I'm angry because I have, whether from Gaza to the streets of Minnesota, friends are dead. Okay? Like this isn't a cause for me.

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This isn't something that I care about. Like I have people who aren't on the planet anymore because of injustice and violence. And so much of it is endorsed by the theology that I inherited. And I'm angry about that. And I befriend it and I let it be fuel, but the fuel, I have to move with merciful action, right? Because if I don't befriend anger, it's going to turn into a dehumanizing rage. And that's when I hurt people.

Tracie: Yeah.

Jer: Right? And so like in this case, when I'm witnessing undertrained, over resourced men behind badges and guns and the myth of absolute immunity terrorizing a young Latina sister who's pregnant, that's outrageous. Now, it's easy for me to feel empathy and compassion toward her. The question is, if I don't befriend anger, I'm going to tip into dehumanizing rage and either do something that's not good, that's that's violence in return, or in my own mind, I'm going to create caricatures and cartoons about who that dude is or who those guys are that are doing it. And turns out that's actually not helpful. So I think like the work of the gospel in my life right now, my heavy reliance on the spirit of the resurrected one in my life right now is holding anger in check, befriending it, so that when I see this, I recognize that there is a story and there is an ideology and there is a darkness and there's a there's there's a dupe, they've been duped. There are things going on.

You cannot do what these ICE agents are doing without some kind of really severe thing, darkness happening inside of them. And it's not going to help me to dehumanize them and turn them into cartoons. I have to remain generous toward them and the only way that's going to happen is if I befriend anger here. You know, and so and we could talk a little bit more about how and why and all the things, but I'm also learning like there's a little part of me that is concerned that if I don't hold on to just a little bit of hatred, like, will I be effective as a peacemaker? If there's not just a little, and I think that's important to just be honest about too. Like, we are human

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beings on the front lines of really hard things. And I think it's important that we just open up conversations about the emotions, interior work that it that it takes all of us to sustain it for the long haul. So I'm grateful for the for the question.

Tracie: Thank you so much for that. It reminds me, one of my mentors, she told me when she was retiring from immigration law, she's like, I knew it was time to retire because I stopped getting angry at the system. And I hold that near and dear and I'm like, I sure am angry these days, so I guess I'm not retiring. But I think you've alluded to this, but looking at anger, and I think it is an emotion that we're not always comfortable with. We're not told how to process it, how to sit with it. But looking at it from the context of righteous anger from emotional anger, how do you resolve that? You used the term rage. Is that more of the emotional anger angle that you have there? How do we figure out what we're feeling?

Jer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, if we claim to follow Jesus, when we watch people being terrorized, that should make us angry. I think that's righteous indignation. When I begin to wish ill upon the perpetrator of that violence, now I've tipped over into dehumanizing rage, I think, you know? And I was I was chatting with my daughter. She's 18 and she's just a she's just a badass organizer. She's like she's doing so many cool things with the emerging generation. The kids are okay, y'all. The kids are okay, you know? And she and I were talking about anger the other day and she's a swimmer and she's like, yeah, but what do I do with this? Like cuz I feel dehumanizing rage. And she's got a significant platform and so if she doesn't learn the skills to process that dehumanizing rage and live in the space of righteous anger, righteous indignation, that I think it's good fuel, you know? But that dehumanizing rage, can we just confess that we all experience that, you know? And she's like, but what do I do? And so we were just talking about different ways that I physically process out that. It's

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not just like I can just tamp that down and give myself a good pep talk and have a nap or something. I don't nap, you know what I'm saying?

I've got to do something physical. That's for me, like that's my style. And she's similar. So I'm like, how about when you're she works out hours a day in the pool. I'm like, what if you used that time to scream your rage at that black line that you're looking at for two hours every day? What if you what if you viewed your swimming workout as a baptism where you bring all of that dehumanizing rage into the waters? You scream it into the waters and you come out with that tank depleted with you finding your anchor again in your belovedness. And if that's true about you, then that's true about perpetrators of violence as well. Can you come out of the waters, right? That baptism, come out as a new creation in that way again, right? So whatever that looks like for all of us, I think we just have to acknowledge that we are always teetering between righteous indignation and dehumanizing rage, and we need to figure out where to place this so that we're not directing it at people and hurting them.

Ashley: That's so true, Jer. I went to Fuller, I know you did as well, and there's a psychology program at Fuller. I was telling Tracie about this earlier, and so I had lots of friends who were studying to be therapists and I learned so many great tips and ideas from them. And one of them is the somatic release. And they said, if you're just feeling that anger, grab a pillow and just start slamming it against the wall or the couch. And that helped me. I'm telling you what. That release is so important when we're feeling that anger, rather than turning it towards other humans, how can we release it in ways that are healthy that connects with our body? We talk about breath work, we talk about art, we talk about just whatever your body needs to process that and to let it go. And then we talk about prayer and how we can come back to God and say, help me direct this. What do I do next?

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Jer: Yeah, I mean, you look at, you look at David and the other psalmist, right? Like that gives us permission to recognize a dehumanizing rage. Like David and the psalmwriters, they are calling down wrath. They want God to enact genocide, right? And so if that's that's what's happening in some of these Psalms. And if that's true, I think you're spot on, Ashley. What's the physical release and what's the spiritual recalibration to like, I think God can handle. I know God can handle my rage, right? And I think that's a safe, a safe space to go with it.

Ashley: Yeah, for sure. And I'm thinking of different ways that people are responding in this time. And you know, you talked about going to Minneapolis with all the clergy and others and just standing in those spaces and putting your body in places. I also hear about, I don't know if you've heard about this, I'm sure you have, but there was a protest at a church during a church service because the pastor, you know, was allegedly an ICE officer. And I have been so conflicted about the response to that. And on one side, you know, I've heard like churches are a safe place and if we want ICE officers to leave churches alone, then we should also mark them as a safe place where we don't engage in acts like that. We don't engage in the First Amendment, right? But then I've heard others say, well, it is the First Amendment and we do have the right to speak up. And if this is going to get the attention of the empire, then by all means, go for it. And I'm curious, what are your thoughts on that and how would you interpret that as anger or as moral grounding? What response would you have?

Jer: I am beyond critiquing people's nonviolent tactics, honestly. And I don't think it's ever been helpful for people to sit in the lap of comfort and luxury and lob critiques at people's nonviolent actions, you know? And so I no, I don't know that particular tactic is one that I would have employed, especially in light of the fact that particular pastor who is an ICE field director, so we'll talk about that in a second... I could imagine personally deploying tactics when he's in the pulpit, but he wasn't in the pulpit, you

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know? And so I think there's there's things to be learned. I mean, I live in Spokane, Washington. We're 35 minutes from the Idaho border. One of the most powerful and profound empires of Christian nationalism is in Moscow, Idaho. Doug Wilson's church. And that's a movement that is spreading like a virus throughout our country that is wildly patriotic and supremacist and dark. It's dark. And you know, and so there's disruption of the status quo. I think I think these are effective tactics. You know what I'm saying?

But I think it our conversation around tactics sometimes can also slide us away from the oddity that a an evangelical pastor in the Twin Cities is an ICE field director. So like by day, he's mobilizing people to terrorize people, the majority of which are like here after being heavily vetted to be here. And then like I don't know how you can come into a congregational space and reflect on a cross wearing rather than a cross wielding God. Right? Like I how do you how do you eliminate your enemies on the one hand, whether they're migrants or refugees or liberal protesters, and then speak to enemy love in a way that is effective or congruent or virtuous. This is this unholy fusion of partisan politics with the Christianity that washed up on our shores, right? Like it's such a manifestation of that. And I think we should collectively be alarmed that you have an evangelical pastor who is an active ICE field operative or director. Like, how do you live in both of these spaces and how do you worship under that leadership? You know, I think we need to ask some significant questions about that.

Tracie: Absolutely. And I think this segues really well into our other question that we have for you. And it's both individual, how do Christians respond in these situations, but also faith communities in general, thinking about that church in St. Paul or people who may be going to churches that are silent on these issues. Where are our responsibilities as followers of Christ?

Jer: Yeah, it's so good. I mean, listen, I spend so much of my time with, I call them Nicodemus moments, right? There are like these brilliant

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evangelical and conservative faith leaders who are paying attention to what we're writing about and the life that we're living and they can't publicly like it or attend anything, you know? Cuz they know that the ramifications will be really severe. I mean, if I have one story, I have hundreds of them of faith leaders who have caught the vision for the restorative revolution, the hopeful alternative to this religion that dominates, right? And they return to their congregations with new convictions, moving toward a Jesus that's worth their lives rather than costing the lives of others. And it's their elders and their staff and their funders who say, you either return to chaplaincy of the status quo or we will terminate you. Right? So the stakes are super high. You know, our pastors, our evangelical pastors, you need to understand so many of them are watching what's unfolded and they are devastated by it. They know that fundamentally this is wrong, but they're making calculations around self-preservation. And part of it is not their fault. They have been socialized into a system that prioritizes self-preservation over self-sacrifice. They follow a Jesus who prioritizes self-preservation, accumulate power, abundant safety regardless of the cost of others, over self-sacrifice, which is the actual cross-wearing ethic of Jesus. So their ethic of self-preservation makes a lot of sense. We can actually understand that they like from their point of view, this is faithfulness, right?

But what I want us to, and for people who are listening in, our pastors are watching this and they are moved and they are alarmed, but they know that if they begin to ask questions, they will be threatened by their own congregation. So friends, what does it mean for us with that knowledge to quietly build an infrastructure of support around our pastors, saying, I know that you see this. I know you see what we're seeing. There are a lot of us who are seeing it as well, right? They're coming to me in the dark of the night, Nicodemus moments. I'm not comparing myself to Jesus by any means in this illustration. I'm just saying they're coming to me in the dark of the night saying, tell me more. Help me grow my courage, right?

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Like I need resilience. Like I need to know how to guide the transformation of my congregation because if I just start saying some things, it's going to be tissue rejection and I'm going to be an institutionless pastor. So like, what does it mean for us to come alongside and behind quietly behind our pastors and breathe courage into them until they find their own courage, their own agency, their own voice, right? Because when they start to speak up, the mainliners are already speaking up. We're starting to see the Catholics speak up more and more, right? We've got we've got rabbis and imams, but the evangelicals, when they start to speak up, they bring a skill set to this game. Ooh, it's world changing, you know? So, yeah, that's I think that's how I'd interact with that.

Tracie: Amazing. Thank you.

Ashley: Yeah, I think speaking to the pastor thing, we were thinking about talking about that later in the episode as well, but we are noticing that pastors are being threatened in this way. Like I'm part of a women's group and online women's group and so many women have come out recently and said, my husband's a pastor and he, you know, prayed for immigrants in church one day. And now the church is threatening to like end his term there. Are they're looking to make him have him move on or something. And I love what you said about how we can come around our pastors and not say like, why aren't you saying anything? But how can I support you in this moment? That's so powerful. As we talk about supporting our immigrant brothers and sisters, as we talk about not using dehumanizing thought language towards ICE officers and others, how can we also support the pastors who are struggling on a human level with this just the same as we are? So I've really appreciated that guidance from you.

Jer: They have the possibility right now to take a journey from a religion that dominates to a faith that restores. They were socialized into a religion that dominates, and the invitation is into a faith that restores. That's where

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their white knuckle adventure really is. But what they need, and this is the work that we're doing, that Global Immersion is doing is we're saying like the journey from a religion that dominates to a faith that restores is a perilous pilgrimage. It is painful and is long and it takes careful companionship. That's why we stood up a six-month long cohort for faith leaders like these, not that it can happen in six months, but we're actually actively equipping you for skills to walk this road, but we're also building an infrastructure of support around you. You are not alone, right? And you can actually guide the transformation of your congregation. We're watching it happen hundreds and hundreds of times, right? So like this is real. This is happening. And but this is we can't underestimate how lonely and dangerous and scary this journey is. And we got to support them in it.

Ashley: We do. We all need that support. And you mentioned earlier the hopeful alternative that we have to dehumanization and to the anger and injustice that we feel. And that's actually the name of your Substack, which I think was actually how we thought about having this conversation with you because you'd shared a writing that you did about the US involvement in Venezuela and then the country's actions on the world stage, our country's actions on the world stage. And you said in that article, "The real question then isn't whether injustice should be confronted, it must be. The question is whether we dare to confront injustice without becoming what we claim to oppose. We address this by recovering Jesus's practices that resist injustice without sacrificing our humanity in the process." And that just really spoke to me as I think about, again, you were talking about Venezuela, but how can we respond to the events that are happening on our own soil? You've touched on so many of these things, but when we see this injustice, we cannot let it be. The anger rises up in us, and we are called to respond. When we do that, we talked about dehumanization, we don't want to dehumanize others and we don't want to sacrifice our humanity in the process.

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Jer: That's right.

Ashley: That's just so important, I think, as we love our brothers and sisters who are immigrants, how can we also not lose our own humanity in the process?

Jer: Come on, Ashley, say it. No, I like, that's what I'm, that's what I'm talking about. And I think here's my, here's my beef with like progressive Christians. You ready for it? My beef with progressive Christians is like suddenly they start to care about black and brown people and queer people and things like that. Awesome. That's great. That's great. But you know who they hate now? Evangelicals. So John A. Powell, who's a prolific thought leader and activist, he's at the University of California Berkeley. He talks about the circle of human concern. And his daddy was a AME minister and so he comes, he comes with some faith roots in this, but he talks about the circle of human concern and the process of maturity for us is that our circle of human concern actually grows. In other words, people that we didn't used to care about, we care about now. My beef with my beef with progressive Christians in this regard is that you're you care about black, brown, and queer people. That's awesome. But now you hate evangelicals. You hate the community that like raised you. Your circle of human concern didn't actually get larger. It didn't increase. It just shifted, right? So part of the dehumanizing that we have to address, you know, and once upon a time, maybe we dehumanized migrants and immigrants and queer folk. And we need to lament that and confess that and repent of that. And maybe that's what some of us are doing in trying to be involved in building a better world.

But if now all of that ire is directed at the people and the community that raised us, like that's broken, you know? And so I'm recognizing that in the way that we navigate right now, there are a lot of evangelicals folk that are watching what's happening on the streets of Minnesota right now. And I

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don't know what it was for you. It was Renée Good, it was Alex Peretti, it was Little Liam Ramos, Karla Baltazar is a 10-year-old little girl that was abducted from the streets of our city. There is a classroom with a vacant desk in my city, right? And she and her dad have done all the right things. Documented, not dangerous, right? So I don't know what the what the, but there are a lot of evangelicals who voted for Donald Trump who right now are going, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, this is not what I voted for. And what we need to be saying to them is like, you're not losing your principles in acknowledging that, you're remembering your principles. There's space for you here. I'm with you. I'm incomplete, imperfect, and in process too. I'm with you in this journey. You know what I'm saying? And I think this is how we grow the circle of human concern rather than just shift it. Let's break agreement with shifting and start leaning into the growing. I think that I think we see that modeled by Jesus.

Ashley: Yes. We always welcome everyone back to love and to caring for our neighbors. And there might be a time for reconciliation in that later, but right now, just make sure there's a space at the table for those people who are having those second thoughts who are coming to different decisions from what they voted for a year ago, what they've been thinking for however long. Don't say, well, thanks for coming around. Thanks for finally, you know, making a decision. But instead say, you're welcome here. That's what we want to do. Make a space at the table for them.

Jer: That's right.

Tracie: I think honestly, we could talk to you for hours about this, but we don't want to monopolize your time. And we know you've got a lot of other people to share this story with and we're so grateful for that. As we start to transition away from this segment, what would you like to leave our listeners with a story of hope and action item? We'll talk about some of that

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a little later, but from your perspective, how can we apply the principles of peacemaking in what we see today?

Jer: Yeah, I think I want us to understand that while the scope and scale of what's happening in Minneapolis is massive, this is happening in all of our cities. And there are remarkable leaders in all of our cities who are actively doing the work of welcome. And that work is becoming more dangerous. And we don't need to start new things. We actually don't even need to go get new skills. You know, I'm thinking about that moment in the wilderness where the bush is on fire, right? And God says, I'm going to go liberate my people. And Moses, I'm going to invite you to join me in that work. And Moses is like, I don't talk good. And so what am I going to and God asks Moses one question. And the question is, what is that in your hand? And Moses looks down and he sees like the sweat stained, like smoothed down shepherd's staff that had been in his hand for 40 years. And God goes, yeah, I'm going to use that. I'm going to use the thing that's already been in your hand, right? And so I think that's my word of encouragement to us. Like some of you have stethoscopes in your hand. Some of you have paint brushes. You two have microphones and a platform, right? Some of us have vehicles. I'm I'm working with people in the twin cities right now who have spare bedrooms and basements with air mattresses because there is an underground movement of refuge afoot because that's what the moment requires, right?

We all have things that are already in our hands that God wants to use to deploy in the work of restoration and liberation, you know? For us, I think it takes us a moment to just look down and acknowledge it and then figure out how to redeploy it in community with others. You know? And so I was chatting with my brother, and I'll just leave us with this, who is a conservative evangelical, and as I was talking to him about, I was inviting him to take a risk, because that's kind of what I do. I invite people just beyond the threshold of their comfort. And he lifted up some really

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significant concerns. One of them being, I don't feel educated. And another was like, I'm kind of concerned about nosy people who might be paying attention to what I'm doing. I'm like, yeah, that's real. That's that's really real. And I started to talk through that, my brother said, you know, I guess, I guess that what you're saying is that this is a moment to either be fueled by fear or follow Jesus. And I'm like, yeah, man. That's the moment that we're in. And it's incredible to watch him follow Jesus and in so doing, grow his capacity for courage and creativity and compassion, you know? And I think that's the movement that's underway here. And so we're enough, friends. We are the answer to our prayers. And we get to be a part of building the world that God is making if we want to.

Ashley: That's beautiful, Jer. I think everything that you said has just lit a fire under me today and I have so much more to think about. And I hope that our listeners are also going to have a lot to think about. And you're just lucky that this is a recorded podcast and you can go back and listen to it again and again because I know I will be. So thank you, Jer, for sharing with us just all that you've been doing, what Global Immersion is doing in the world, and I just thank you for your voice, for the way that you've listened to God when he said, what's in your hand? Thank you for encouraging us with that today and for the conversation.

Jer: Yeah, truly a gift to be with you both.

Tracie: Thank you.

Ashley: We're really grateful to Jer for the way he named both the urgency of confronting injustice and the danger of losing our humanity in the process. What he was describing definitely doesn't feel easy or neat, but it does feel honest. And for listeners who want to go deeper, we'll link to Jer's writing and the work of Global Immersion in the show notes.

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Tracie: We are so thankful that he reminded us that a faithful response isn't passive, but it's also not reactive. It requires courage, humility, and practices that shape who we become over time, not just what we say or do in the moment. As we continue, we want to stay with this tension that Jer has helped us name, the tension between anger and love and between accountability and humanity.

Ashley: Because the question isn't whether anger will arise in moments like these, as he talked about, it will. We're human. But the question is what kind of anger we're being formed by and where it's leading us.

Tracie: So let's turn now to that question together. If righteous anger helps us name what is broken without losing our humanity, then the next question becomes this. What do we actually hope for now? What does a faithful response look like beyond our emotions?

Ashley: Grief and anger can wake us up, but they can't be the end of the story. Faith calls us to imagine and work towards something more.

Tracie: So next, we want to talk about what we would like to see happen, not as political talking points, but as expressions of our deepest values.

Ashley: Because seeking justice isn't just about naming harm, it's also about asking what repair, accountability, and healing might require.

Tracie: So something that we would like to see, and frankly, something we have not consistently seen is restraint and responsibility from those in positions of power. In the days following the deaths of Renée Good and Alex Peretti, public officials moved quickly to offer explanations and conclusions before investigations were complete or even started. In some cases, federal authorities have also taken steps that appear to obstruct or limit Minnesota's law enforcement ability to conduct independent

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investigations. And this kind of response does not calm our fear, it does not build trust. I think it honestly adds fuel to an already volatile situation.

Ashley: That's right, because leadership in moments like this matters. When we see officials rush to defend institutions instead of protecting the integrity of the process, it sends a message, especially to grieving families and the fearful communities that truth is secondary to control.

Tracie: What we need from our leaders is not escalation, deflection, or premature certainty. We need them to rise above the chaos instead of feeding into it. And that means allowing investigations to unfold fully, respecting local authority, and speaking with humility when facts are still emerging.

Ashley: Accountability isn't a threat to justice. It's how justice becomes credible. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The first to present his case seems right until another comes forward and questions him." Transparency is not hostility. It's a requirement for trust. That means that independent review matters, especially when the use of lethal force is involved.

Tracie: And another hope that I have is for meaningful dialogue between communities and law enforcement. Real safety cannot exist where trust has collapsed. And I'll be honest, as a white woman, something in me has shifted. I think I've lived with a sense of almost invincibility, right? Like I have always felt safe going out to peacefully protest, to speak my mind, my opinion publicly. And Renée's death has shaken that assumption now. And I'm wondering and questioning about the safety that I took for granted. Does it still exist?

Ashley: Yeah, I feel that shift too. And at the same time, I've been thinking about how black, indigenous, and people of color, communities who have been living with that fear and uncertainty for decades, even centuries. What feels like a sudden loss of safety for some has actually been a long-

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standing reality for others. For example, I think about Keith Porter, a black US citizen who was killed by an off-duty ICE officer on New Year's. How many of you have heard of that story? Because I'll be honest, up until we started talking about the deaths of Renée and Alex, I hadn't heard the story. And part of me wonders why.

Tracie: Yes, Ashley, thank you for saying that. I feel like he was just kind of a postscript in all of this, even though he was the first one killed at the hands of federal law enforcement agents. So thank you so much for saying that and bringing that to our attention. So yes, what feels like a loss of safety for some immediately, like right now, has been a lived reality for others for a really long time. And I'm going to be sitting with that question you raised about why stories like Keith Porter's don't break through more widely. That gap in awareness feels like part of the work in front of us, noticing whose fear is treated as urgent and whose fear has been treated as background noise.

Ashley: Exactly. And I do think that there are other podcasts that focus exclusively on that question, and it's too much for us to take on in our scope with this podcast. But I encourage you to seek out those voices and to open your ears and eyes to those opinions as well. So back to our topic at hand. In all of this, I keep thinking about Jeremiah 29:7, where God calls us to seek the welfare of the city. And seeking the welfare of our communities means listening, especially to those who are most impacted by harm and injustice, not just after tragedy and not just when it's trending, but consistently before things reach a breaking point.

Tracie: And that kind of listening requires humility. It asks some of us to sit with discomfort and to acknowledge that our experiences aren't universal, and that justice and safety can't be defined only by those who have historically had the most protection and who have also defined who is worthy of that justice and safety.

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Ashley: We're also seeing protests across the country. For Christians, peaceful protest can be an act of faithful witness. And a quick note that peaceful doesn't have to mean quiet, and that's according to Latasha Morrison of Be the Bridge. This means that biblical peacemaking isn't passive. It can be a way of publicly saying that life matters and that accountability is part of loving our neighbor.

Tracie: Absolutely. And Micah 6:8, it reminds us that God requires us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Justice and humility belong together. Mercy and truth belong together.

Ashley: And finally, on the list of things we would like to see happen, there's the need for policy reflection. How are enforcement agents trained? When are they deployed? And how are they held accountable when harm occurs? And these are not partisan questions, they're moral ones. Our faith gives us practices from moments like this, and one of the most important is lament.

Tracie: And the Psalms are full of that. Psalm 13 begins with the words, "How long, oh Lord?" And I have to say, I think I'm beginning every day with those words. Lament allows us to bring our grief and our anger to God without pretending that everything is fine.

Ashley: And Romans 12:15 calls us to weep with those who weep. We don't rush people past suffering and we don't demand closure before healing.

Tracie: And Christian love tells us the truth. Ephesians 4:15 calls us to speak the truth in love. Love does not require silence about systematic harm in the name of keeping the peace. Jeremiah 6:14 says, "There is crying peace when there is no peace." In fact, love often demands that we name the injustice.

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Ashley: And that raises a hard question for many of us. What do we do when the faith leaders we trust are silent or when the response we hear is so vague that it feels disconnected from the weight of what's happened?

Tracie: It's understandable to want our pastors to be careful, especially when the facts are still emerging. But there is a difference between careful speech and the absence of moral clarity. Platitudes can feel safer than truth, but they often leave people feeling unseen and alone.

Ashley: When something this serious happens, when lives are lost and communities are hurting, silence can unintentionally communicate indifference. And that non-committal language can feel like avoidance rather than wisdom.

Tracie: And faithful leadership doesn't mean having all the answers. No one does. It means though that our faith leaders are willing to name the grief, to acknowledge the injustice, and to stand with those who are hurting, even when the path forward isn't clear.

Ashley: And for those of us in the pews, this is a moment to engage and not withdraw, to ask honest questions, and to invite our leaders into deeper conversation, to say, this matters and we need help making sense of it together.

Tracie: Absolutely. Lament is not a private act. It's a communal one. And the church is at its best when it creates space for truth, grief, and the courage to be held together, not avoided.

Ashley: So what does this mean for the immigration conversation at hand? Because this moment does not exist in isolation. Two people, Renée Good and Alex Peretti, have been killed in Minneapolis this month during federal immigration enforcement operations. And both deaths have sparked deep pain, protest, and urgent questions about how our government is using

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force, how communities feel protected or threatened, and whether justice is truly serving life and dignity.

Tracie: Throughout this podcast, we've talked about the human cost of immigration enforcement, how law, power, and fear intersect with real lives. When enforcement actions result in a loss of life, the ripple effects are profound. Families are shattered, communities are shaken, and trust, already fragile, it's further eroded.

Ashley: While both Renée and Alex were US citizens, the impact of these incidents extends far beyond them. In immigrant communities and communities of color, enforcement actions are often experienced not as orderly application of law, but as unpredictable and dangerous intrusions into daily life. In Deuteronomy 10:18 through 19, a verse that we've mentioned many times on this podcast, reminds us that God loves the foreigner and calls God's people to do the same. And that is not optional discipleship.

Tracie: That's right. And caring for the vulnerable does not mean rejecting the law. They're not mutually exclusive. It means though that we're insisting that law serve life, dignity, and peace. That includes how the laws are enforced, how force is used, and how accountability is pursued.

We want to see thorough, transparent investigations so that we know what happened in both of these deaths and so that the families, communities, and the whole broader public, they can see justice done, whatever the facts may ultimately show.

Ashley: We also want to see leaders at every level, the local, state, and federal levels, rise above chaos and premature certainty. When officials rush to conclusions or they shield processes from independent review, it deepens suspicion and it harms trust, especially among those who are already marginalized.

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Tracie: And as Christians, we are called to pray for all afflicted, the families grieving, the communities in anguish, and enforcement officers who are wrestling with their responsibilities, as well as our civic leaders tasked with stewarding justice. May we pursue wisdom that honors God's justice and mercy alike.

Tracie: Now, as we close, we do want to offer something practical.

Ashley: When you talk about this incident, try leading with honesty instead of accusation.

Tracie: You might say something like, I'm really struggling with this news. It feels deeply unjust, and I'm trying to think through what compassion and accountability should look like. Would you be open to talking about that with me?

Ashley: That's right, because that kind of language, it opens doors instead of shutting them.

Tracie: And here's one small action you can take this week. Pray for the Good and Peretti families, the Minneapolis community, and all of those affected. First Timothy chapter 2 verse 1 reminds us of the call to prayer.

Ashley: You can also connect with a local organization working toward peace and accountability or you can share reliable, factual information to promote understanding rather than rumor. And there's so many rumors now, so we encourage you to find those factual sources. We have a previous episode on that, but find some of those sources that you trust that provide a balanced view of all the sides, of all the different views, so that you can come to an understanding maybe of the situation and what actually happened. Just remember that grief and anger do not have the final word.

Tracie: And faithful response does not look away, it leans in.

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Ashley: May we be people who tell the truth, who love fiercely, and who seek justice with humility. Thank you for listening to Hope in Action. We'll see you next time.

Tracie: This podcast is to inform, educate, and entertain and does not constitute legal advice. If you are making decisions related to immigration or any legal matter, please consult a licensed attorney in your state of residence.