

## A Mid-day Meditation

From

Sue's Perspective

*"...there is no 'yeah, but'..."*

- from a conversation with Helen Wheeler

Many years ago, when I was about 10 years old or so, my mother's aunt travelled from England to visit the family in Canada. As I recall, Auntie Glad was a robust, fun-loving, no nonsense kind of person. Once she joined my Nan, her older sister, on the weekly visit to see my mum. I was so excited about meeting this person that I had been sending letters to for so many years. In my excitement, my enunciation of some words became less than clear. During our conversation, Auntie Glad looked me in the eye and said, "Susan, what in the world is a 'Yabut'?" I looked at her with a puzzled expression and then the penny dropped – "oh, that's 'yes, but'" I replied. The expression that followed I had seen numerous times before, from my Mum and from my Nan. It wasn't quite withering but mighty close to it. "Well, if that's what you mean then say it," was the response. "Because..."

*"...there is no 'yeah, but'..."*

Over the years, 'yeah, but' has followed me around, nipping at my heels. I would use it to rationalize my actions and the actions of others. Subsequently I found myself relying on those two words more often than not. As a teenager I used them to argue my point with my mother. Sometimes I was successful, but most often my arguments fell flat. As a young adult I would use those words followed by "what about trying this?" when looking for the solution to a problem. However, when I used those words to explain away the ill-treatment of another human being, in reality I was putting myself squarely in the shoes of the person or persons responsible for the maltreatment. When it comes to explaining away harming one or any of God's children...

*"...there is no 'yeah, but'..."*

Over recent weeks, we have learned about atrocities that we, as white privileged people, thought could never happen in our country. The long and the short of it is, they did happen. For decades children were forcibly taken from their families because they needed to be "assimilated." For decades families were torn apart because, to coin a phrase from the 60's "White is right!" All of these actions were followed by "yeah, but"; yeah, but they will be better off; yeah but, they will have more opportunities; yeah, but; yeah, but...yeah, but nothing! The long and the short of it is...

*"...there is no 'yeah, but'..."*

Sadly, it doesn't end there. A little boy is orphaned because of the act of one human being. Some may say, "yeah, but at least he has other family." What he doesn't have are his parents, his siblings, his grandparent. Again, it just doesn't cut it! Again...

*"...there is no 'yeah, but'..."*

I could go on and on. Suffice it to say, "yeah, but" makes us complicit. A broken heart for all of these actions of others against children, against people of different religions, against other cultures makes me wonder how many times my heart can break. Until we stand up against this violence, it will continue. Please God, make us channels of your peace.