

WE HAVE A DREAM: A WORLD WITHOUT RACISM

DECEMBER, 2020 - Where Were Christians During Slavery? Where Are They Now?

We began with prayer.

Introducing the evening's discussion of racism in the church, we led with a video of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message from the Birmingham jail when he talked about the failure of the church to act behind their anesthetizing stained glass windows.

We discussed the book, White Too Long by Robert P. Jones. The title came from James Baldwin's comment that the bulk of our country is beyond hope of rehabilitation because they have been white too long. The statistical data showed that church going individuals were more likely to support white supremacy than non-church goers. The emphasis of a personal relationship with Jesus was paramount and overshadowed the gospel message of seeing Jesus in everyone. With no "whites" in Europe and no "blacks" in Africa, "race", a social construct, was used forcefully in the U.S. to subjugate people of color.

Historically Catholics were on the side of the oppressed but white non-Hispanic Catholics changed as they became affluent. Their views aligned with white Evangelical Protestants in the South, also the dominant group. We considered that racism is in our DNA. We discussed the "Theology" of white supremacy and the justification by Christians for the Civil War and the cause of the Confederacy. Most white Catholic churches remained silent during the civil rights movement.

Agreeing that without repair there cannot be justice which will lead to reconciliation, we discussed that reparations will need to go hand in hand with changing racist systems and policies.

We asked the group to read the article in The Atlantic, The Case for Reparations, by Ta-Nehisi Coates for next month.

We ended with prayer.