

My Damascus Moment

I have not had a single “Damascus moment” but a series of awakenings. From the beginning of “We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism” and continuing now (20 months later), I experience monthly growing pains in finding out just how much I do not understand nor think about racism. Someone mentioned to me recently that it is difficult to live in Baltimore and be naïve about racism. While I believe that is true, it is very possible to become complacent. I think of myself as not being racist but, as I keep finding out, that surely does not mean very much. In fact, it almost perpetuates complacency. Rather, I have come to realize that I must be anti-racist. Now. Always. In everything. And especially now when many in the country and in and around Baltimore would rather ignore racism or, at worst, deny its existence.

The journey with “We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism” has been amazing: the history of racism, structural and systemic racism, redlining, implicit bias, the need for reparations, societal failures, church failures and many other aspects of racism. Month after month the journey continues. It must.

As I said, I experience monthly growing pains but there were times when something startled me so much that I was left awe-struck. There were several such times, but I mention two occasions here. The first was reading and discussing “White

Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity” by Robert P. Jones. The other was a presentation by Dr. Lawrence T. Brown in which he shared the findings he documented in his book entitled “The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America.” What dynamic and shocking information those two occasions presented!

If I were to sum up in a few words my experience of “We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism”, it would be that I have reawakened to a new journey, one that must continue.

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