

Race and Racism in the U.S.

Conrad L. Kanagy

Session 3: Why Black Lives must Matter to a White Church

This is the third of a series of eight video episodes that address issues of race and racism that society faces currently, but that have been part of our history as a nation since its founding. In this episode I discuss the 19th century efforts by evangelicals to confront and destroy slavery and the resistance they encountered. And I wonder why evangelicals today are so offended by a movement in which those who have been long oppressed are simply crying out to be seen, embraced, and recognized as equals among all people. Without the systemic racism nurtured in U.S. history, there would be no need for a BLM movement. Can we reconsider how God might be using this movement to help complete the Civil Rights movement, a movement deeply embedded in the Scripture and the faithfulness of a Black Church?

Scripture: Acts 15

Questions for Discussion

1. What information did Conrad share that was new about evangelical efforts to abolish slavery to you and what difference might knowing this have upon how you think about issues of race and racism going forward?
2. How did the Jerusalem church work at the differences between Jew and Gentile and the expectations they would place upon Gentiles? Why was resolving this difference so critical to God's mission to the world?
3. Can you think of heroes in the Bible who stood for justice for those who were on the margins and how their efforts were understood by others?
4. Why do social movements of those on the margins of our society so threaten those of us in the "middle" of society?
5. Why is the story of the Jewish exodus such an important one to the African American Church?
6. Given what we learned today, how might we talk differently about the Black Lives Matter movement going forward? And how might we be more sensitive to Black folks around us when we talk about this movement?
7. What questions remain for you regarding what you've heard or that we've discussed today?