

Race and Racism in the U.S.

Session 6: Some Concluding, Limited, Partial Reflections

This is the concluding episode in a series of six 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 need to continue the conversation of racism to continue in order to address the historic wrongs that continue to impact people of color and society as a whole. I raise the question of whether we too have created incongruity in our mission and message by saying on the one hand that God loves the whole world, but being content with the ongoing inequities and injustices that continue to determine life expectancy, status, income, residence and more of groups depending upon their race. I share a parable that gives a limited, but I trust helpful, analogy for the importance of structures in affecting understanding and perspective. This conversation is so critical because it reflects a spiritual struggle against the principalities and powers of the air; this is as Bishop Al Motley notes, about spiritual warfare. This is about tearing down strongholds that are woven into the fabric of our existence as a nation and a church.

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Questions for Discussion

1. What privileges did the two who passed the wounded man in the story of the Good Samaritan invoke as rationale for not caring for this man? Who do you most relate to in this story and why?
2. What is Jesus teaching the expert in the law about who his neighbor is, and how does this teaching relate to our current conversation?
3. If race doesn't exist, why does Conrad suggest we need to continue talking about it? And why do white folks so often want to move away from the conversation?
4. Can you name one privilege that you likely have that has come to you and to others because (and if) you are white?
5. What does Conrad mean by the middle vs. the margins? And how does where one is located affect one's perspective of the world? Of this discussion of race and racism?
6. Why did the two individuals in the parable that Conrad described have difficulty understanding one another, and how does this parable apply to our perspectives of race and racism?
7. In what ways has the Black Church been different historically from the white church in the U.S.? Why has the church as a social institution been so important to the Black community?

8. Why has the Black community needed to rely on political engagement to advance justice, and how is this related to the failures of the white church in the U.S.?
9. What questions do you have from this episode?
10. What is the most important take-away from this series for you personally?