

Taking Steps Towards Reconciliation

On November 9, participants from throughout the Midwest gathered at Community Covenant in Lenexa, KS, to embark on Sankofa, a journey toward racial reconciliation. Facilitators David Swanson and Nilwona Nowlin did an excellent job of setting the tone for the trip as an open, grace-filled space to learn from one another without fear of judgment.

Over the course of a long weekend, we traveled by bus to historic sites of importance in the Civil Rights movement and visited sites that serve to educate others on the history of slavery and racial tensions and continue to fight racial injustices today. Upon our return to the Kansas City area, we gathered to debrief and process our myriad experiences.

Below are thoughts on the experience shared by some of our participants.



Aisha Thomas, Crossroads Covenant, Loveland, CO

During the trip, my feet touched the ground where MLK, Jr., was murdered, where runaway slaves hid in a cellar on their way to freedom, where an impoverished community comes to pray and be rich in the Lord, where the enemy ran free on a bloody Sunday, and where a coalition of lawyers are working to free innocent men, women, and children from the crimes that lie within our prison system. Sankofa was a spiritually-tasking, yet life-emboldened adventure!

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From the Superintendent

Friends,

In this season of Advent, I trust you are finding meaningful ways to celebrate the significance of Christ’s birth. As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on God’s goodness, and one of the ways I experience great joy and gratitude is when I think about our Midwest Conference family. I am so thankful for your partnership that allows us to pursue Christ’s priorities across our Midwest geography, starting in your own community. We are grateful for your financial investment in our shared mission that spurs us on to achieve God-sized goals together.

In November, we wrapped up our Vision Tour, where we focused on next steps in reaching our shared 10-year goals. I am grateful to the many pastors, ministry staff and leaders who attended these gatherings to continue conversation on how we can work together to fulfill the vision God has set before us. I was encouraged to hear your thoughts and I was

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Travis Nordstrom, MWC Executive Board, Omaha, NE

Sankofa was in many ways a transformative trip and experience for me. Visiting the historic locations of the civil rights movement, walking through the museums, watching the videos, and having open, honest discussions . . . it has forced me to wrestle with and change my former perspective and the lens through which I see and understand racial injustice.



Lori Anderson, MWC Business Manager, Omaha, NE

On the Sankofa Journey, there is real dialogue and fellowship between partners and participants. You spend a lot of time digging deep into the hard stories in history to understand where we are at in society today. Now the question becomes, "How do I engage and continue this journey today in my own community?"

Our journey did not end on November 12, when we pulled into the parking lot of Community Covenant to return to our individual families and communities, but continues as we each live into our new understanding of racial tensions both throughout our shared history and in our current context.



deeply moved by the prayer time we shared in each setting.

In addition to planting churches and coming alongside established churches, a majority of our MWC board and staff participated in Sankofa—an experience centered around racial reconciliation. This was an incredible time of learning, growth and healing as we joined with ministry partners throughout the Midwest to consider our personal and collective roles in addressing racial tensions in our communities. I encourage you to take time to read the personal testimonies of participants provided in this issue. We hope you will consider joining us for future racial reconciliation experiences hosted in the Midwest Conference.

As evidenced by this busy season of ministry, the transition from fall activities to Christmas commitments is swift, often leaving little time to reflect on the “why” of all that we do. I pray you will make time this advent season to experience the wonder of Christ’s coming. May the joy of God’s amazing gift carry you into the New Year!

May Christ’s peace, joy, love and hope be yours in abundance.

Tammy

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