

Prophetic Word to Celebrate Juneteenth: 'I Want You to Build America's Table'

At what it calls “tables, altars, walls and hope rallies,” a for-profit champion of social justice, holy activism and civil righteousness will commemorate Juneteenth, Saturday, June 19, and, at the same time, shine a light on modern-day slavery.

From Ferguson, Missouri, to Fredericksburg, Virginia, and other locations, food, fellowship, music and dance will mark Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of slavery's end in the United States. The U.S. Senate just passed a bill declaring Juneteenth a federal holiday.

A banquet held in Ferguson is set to remember the day slaves in Galveston, Texas, learned of their freedom, while another event in Fredericksburg will shine light on the long road to freedom for victims of sexual exploitation.

The Texas-sized table will be prepared at Ferguson First Baptist Church, where 250 invited guests are invited to share a meal and conversation—even if some can't afford the price of admission.

Pastor Jonathan Tremaine Thomas, who founded Civil Righteousness in Ferguson, explains the vision for the table and other Let Freedom Ring gatherings on June 19.

“At the beginning of this year, I felt really strongly that the Lord was extending an invitation not just to me— but to the church in America—to build the table of the Lord, to build America's table. The phrase specifically was: ‘I want you to build America's table,’” says Thomas.

In Fredericksburg, the for-profit Freedom Society Collective

plans to host short presentations on human trafficking at the Freedom Society Tea Room, which sells survivors' arts and crafts to support their freedom and to fund efforts to end sex slavery in India, China and the nation.

"We're deeply committed to—along with Civil Righteousness—bringing the family together in loving, honest, sincere conversations and relationships in listening and lamenting," says Jed Robyn who, with his wife Nicole, are local and regional organizers with Civil Righteousness and founders at .

"It's time for us to realize that there's a place we all have and a role that we all have to play. For us to be able to facilitate healing conversations and give opportunities to create space and find one another over a really great meal. That's really our heart," Thomas says.

The Civil Righteousness team agrees with Thomas that the table needs to be one where a king feels at home, and where the homeless feel like kings. "I believe that we're royalty as sons and daughters," Thomas says of its vision for the celebration.

"The message of the church is to not only say it, but to create atmosphere, opportunity and legitimacy of understanding within all of humanity that we are blood-bought sons and daughters, royalty in the household of the king, our Father, with an inheritance in Him no matter whether you have power on the earth that you're stewarding in your role in law enforcement or government," Thomas says.

Many of the invited guests understand the significance of June 19, but not all do. Civil Righteousness will tell the story of events in Galveston, Texas, where emancipation came for the last slaves in America.

The table is intended to be a multi-faith gathering. "There will be people who are believers, people who are of no faith.

We won't shy away from who we are, and the fact that we are representatives of the Christian worldview. We're pursuing these things according to our biblical ambitions," Thomas says.

If people find it in their hearts to want to sow into Civil Righteousness, helping build America's table or helping engage in the ministry of reconciliation around the nation, Thomas welcomes prayer and financial support at . {eo}

Steve Rees is a former general assignment reporter who, with one other journalist, first wrote about the national men's movement Promise Keepers from his home in Colorado. Rees and Promise Keepers Founder Bill McCartney attended the Boulder Vineyard. Today Rees writes in his free time.

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