

TheCall Detroit Leaders Repent for Racism

Local pastors and national Christian leaders battled an ancient spiritual stronghold late Friday night at TheCall in Detroit. While the original crowd of approximately 30,000 dwindled slightly with the midnight hour, more than 30 leaders representing multiple races gathered onstage to ask each other for forgiveness for the racism that has divided not only the Motor City but the entire nation.

After offering a historical briefing of racism's dominance in America since the days of slavery, Detroit Bishop Ben Gibert gave a moving testimony of how his family has been changed by this demonic stronghold—including his grandfather's death as a direct result of the Ku Klux Klan. Gibert recounted his father's words, which became emblematic of the night: "If I hold something against them, the Scriptures say that I'm in shackles."

To begin unleashing those spiritual shackles, white ministers including Lou Engle, Mike Bickle, Cindy Jacobs and Detroit pastor Dominic Russo asked for forgiveness from Gibert and other African-American leaders for everything from lynchings to apathy. Engle, who has been involved in identificational repentance for decades, stated, "I don't know how to do this, but I ask for forgiveness."

He began the two-hour prayer emphasis by recounting how God told him, "You can't deal with abortion until you've walked in the sandals of those on the Trail of Tears and [understood] the plight of the black American."

Che Ahn, pastor of The Rock Church in Pasadena, Calif., apologized to African-Americans on behalf of the Asian community for making money off of the urban population but not sowing back into it.

After accepting these and other pleas for forgiveness, Bishop

Andrew Merritt spoke on behalf of the Motor City's African-American leaders, which included Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, by declaring, "Racism is dead! Racism is dead ... and we speak life to love!"

Representatives from all communities were also quick to point out the stronghold of racism would not be broken merely with symbolic acts of forgiveness, but also in establishing authentic, day-to-day relationships that demolish racial barriers.

Earlier in the night, this was also expressed between Arab and Jewish representatives from the Middle East. Former Palestinian Liberation Organization member Kamal Saleem bowed at the feet of a Jewish leader and asked for forgiveness for those in the Muslim community who harbor deep hatred toward Israel.

"I pray for the reconciliation of Ishmael and Isaac," he said while leading those TheCall attendees in praying for both the Muslim community in Detroit and the peace of Jerusalem.

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