

Six  
--Looking Forward--  
*A Vision for Tomorrow*

The children of Israel were at a national crossroads. Moses sent twelve spies into the land of promise to explore the possibilities. By all appearances, it was to survey the acreage that was to be their future home. Ten spies came back tails tucked. "Giants live there. We were grasshoppers next to them. And we're pretty sure they saw us the same way." Only two were eager to take action.

Because of the fear-driven majority, Israel was faced with forty years wandering the desert trying to find themselves. They proved unready to pursue their future because they hadn't yet processed their past. How do you move from centuries of oppressive slavery to becoming responsible landowners? This calls for honest introspection, mental reprogramming, and an inversion of expectations.

Here we are as a people "spying out" our uncertain future. As the pandemic slowly subsides, we face fresh possibilities. Do we know who we want to be? What is our vision? With whom will we link arms? Like Israel, we'll not move forward in a healthy way until we first come to grips with our collective past.

Like cream, truth rises to the top. The realities that failed to make our early history books have risen to the top in recent decades. Facts like, our founding fathers were more deists than followers of Jesus; slave owners who kept enslaved mistresses. Their constitution conveniently excluded, and therefore degraded, women and those with darker skin tones, as well as the poor. Land was routinely ripped from indigenous people by deceit and slaughter. And all of this was built on the backs of enslaved Africans.

History's ripple effect has not died down. It's more like a tidal wave that is reaching landfall. For certain, we've passed laws and made amendments, but you can't counter-legislate centuries of longstanding bias. So, how do we move forward?

In our last session we talked about impacting systems and treating the person in front of us with respect. This is a great start. But, can we do more?

What if we start with the most vulnerable? Do you understand what it means to be poor? What's it feel like to be racially profiled? Try to understand what it feels like to be born gay or lesbian into a straight family/church. What does a foster child deal with? What's it like growing up across the tracks? Long term hunger or

homelessness ... what's that do to a person's psyche?

Included in these sessions are helpful links/resources that can get us started. Research is only the beginning. Real life conversations are a must. Friendships will develop. Groups will form. Arms will be linked. This is not a concept to be grasped. It is a lifestyle to live in to.

*We're creating our world every day.*

Things to consider:

1. Do you have a story to tell about racism, homophobia, poverty, etc.?

2. What is your first step toward a better collective future?