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Re: Kentucky Council of Churches, 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly October 19 and 20, 2017,  
Jeffersontown Christian Church, Louisville, Kentucky: "Unpacking Power & Privilege."

Dear Jerry and Robyn:

I apologize for this late report.

This was my first Kentucky Council of Churches Annual Assembly as a delegate from the Presbytery of Transylvania. It was an honor to be asked to represent the Presbytery of Transylvania, made easier because I spent most of the meeting with Rev. Mike Ward, Rev. Susan Warren and Lawrence Monroe. At one point, Phillip Lotspeich came over to encourage us to move around and get to know other delegates, which did happen during our break-out sessions for workshops.

I have attended prior KCC Annual Assemblies as a member of the Creation Care committee. I have also been a friend and supporter of Nancy Jo Kemper, growing out of the proximity of Pisgah Presbyterian Church and New Union.

This meeting was my introduction to Rev. Donald Gillett, II, and I was very impressed with his passion and his advocacy.

The theme of the Assembly was “Unpacking Power and Privilege.” The two keynote speakers were both very powerful and very eloquent advocates. On Thursday, Mr. Jack Jezreel, founder of JustFaith Ministries spoke about “Missionary Discipleship” and made the clear distinction between “providing answers” and sending checks at the problem as opposed to building relationships outside our comfort zone. He said wealth is a problem because it often traces back to an abuse – that privilege is not a blessing, it is a curse because it makes you blind. And that Jesus was a road guy, not a sanctuary guy.

I attended the “Environmental Privilege” workshop sponsored by the Creation Care committee and the “House Divided” workshop led by the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange.

The Friday keynote speaker was amazing with a very troubling message. Rev. Dr. Miguel De La Torre discussed his book, *Embracing Hopelessness*. He said “hope” was damaging and dangerous to people of color. He noted that the Spanish word for “hope” comes from the word “waiting” and that Christian “hope” has been used to defend systems of European-Caucasian power over people of color. “Hope domesticates the oppressed.” He disagreed with Martin Luther King – the arc of history does not bend toward justice – at least not on its own. “We have to bend it. It won’t do it by itself.” Some of us white male Caucasians felt the punch.

Finally, BreadfortheWorld lead another powerful exercise on laws and policies enacted by white men that have contributed to wealth and land acquisition by white people and loss of wealth and land by people of color, starting after the Civil War with Andrew Johnson’s land policies and sharecropping (1865-1880).

Again, thank you for the opportunity to represent the Presbytery.

Peace be with you

Hank Graddy

