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We can see already at the beginning of scripture that God has created humankind in his own image. God did not make a superior race, but all humans belong to Him. (Gen. 1:27) “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” What does that say, then? If all of us come in different shades and cultures, you can see that God intended for that to be so. Injustice is not seen with God. “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, and please the widow’s cause,” (Isaiah 1:17). These are all statements to help the oppressed. This is our role that God has established within us to finish His good work.

In the Bible, it has been mentioned the difference between Jews and Gentiles. Even then, there has been discrimination against the Gentiles. The Gentiles were forced to follow Jewish traditions, and the Gentiles could not follow their own path. However, Christians were encouraged to fight against this injustice rather than ignore it. Romans 10:12, says “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him”. In the same way, it can be inferred with people today of any race or color. It is not based on us but yet based on God, who does not show favoritism or injustice. In fact, God can bless anyone. Our ethnicity or nationality does not alter God’s relationship with us.

This is why reconciliation is so important. Some people are too religious to open their eyes to this cause. God reconciled with us. This shows the necessity to reconcile with other

people. The good news is that God gave his only son to be with us. God showed us the greatest sacrifice in order to be with us through love. Love and reconciliation are two of the biggest themes in the Bible. Once we take a better look, we can see that other people are not that different from us. God has the power to restore even the coldest hearts and the darkest thoughts. The gospel is to show that God came for all people, not just for the Jews, and not just for the white American church. Christians are supposed to be like Christ, and Christ came to show people the unconditional love of God. You cannot exclude reconciliation from the message of Jesus. Knowing this, we can boldly live the life that Christ has set out for us.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights movement struggled for social justice in the United States. In order to make sure there were legal and constitutional rights for African Americans, its goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination. Many people were involved in the movement, including Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X. A long history of racial oppression in the United States provided the circumstances for the Civil Rights movement. As slavery continued, laws and customs continued to enforce racial segregation and discrimination, which began with enslavement. Many of the basic rights enjoyed by white Americans were denied to African Americans, like the right to vote, education, and employment. Nonviolent protests, legal actions, and other forms of activism were used by the Civil Rights movement to challenge these injustices. There was a big change in attitudes, laws, and social norms as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was signed into law. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law. This marked a significant step forward toward ending legal segregation and discrimination.

However, despite the progress made by the Civil Rights movement, injustice continues to be a reality for many people today. Racism and discrimination persist in many forms, including police brutality, mass incarceration, and economic inequality. The Black Lives Matter movement, which emerged in response to police violence against Black people, is a direct descendant of the Civil Rights movement. It seeks to preserve its work today. Social justice struggles are ongoing. The legacy of the Civil Rights movement continues to inspire and guide those who seek to make the world a more just and equitable place.

Police brutality has been around for quite some time. Although some people may say that this does not correlate to discrimination and racial injustice, I beg to differ. According to the Washington Post, it states that “Although half of the people shot and killed by police are White, Black Americans are shot at a disproportionate rate. They account for roughly 14 percent of the U.S. population and are killed by police at more than twice the rate of White Americans. Hispanic Americans are also killed by police at a disproportionate rate.” Mass Incarceration in the 1970s, which is pretty recent. What led to mass incarceration was that there was no longer slavery or segregation, so the white Americans took it upon themselves to put thousands, including young blacks in jail.

The only way to fight injustice today is by learning about it. The Sankoa trip gave me the opportunity to watch documentaries, read books, and visit locations that I would otherwise never have given myself the opportunity to do so. This gave me the chance to see other perspectives and hear the stories of people who have the knowledge and life experiences. I want to use my voice to raise awareness and speak out against social injustice. Life gives us that opportunity to do so, it is just up to us to live by what we have learned or just ignore it. The Bible speaks about speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves. (Proverbs 31;8-9) “Speak up for those

who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” I can start by bringing up these tough conversations with my friends and family. You can only make a difference in the world or your community once you are able to make the change from within your home. Having serious conversations about social injustice and racial discrimination is necessary.

Making a difference from within requires getting out of your level of comfort and experiencing the life of others. It is understanding what needs to change in your surrounding or home. The problems of injustice and racial discrimination need to become more visible, almost in your face. I can look for opportunities where I can share my experience with the Sankofa trip. As well as donate my time or money to nonprofit organizations that help fight against injustice. I am going to be more mindful when voting. Being aware of the political parties and what their agenda is against social discrimination is important. Governors have more power over their city and therefore it is important to be aware of where they stand, as this impacts the community overall. There are many businesses that support justice and those businesses are important for them to remain open and available so that they can continue to help spread awareness in the community. Supporting their business can be beneficial. The most important thing I can do is to speak out when I know something is wrong. If there is a social situation where someone is not being treated fairly, it is my responsibility as a person to reach out and help them. People need each other in order to successfully win this battle.

Before the Sankofa trip, there were a lot of things that I was not made aware of. What they teach in school only covers briefly the horrors of slavery, racism, and social discrimination. I did not know about the lynching that was happening around America for years, that ended not so long ago. This was one of the biggest things that impacted me on the trip. One of the other

experiences that impacted us was the last museum that we went to which tied in the history of racial injustice and racism from slavery to segregation to mass incarceration.