

Reflections on Crossing the Bridge Of Peace

Libby Henkin and Gloria Burrell
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Libby Henkin and Gloria Burrell prepare to cross the Bridge of Peace

Thank you for thinking of Gloria Burrell and I and inviting us to cross the Bridge of Peace at the WFWP 23rd National Assembly this year. Most of the love and unity that was made possible between us happened over the last eight months; but honoring it in a ceremony was very meaningful. I would also like to say something about the "talking circle" that Ms. Dottie Chiquelo facilitated right before the Bridge of Peace ceremony. It was what happened there that took our reconciliation to a new level. That deepening had not happened until then and made the crossing even more meaningful.

Dottie is very skillful at facilitating reconciliation when the parties are ready for it to happen. During the circle, the lights were dimmed and Dottie paced back and forth with her bells tinkling, clearing the atmosphere. Things inside me loosened. I felt I had to apologize to Gloria for my family and for the culture in which I was raised to view black people as inferior and ignorant. Although we have grown very close as sisters and twins, and had alluded to the fact that there had been racial tension between us before God brought us together; I had never said this to Gloria before.

Apologizing was difficult for me, and she readily forgave me, for which I was relieved and grateful. I told her I was sorry. One summer when my family returned to Mississippi, we could not swim, because the pool was filled in with cement because of integration. I cried hard talking about this with Gloria. It was unbelievably liberating for me after confessing to Gloria and being forgiven which I honestly did not expect, and I wanted to apologize for more situations, but I could not go on.

I thought I should find a time to continue this process of confession and apologizing to Gloria, in a guided way with Dottie, Nancy Bulow, and Brenda Miller, a few of the organizers of the Bridge of Peace ceremony and talking circle. However when I talked to Gloria about it, she explained that what would be more healing, and affect the world more strongly would be if I talked to my family about what I have experienced and learned. I was impressed with her much bigger mind and heart for the world. That is what I plan to do.

May God bless Father and Mother Moon for founding WFWP and all they have brought to the world and are doing every day to forge sustainable peace among all people as children of God, our Creator.