

***Living into God's Dream: Dismantling Racism in America* by Dr. Catherine Meeks**

**Book Study Guest
Discussion Leader for**

Chapter 8

Dr. Nancy Briggs

Live: 10/22 @ 2-3 PM

Online: 10/25 @ 7:30-8:30 PM



*For 6 weeks in October and November leaders from the community will guide both a live and online book discussion on “**Living into God’s Dream: Dismantling Racism in America**,” a collection of essays edited by Dr. Catherine Meeks. Each guest leader(s) will post a reflection on a chapter(s). The reflections are on the Middleham and St. Peters website and the weekly Sunday bulletin. Note: The book chapters are not being discussed in order.*

The reflection for Chapter 8 comes from Dr. Nancy Briggs (see a brief bio below her reflection).

Reflection

Reflection on Chapter 8

by Dr. Nancy Briggs

When I first started perusing the book in preparation for these sessions, I was struck by the title of this chapter, “The American South is Our Holy Land”. I was a college student during the civil rights era and my first reaction was how can a place where so many horrors occurred be “Holy Land”. I thought of four little girls killed by a bomb in a Birmingham church, three voting rights workers murdered in Mississippi, the assassinations of Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King, Jr., the violence perpetrated against the Freedom Riders.

As I began reading, I was surprised to find that the author is African-American, a viewpoint I had not envisioned in my musings. His account of his family's pilgrimage through the South to visit places where hope remained and strength to bear witness grew, made me realize that for him these are places of hope and strength, not just violence; places where God was not only present but also deeply known. So maybe my problem was not being able to internalize God's moving in the lives of those who worked, and, yes, in some cases died, to further "living into God's dream" in the South. Maybe I was blinded by the evil that happened there.

Finally, as the author states, like the Holy Land of the Middle East, the American South can also be "where significance and guidance for present-day actions abound". I pray that we can find that guidance as we struggle with the ongoing task of dismantling racism in our world.

Bio:

Nancy Briggs is a retired emergency physician having worked in all kinds of settings from DC General, the public hospital that served Washington, DC and small rural hospitals to an academic appointment at the University of Rochester Medical University. She has degrees in Education and Training in the Emergency Health Services Masters program of UMBC and an MPH in international health policy and program development from GWU. She has been active in international programs in Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, the Virgin Islands, Vietnam and Cambodia. She is active in Middleham/St. Peter's outreach programs, including the Haiti School Nurse Project, the construction trips to the Gulf Coast, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, as well as the leader of the senior high youth group. She is a mentor in the Project Echo small groups project.