



The monthly DARTT column provides different voices united in the common mission -- to raise awareness about racism and promote personal transformation and spiritual growth that will intentionally move our congregation to become a truly welcoming, multi-racial, multi-cultural community. This month's column is authored by long time Paint Branch member Margaret Morrison.

INAUGURATION DAY-2009

On January 20, 2009, cloaked against the wintry cold by the memories of my slave ancestors, family surnames lost in antiquity, my daughter, other family members and friends boarded a Metro train for a ride into history. We needed to witness the ascendancy to the Oval Office of the first African-American President of the United States of America. There was no way I could not have been present. For most, all?, of my life, I have lived in an America that perpetuated the injustices legislated and/or long practiced in the United States of America against those of my color. I pushed those thoughts of injustices to the margins of my memory, and permitted myself to be caught up in the promise this inaugural day presented. My emotions and feelings were telegraphed to all by the wide smile on my face and the buoyancy of my steps. In my lifetime! An African-American President of the United States! No way! Being wrong never felt so rewarding. My thoughts were as random as kaleidoscopic scenes, one picture juxtaposed upon another, every thought forming another image, another emotion: "I wish my parents were still alive"; "Am I glad I have a silver ticket for the swearing-in ceremony!"; "I have never been in a crowd of this size"; "I am so happy"; "I can imagine Martin Luther King, Jr. on the Mall, his grin as big as mine"; "I wish Roy were here to witness this event with me"; "Wonder if my daughter got a good bleacher seat on the parade route?" And, so, I stood on the Mall with nearly two million fellow Americans of different races and creeds, but with a commonality of purpose as we witnessed Barack Obama take the oath of office to become the 44th President of the United States of America. It was a moment of transformation, potent with the possibilities of realizing a "more perfect union." For the first time in my life, I was proud to be a citizen because for the first time in United States' history, my heritage was fully recognized; my presence on this land acknowledged; my intellect, hard work, and contributions rewarded.

When asked to describe my feelings about that day, lines from Michael Buble's song come to mind:

I Feel Good
 Stars when you shine, you know how I feel
 Scent of the pine, you know how I feel
 Oh, freedom is mine. And I know how I feel
 It's a new dawn, it's a new day,
 It's a new life for me, and, I'm feeling good.

Margaret C. Morrison

DRED SCOTT DECISION:
 "SLAVES (AFRICANS) HAD
 NO RIGHTS WHICH A WHITE
 MAN WAS BOUND TO RESPECT"
 CROSS BURNING
 SELMA TO MONTGOMERY
 RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS
 NO NIGGERS OR DOGS ALLOWED
 WHITES ONLY
 ASSAULTS/SYNAGOGUES
 JIM CROW LAWS
 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF
 THE SLAVE WOMAN, i.e., RAPE
 PLESSY vs FERGUSON
 KU KLUX KLAN
 EMMETT TILL

SLAVERY: A CAREFULLY CRAFTED INSTITUTION
 DESIGNED AND LEGISLATED TO BRUTALIZE,
 EMASCULATE, AND DESTROY THE PSYCHE OF
 AN ENTIRE RACE OF PEOPLE
 THE PECULIAR
 INSTITUTION
 TRANSATLANTIC CROSSING
 SLAVE TRADE
 WORLD'S LARGEST GRAVESITE:
 ATLANTIC OCEAN WHERE SOME
 NINE MILLION SLAVES ARE ESTIMATED
 TO HAVE DIED DURING THE CROSSING
 CHURCH BOMBINGS
 LYNCHINGS AND POLICE DOGS
 3/5 OF A PERSON
 WATER HOSES AND STRANGE FRUIT:
 "BLACK BODY SWINGING
 IN THE SOUTHERN BREEZE"