



Heaven on Earth

Chris Davies

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I believe that God is inviting us into visionary co-creation of worlds we do not yet know. I believe there are whispers of hope and moments that feel like fiction in the midst of the world that crushes us with a violent news cycle and puts people's trauma on the front stage for games of politicking. I am seeking those moments in the midst of the preparation to move masses towards justice for all.

What would you have done if you were there?

What are you doing now?

These are questions of eschatology, questions of the end of days and heaven on earth, the Day that it is here but not yet, the work for our granddaughters, and our ancestors.

We are weaving in and out of time. History is overlapping itself and imploring.

"What would you have done if you were there?" followed ever so closely with

"What are you doing, now?"

In January, the leadership team of UCC Justice and Local Church Ministries went to Alabama. We walked through the Birmingham jails [where Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) was held (and where people are currently incarcerated). We walked through the [Civil Rights Institute](#) and the [16th St Baptist church](#) where four girls, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley ([#saytheirnames](#)) were murdered because of white rage.

We listened to those narratives, hearing a lingering question in the background: what would you have done if you were there?

We went down to Montgomery to the [Equal Justice Initiative's](#) Legacy Museum and [National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#). We spoke together about the clear line from the domestic slave trade of people of African descent to the mass incarceration and the profit-driven industry of prison, the legal system, and policing.

Therein lies the present question: *what are you doing, now?*

This Black history month, I am aligning with the call for white folks to do our own work and to amplify the wisdom and work of leaders of color. *What would you have done if you were there? What are you doing now?*

In the current time and place, how are we—how am I—acknowledging the systems, and the people who uphold them, profit from them, and witnessing them in silence? How do I show up and alongside whom? How am I moving resources and to what end do I put my energy? How do I—how do we—live in peace, knowing that people are still behind the wire?

The large-scale work can overwhelm me, but it's usually not about the big actions and reactions. It's about all the small actions, every day.

For a heaven on earth, a world beyond this one: gather the moments of hope. Imagine a world where all people are free. Find your own stake in the work, go internal and heal, take the time. Resist the systems that are designed to keep poor people poor and imprisoned. Invite people into a collective story that is amplified by our voices, our participation, our prayers, our work together toward a just world for all. Hold the hope and help hold up the healing for collective liberation. This is the call.

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