

Reflection of DOTAC Assembly by Marcie Gibson



One of our songs:
Listen to the Word that God has spoken;
Listen to the One who is close at hand;
Listen to the voice that began creation;
listen even if you don't understand.

There were many moments at DOTAC of connection, and many where I felt I did not first understand. A new place, with unfamiliar street names and bus schedules, expressions of diakonia in different denominations, new songs, unfamiliar people and accents around the table, and organizational models that resonated but used different names. These offered me opportunities to stretch and listen. To practice listening, both for the points of connection, and well as delighting in what was different. I sometimes speak of practicing invitational curiosity - it is not my right to know or to understand what is familiar or grounding or sacred to another, but I seek to be open to what they choose to share, and to hold open my ears with respect.

I had read many things that day, sometimes struggling to see the words or make out the typeface. The sign said "Say Their Names" - literally - and so I asked that we do. With seven of us there, and seven rows of markers, we walked the graves and said their names. Listening to each others' voices, listening for the sacred in that holy ground, we might not understand the depth of it, but God was surely close at hand.



These tombstones, close to the George Floyd Memorial, represent black people, many who were young, who died at the hands of police officers.



For every black man and woman
who called out to their mothers
because heaven was
approaching faster than the
paramedics

I now see the privilege
Not in my circumstances
But in the breath I still breathe

Because the driver's license I
carry reads more like an
obituary when found in the
hands of the police

- Miss Mari



