

Christians Meet at KKK Site to Repent

More than 10,000 individuals from a variety of cultural and denominational backgrounds gathered in late August for OneRace (oneracemovement.com) at Stone Mountain, GA, to repent of the past sins of racism, affirm the Church's leadership role in overcoming our nation's divisive past, and commit to a new unity.

Both the location and date of the event were historic. In 1915, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) burned its first cross in public on the top of Stone Mountain, and nearly 55 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in which he dreamed freedom would one day ring from Stone Mountain.

The event began in the morning with more than 2,000 millennials ascending to the top of Stone Mountain to join more than 560 pastors. The group asked for forgiveness from those who had been affected by historic injustices, including Dov Wilker and Harold Kirtz of the American Jewish Committee, who represented Leo Frank, a Jewish man who was the first individual lynched by the KKK in Georgia.

Another plea for forgiveness came from Pastor Ferrell Brown, a direct descendant of KKK Founder Nathan Bedford Forrest. "I stand here today as a representation of the racism of the white man against African-Americans, against Jews, against Hispanics," said Brown. "I repent and I'm asking forgiveness." On behalf of his lineage, he asked forgiveness from Dr. Rose Simmons and Anthony Thompson, who both lost family members in the 2015 shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.

Simmons replied, "Ferrell, I respond to your plea for forgiveness and I forgive you. May God bless you. Thank you

for the work that you have done in the Body of Christ so that we may take this movement all around the world." At the end of the event, organizers physically erected a cross on Stone Mountain.

At the base of the mountain, in front of the Confederate Monument, a stage became the focal point for the rest of the day. Times of prayer and worship and speakers focused on healing, reconciliation, unity and social justice.

Throughout the day, attendees (including church leaders) were reminded about the Church's crucial role in leading the way for reconciliation.