

OUR SOJOURN by David Jacobson

Photographs by Audra Gray

Introduction

Sojourn to the Past (Sojourn) is a non-profit founded by Jeff Steinberg that provides immersive civil-rights education travel experiences for middle school and high school students. The site visits, classroom teaching, interaction with guest speakers who led and survived the front lines of the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, and interaction with fellow Sojourners can be life-changing. It was for me.

When my son, Sam, decided to go on Sojourn's 78th Journey (March 27-April 2, 2015), I asked Jeff, a high school classmate of my wife, if I could chaperone. Jeff's work had always intrigued me, and I wanted to accompany Sam on an adventure. Also, I meant to further my decades-old fascination with African-American culture and history, born of years during childhood living in an ethnically mixed neighborhood in Milwaukee and later a suburb whose schools were newly integrating.

I knew the Journey would be a moving and meaningful experience. However, I did not anticipate its depth of impact on me, did not expect to cry, nor to have my consciousness jarred into refocus on matters that were once of great importance to me, but which I had since neglected while expending energy in other aspects of my life, such as family and career.

The Journey would have had that effect on me even if I had taken it all by myself. Of course, I was not alone. I joined 87 high school students, about 20 other teachers and chaperones – including Audra Gray, the official photographer, whose work fills this document – and several heroes of the Civil Rights Movement.

Some of the students were from Sam's high school, San Mateo, where I had coached them in basketball. Others were basketball players from rival high schools and children of friends or acquaintances. I did not know most of the students, who came from about a dozen schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Birmingham and Youngstown, Ohio.

While I conversed with many students and teachers on the Journey, the focus here is on the few to whom I grew most attached. They were most engaged and enthusiastic, most willing and able to share emotions and perceptions with the group, and, at least outwardly, most transformed.

Sojourn is a transformative experience. It flips the switch that turns proverbial lightbulbs on over people's heads. Learning non-violence from historical figures who used it to change the world will do that. Learning non-violence alongside children who have suffered violence – from physical and sexual abuse to peer pressure to damaging media messages – and who commit out loud, tearfully, to overcome through non-violence is revolutionary.



Pretty purple flowering tree outside Stone Mountain Inn, where we stayed the first night



Our classroom at Stone Mountain Inn, led by Sojourn Founder Jeff Steinberg

That first night, I sensed the energy that would infuse the whole Journey. I wanted in. Explaining a historical context, Jeff needed a volunteer to sing a bit of "Heatwave." He called on Gary Ferguson, my roommate on the Journey, a former Broadway singer and dancer, now coaching dance at Mercy, a Catholic girls' school outside San Francisco. Gary had attended a Positive Coaching Alliance workshop I'd led a few months earlier, so we'd met, and I thought singing "Heatwave" would be a great way for him to get involved, but he refused.

When nobody else stepped up, I inflicted my own voice on the crowd. I knew my voice was bad enough to get me off the hook of having to sing too long. Plus, I only know a few of the words. But my belting out a few words of "Heatwave" let the group know I was into the Sojourn spirit.



After our first classroom session, Jeff and Steve Schultz, Sojourn's assistant director, wheeled speakers and an audio player down the path toward Stone Mountain. We gathered and listened to Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech in the cold night. Park crew were testing a laser light show, occasionally revealing this trademark carving of Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee. Jeff emphasized that this popular attraction remains a source of Southern pride in the Confederacy and that the mountain was the site of Ku Klux Klan cross-burnings.



The mountain's symbolism of the Confederacy even while serving as the backdrop for the loud playback of Dr. King's speech had its emotional impact on some of the Sojourn Students. Jeff invited them to share any thoughts or emotions with the group. Some did. Then students were dismissed back to the hotel, or allowed to hang back with Jeff, Steve and me if they wanted to stay a few minutes longer to further process the experience.



Sojourn honors its guest speakers, who all are heroes of the Civil rights Movement. To help us understand the enthusiasm expected when welcoming our guests, Jeff played a video of Bobby Kennedy's introduction at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, where he received a 22-minute standing ovation. Jeff asked us to give a "Bobby" to each guest speaker he introduced (here, Minijean Brown Trickey, one of the Little Rock Nine, who integrated Central High School in the late 1950s).

Jeff would raise his fingers to let us know where our noise placed us on the "Bobby"-meter. I yelled as often and as loudly as possible, cupping my hands to my mouth and making the kinds of noises previously reserved for the Cubs. If I could sustain that kind of cheering for a ballclub, I could do the same for true historic figures. I wanted them to know my appreciation, and I wanted to contribute to the quality of the Journey by encouraging the students to keep up their enthusiasm.

It is hard to remember much of the presentations and lessons. The week was so packed that only glimpses and moments stand out. Between the quality of the speakers, the richness of their stories and the waves of emotion they crashed onto me and the students – whose own waves of emotion then rolled back into mine and started new waves – there was too much to completely process and remember.

All of the presenters shared stories of their pasts and answered our questions. But each story was so dramatic and so impactful, that only the rarest, most meaningful moments remain separate and distinct in my mind. What lingers more is the graciousness, gentleness and caring for the students that each speaker exhibited. Also, the cumulative indignities and struggles each faced began to mount together into a mass impression of their strength and how they could withstand their hardships, persist and prevail, at least to the extent that our society is more equitable and freer than before the historic struggle.

Minijean may have been the most outspoken of the Little Rock Nine, the one who enraged her white classmates because she "acted like she belonged." But, she was gentle and patient in all her interactions

with students throughout the Journey. At the same time, in our private conversations about politics and culture, she adamantly defended her points and made it clear that she did not suffer fools gladly.

One responsibility I had on this trip was to shoot video of speakers and students giving testimonial to Sojourn to help raise funds. Minijean came down sick on the day she'd agreed to a shoot and let me know she was annoyed when I asked her again. I never did get the video. Instead she saved every ounce of her waning energy to make sure the students had great experiences with her.



Aviana Collier, one of the students from Youngstown, Ohio, caught my attention early with the intelligence and intensity of her questions and her engagement in the subject.



After most of the guest speaker presentations, we lined up to hug the speaker and have our photos taken. This is Minijean and Aviana.



Precious Boone, another of the Youngstown students, with Minijean



Penny Wells, the Youngstown group leader, with Minijean



One of the few times our photographer, Audra Gray, was out from behind the camera. She and I shared some jokes, as I often stood near her to shoot photos of Sam with the guest speakers on my phone. Audra has been on many Journeys and shot more than 4,000 photos on this one.



Minijean and I



Minijean and Sam



Ann Reeb, whose father, Reverend Jim Reeb, was clubbed to death on the street in Selma after heeding Dr. King's call for clergy to visit after Bloody Sunday, joins Reverend Clark Olsen, who was walking through Selma with Reeb when they were attacked.



As seen in photos with Ann and Minijean, emotion is never far from the surface in Clark.



Clark Olsen addresses students.



Clark with Ann and her son Max



Clark and I



Clark and Sam



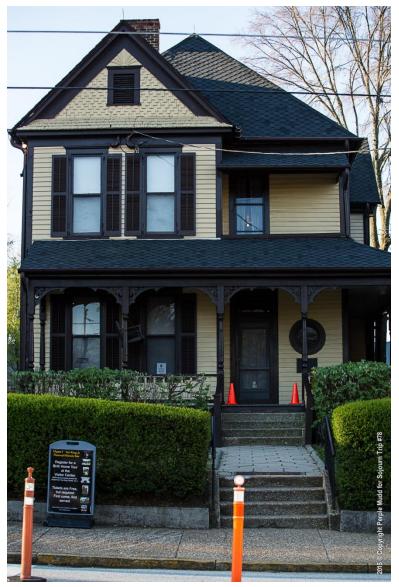
Clark and Precious on her second Sojourn, and you can just see the enthusiasm in her smile



Our second night at Stone Mountain was less formal, more of an ice-breaking session and a presentation led partly by Minijean on the state of race relations and challenges facing youth.



Precious exhibits her form of leadership, always willing to step up and talk, despite a hearing impairment bad enough to require the apparatus you see and a signer at all the sessions. In the background is Ken Mason, one of our other classroom leaders, whose full-time gig is director of Urban Initiatives for the Southern Regional Education Board.



Early in the morning of Day 3, we dressed in suits for our later meeting with Rep. John Lewis. First stop was Dr. King's childhood home. Photography is not allowed inside, so this is about all we got. That morning we also visited a gift shop, where Sam bought a tie he would need for the John Lewis meeting, and I bought a book of Dr. King's famous quotations.



Our group goes for the "Bobby" as we welcome Rep. Lewis to the King Center. He was late, as he'd told Jeff by phone, because he'd been out the night before celebrating his 75th birthday. While we waited for him, we wandered the King Center, closed to everyone but our group, to view artifacts of Dr. King's career.



Rep. Lewis was worth the wait. A forceful speaker, his voice rises and falls to help make his points. You can still hear so much anger and hurt, even 50 years after the Selma march. For most speakers, after they finish, Jeff asks 10 students to share their impressions of the speaker out loud. Sam complimented Rep. Lewis for being so "articulate." I knew that Sam was referring to Rep. Lewis's impassioned style, but "articulate" later drew some ridicule from Jeff.

Rep. Lewis is amazing, the courageous leader who bore the brunt of the troopers' attack at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma on Bloody Sunday, and as Chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, one of the speakers at the March on Washington, who took the podium before Dr. King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech. Rep. Lewis' speech, to me, was much better written and drove even more to the heart of the matter than Dr. King's speech.



After his presentation, Rep. Lewis sat on stage with Minijean, Clark and Ann, and at left Lisa McNair (board member of Sojourn and sister of Denise McNair, one of four girls killed in the 1963 bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church). We sang "Happy Birthday" to Rep. Lewis and joined for a song called, "When I Was Young," changing the lyrics from "30 or 40 years down the line" to "50 or 60 years down the line."



Anthony Bouttie of Aragon High School in San Mateo meets Rep. Lewis and thanks him for his presentation. Later in the journey, Anthony would be at the heart of memorable moments. Once home he would post on Sojourn's Facebook page how inspirational it was to meet a "true American hero." Below are Aviana and Rep. Lewis.





Another Aragon student, Amber McDonald, presents Rep. Lewis with a t-shirt her class had made with one of Lewis' trademark sayings. Below are Sam and the "articulate" Rep. Lewis.

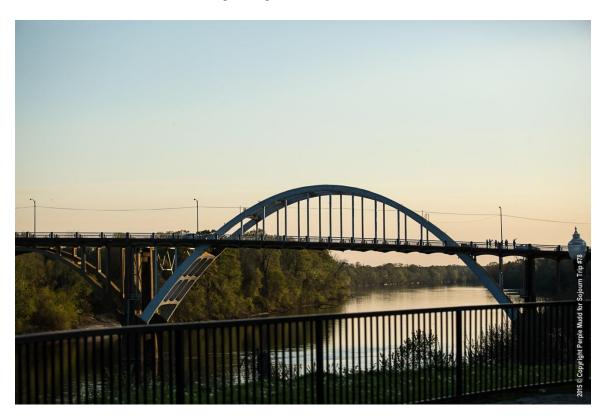




Sam, Rep. Lewis and I. Hugging him, I thanked him for all he had done for our country. Later I shot a testimonial video with him. Despite my decades of meeting "important" pro athletes, Rep. Lewis may stand as the most important, impactful person I have ever met.



From Atlanta, after the time with Rep. Lewis, we took about a three-hour bus ride to Selma and ended up in this artist's-studio-turned-temporary classroom on the bluffs above the Alabama River, with the Edmund Pettus Bridge in sight.





Aviana gets emotional. Audra, our photographer often catches her and others with the Journey's impact written into their facial expressions.



Jimmy Webb gets his "Bobby" as he enters the Selma classroom.



A view of what makes Jimmy Webb a five-foot package of charisma



So who is Jimmy Webb? That's him in the black-and-white image on the screen taken from "Eyes on the Prize." In one of that documentary's most captivating moments, 16-year-old Jimmy Webb

leads marchers from Selma's Brown Chapel en route to the Dallas County Courthouse, when they are stopped and threatened by Sheriff Jim Clark's forces.

The ensuing dialog, in which the fearless 16-year-old outwits the officers, is a prime example of the non-violent tactics of the movement. Jimmy was among the "foot soldiers" who crossed the bridge on Bloody Sunday and has gone on since then to have a fascinating career and set of experiences around civil rights and human rights, including work in the Reagan Administration to advance the MLK holiday, and helping to free Nelson Mandela, whom he escorted from prison.



Later that night, we all moved to the hotel in Selma, and Jimmy joined us to just sit around and talk for a couple hours before lights out. Students asked him whatever they wanted. Someone may have asked him his favorite music, and when he said "Abdullah Ibrahim," I let out a "woo!" Over the coming days, that common appreciation became a bond between us.



Day Four



Joanne Bland – gruff, outspoken and hilarious – prepares to lead us on a bus and walking tour of Selma, including the steps she took as an 11-year-old over the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday. The bus tour rolls through the poorest falling-down-shack parts of black Selma and the wealthier white areas. Joanne provides satirical commentary along the way, but she is serious when she points out the border of the two areas and says if you were black on this street near dusk, you had better be known to be returning from your domestic work in a white household.



Also helping to lead Joanne's walking tour of Selma was "Coach."



This mural is on the wall of a building just behind the memorial for Rev. James Reeb.



Ann Reeb speaks of her late father at his memorial as Ken Mason watches.



Anthony Bouttie pays his respects to Rev. Reeb as part of the procession Jeff organized for us to physically pay homage to civil rights heroes and martyrs.



Ann is pleased at how moved the students are by her father's story.



Next stop on our walking tour was Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the gathering places for movement leaders who planned the march from Selma to Montgomery.





Joanne puts all of the students up on the steps of the chapel to help them feel the story she shares.



Then she makes sure the adults also are engaged and ready to follow her lead.



Near the chapel are the George Washington Carver homes, subsidized housing where Joanne grew up, along with many other Selma marchers.

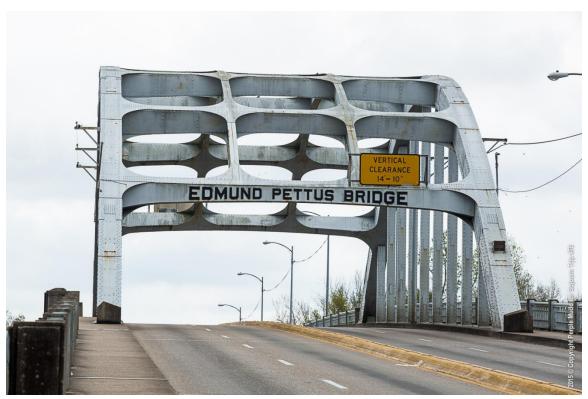


Joanne has us pick up a rock from a patch of concrete in back of the Carver homes, where the Selma march on Bloody Sunday officially began. She explains we are on hallowed ground and we should keep that stone, that it may have come from a spot where John Lewis or Hosea Williams stood.



Jeff leads us toward the Edmund Pettus Bridge.





The bridge is small, but significant. Approaching its iron heft, you feel the weight of history.



Our line of marchers going up one side of the bridge



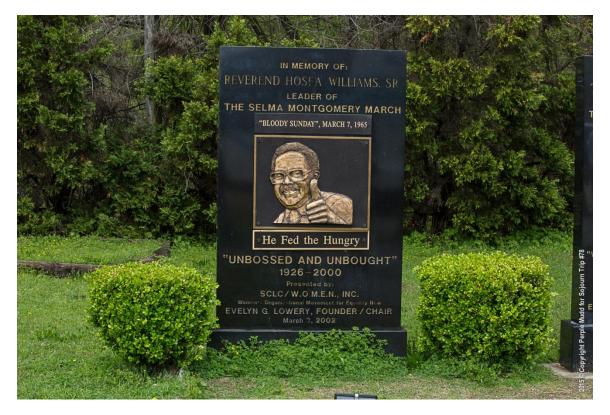
And down the other side

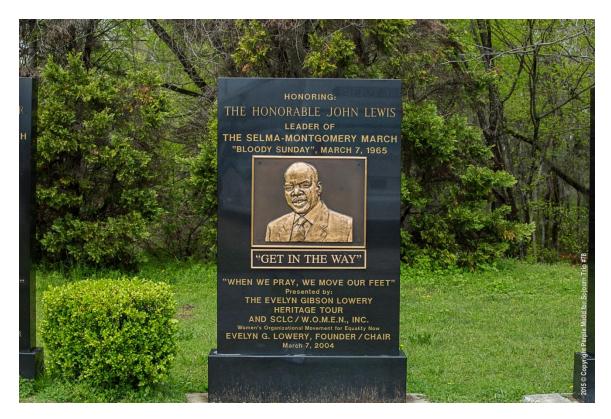


This sign sits at the foot of the bridge.



At the bottom of the bridge is a small park containing these markers and murals.







Mural on the side of the yet-unopened Civil Rights Museum in Selma



A narrower view of left side of mural



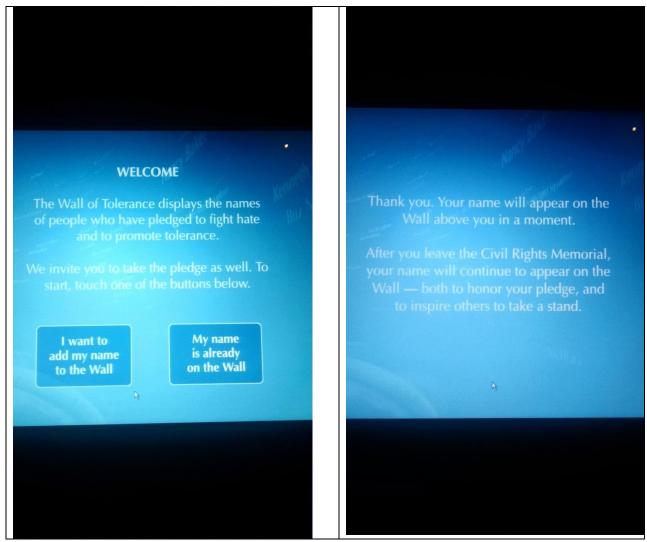
A narrower view of right side of mural, followed by a fried catfish lunch during our bus to Montgomery



Simeon Wright, the cousin of Emmett Till. As a 14-year-old in 1955, Till lay alongside Wright in bed until Klansmen dragged Till away for allegedly whistling at a white woman earlier that week. Till later was found in the Tallahatchie River, disfigured, with an eye gouged out and a 75-pound cotton-gin fan wired to his neck. Till's mother gave an open-casket funeral so media would show what hate had done to her son.

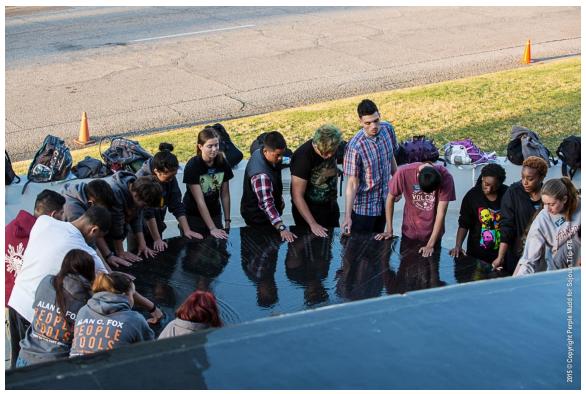
Simeon speaks very courageously of that night he lost his cousin. As he spoke, I glanced at Sam. His cousin, Luc, is his best friend. I wanted to see how Sam was reacting. Later I asked him if he had thought of Luc during Simeon's presentation, and Sam said, "Of course." Those moments in which Sojourn leads you to think of how the Civil Rights struggle applies to your own life are when the program excels most.





Next stop after Simeon's presentation was the Montgomery Civil Rights Museum. This display lets visitors add their names to those pledging to fight hate and promote tolerance.





While part of our group was inside the museum, another part walked around the Civil Rights Memorial, designed by Maya Lin, who also designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC.



Another part of our group took a lesson on the steps of the Montgomery Capitol, listening to a Dr. King speech over the speakers that Steve and Ken wheeled up the steps. When Dr. King asks "How long?" – just as he did at the end of the Selmato-Montgomery march – we all yell, just as the crowd did that day, "Not long!" and our voices reverberate down the empty street and into the night.





Lisa McNair at the Civil Rights Memorial touches the name of her sister, Denise, one of the four little girls killed in the bombing of Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist Church.





And Lisa then comforts some of the Youngstown students after they all exit their rotation through the Memorial.



Students break down crying after exiting their walk around the Memorial. Nearly all do. The experience is emotional in and of itself, but coming after four days of immersion and at the end of an exhausting day that started at Ann Reeb's father's memorial and a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the tide of tears is too much to hold back.



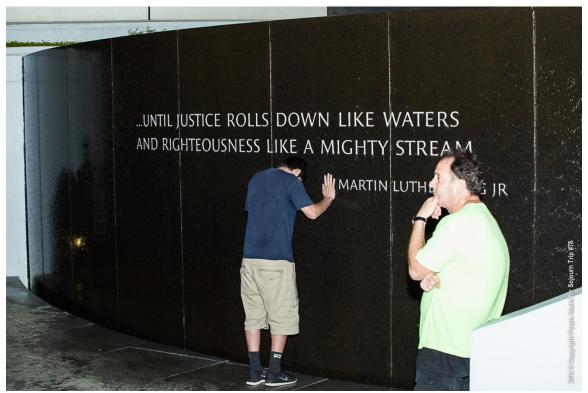
Another student from Youngstown, Antenia Brooks, sheds tears.



As you can see, Antenia is next to Sam and Anissa.



And the experience gets to Sam, too. I will never forget the feeling of him falling into my arms and sobbing for several minutes and saying over and over, "It's not fair. It's not fair." I feel so lucky to been there and wonder what Sam or I might have felt had I not been there.



Then Sam goes to the wall portion of the Memorial to think it all over.



And later works on his Sojourn homework with Anissa.



Joe Selmon, another of the Selma foot soldiers, speaks to the students. I missed this presentation as I sat out at breakfast with Jimmy Webb, learning more of his story and learning non-violence.



It was wonderful having along on this trip several of the boys I coached in basketball, including Grant, Sam, Avnit and Mohammed.



We bus from Montgomery to Birmingham and set-up inside of Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist Church.



Lisa McNair tries to calm the crowd as we give her a "Bobby" before she starts her presentation in the same room where a bomb killed her sister.



In one of the more emotional moments of the trip, Anthony Bouttie stands and speaks, telling us this is the first time he has spoken publicly, about the loss of his little brother, Israel.



And then he falls sobbing into Lisa's arms for a few minutes before the presentation can continue.



As usual, the presentation ends with "We Shall Overcome."



Lisa and I

Day 6



We had the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute to ourselves. This Klan robe exhibit stops me cold.



Sam at the March on Washington display within the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute



Minijean and Gary lead our singalong in the auditorium at BCRI



Precious and the Youngstown students are first on stage, leading us in "Throw the Peace Sign."



Outside the BCRI, Jeff leads a megaphone lesson in front of the statue of Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, a relatively unsung hero of the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement.



Then students are invited up for a private moment with Rev. Shuttlesworth.



We return to 16th St. Baptist Church



Students gather in the sanctuary for a lesson and private reflection.



The reflection also turns very emotional, and students support each other. I will never forget the sound of complete silence, except for sniffles and sobs.



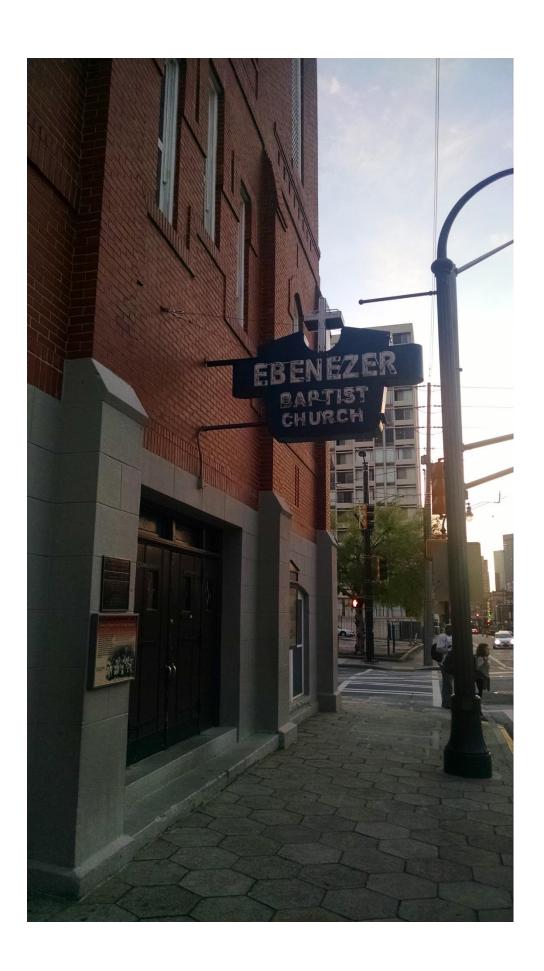


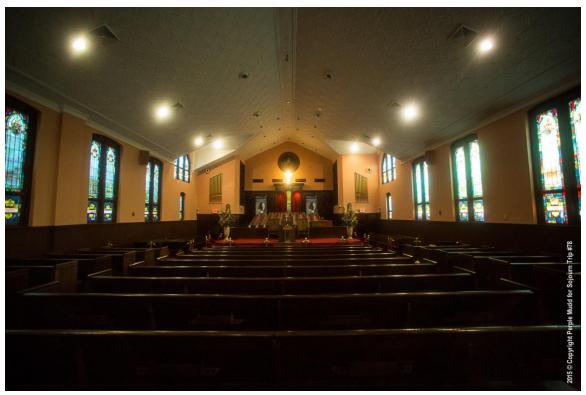
We take a long bus ride back to Atlanta highlighted by a talent show, in which Avnit performs a nice rap, and Max performs a version of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come." Sam gives a physics lecture, and just as we are pulling up in front of the King Center, I perform the first verse of Big Daddy Kane's "Who Am I." As I introduce it, I fear Sam will be mortified, but he lets out a "Yeah!" when he realizes what's coming.





At the King center, this Dr. King impersonator did a magnificent job with the "I Have A Dream" speech. Across the street is Ebenezer Baptist Church. It's striking how small and unassuming the churches are on this Journey. That speaks to the humble beginnings of such an historic Movement and reflects the tenets of humility at the heart of nonviolence.





Interior of Ebenezer Baptist



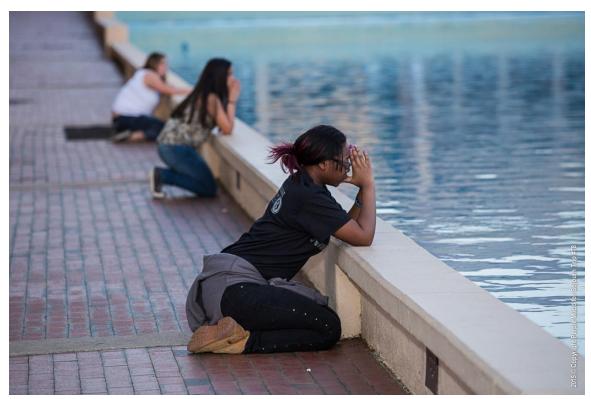
Across the street from King Center and down the block from Ebenezer Baptist lie Dr. King and his wife, Coretta.



Silent reflection at Dr. King's tomb



And at the adjacent pool



Aviana at the pool





Precious reflects on Dr. King.



"We Shall Overcome" at Dr. King's tomb



Our last night together, students cut loose at a DJ dance back at our hotel, and Precious is in the middle of all the action.



Day 7

Elizabeth Eckford, another of the Little Rock 9, speaks to students. She was famously pictured in *Life* Magazine in her sunglasses walking a gantlet of protestors on her way to school. She was spit upon and subjected to many other forms of hatred. She suffers from PTSD, and we were not to applaud for her or approach her or enter her space. She was the only speaker whom we did not hug after her presentation.



Jerry Mitchell of the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* speaks about his experience breaking stories that pressured the powers that be to re-open investigations of the Medgar Evers murder and others. Here he helps introduce the widow and children of Vernon Dahmer, an NAACP representative, whose home was firebombed, leaving him to die from burned lungs.



Students react to the Dahmers' story



Aviana hugs the widow Dahmer



Minijean leads the closing circle, the last group activity before leaving for the airport. Students stand one at a time before the group and explain how the week's Journey has impacted them and how they will enact one or more principles of non-violence upon returning to their communities. One boy (not pictured) spoke so bravely of forgiving his rapists. Minijean hugs each student and hands him or a her a stone inscribed with Gandhi's saying, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."



Anthony Bouttie speaks again of his brother's death, as his Aragon classmate DeAndre Sanders both leans on him and supports him.



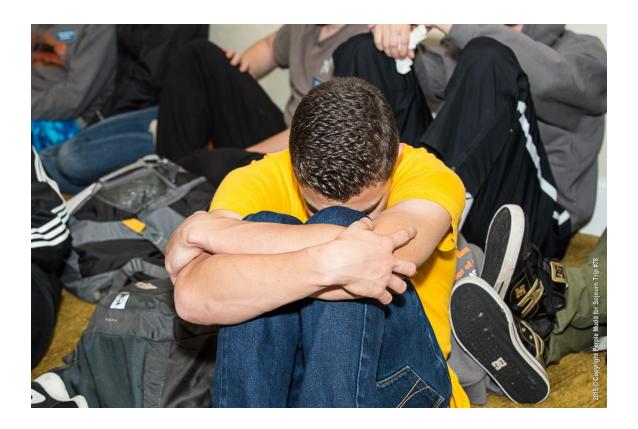
Anthony cries in Minijean's arms



Many students cry in this portion of the program...too many recalling abuses from their parents or other relatives and proclaiming their realization that the principles of non-violence hold that they forgive their oppressors and abusers and come to terms.



And the students' fellow Sojourners react.





Reggie, a Youngstown student, frequently disrupted lessons during the Journey. Then he captured our hearts by explaining his ordeal, living on his own since 15, working two jobs and attending school, because his father said he never wanted to see him again unless he was "holding a dollar."







Aviana cries as she tells her own story of neglect.





Aviana comforts her friend Calah after Calah speaks.



Jeff winds us down after the circle ends.



One last round of "We Shall Overcome"



Jeff thanks all the adults who led, starting with Ken Mason.



Then Doctor Carolyn, who served as everything from Sojourn COO to nurse



Then Steve, whom the students spontaneously greeted in a Rockstar-enthusiastic chant each time he stepped in front of them with a chorus of "Steve, Steve, Steeeve!"

Then Audra





Then Jeff

Epilogue: Not Pictured

No cell phones or other electronic devices. Really. Period. For a week. Use phone cards and the hotel phones. If there is an emergency at home, parents or guardians phone Jeff or Steve.

Reading and studying. Sojourn provides a rigorous academic challenge. Pre-reading is expected – including a binder of material assembled by Sojourn, such as newspaper articles about speakers' topics – and much of John Lewis' stunning autobiography, "Walking with the Wind." Students earn college credit for submitting papers and reports during and after the Journey. Jeff and the other teachers turn away from the door of speaker presentations any students who have not completed the previous night's homework. When they finish the homework, they are re-admitted.

Avnit's dancing. Avnit Prasad is one of the basketball players I coached for three years at Bowditch Middle School and one year at San Mateo High School. The first night we closed in song, which was the second night of the Journey, Avnit distinguished himself as a dancer to one of our anthems, "Ella's Song" by Sweet Honey in the Rock. He often was called upon to lead dancing from then on.

Music. Music is a big deal for Sojourn. The binder contains lyrics to several songs we sang frequently, such as "Ella's Song" and "We Shall Overcome" as well as some written and produced specifically for Sojourn, such as "Thank You, Shuttlesworth." Music helped give us energy and soothed us in times of pain on the Journey, just as it did for those on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement. Weeks after the Journey as I write this, "Ella's Song" is stuck in my head for a record amount of time per day and number of days.

Georgia and Alabama countryside. Our longer bus rides often focused on lessons, but there was plenty of opportunity to get lost mentally while staring out at forests, rolling hills and brown and green rivers.

Food highlights. The fried catfish on the bus from Selma to Montgomery and the Dreamland BBQ catered for two meals at Birmingham's 16th St. Baptist Church.

Teachers. They do a tremendous job of everything from help interpreting lessons to bed-checks to comforting and healing their crying students. Many of the teachers on our Journey were repeaters; most of the rest will be. I had wonderful conversations and bonding experiences with nearly all of them. Most important was Penny Wells, as I plan to attend non-violence week in Youngstown in October and follow up on my offer to help Aviana explore opportunities in journalism.

Conversations with Civil Rights Leaders. To talk politics and culture with Minijean Brown Trickey, knowing through news coverage the ordeal she faced at Little Rock Central, puts today's news into a new perspective. To speak with Simeon Wright about sights and sounds of Chicago, just as I would any new acquaintance, but to also consider how haunted he must be by Emmet Till's murder, brings home the all-day, every-day courage of those who have endured racism.

I went deepest with Jimmy Webb, speaking for about an hour on everything from our shared musical and literary interests to the backgrounds, family lives, professions and commitments that had brought us to the point of sitting at that table together in a Montgomery hotel.

His "Eyes on the Prize" segment exhibits the courage, leadership, patience and wisdom he already possessed as a 16-year-old. I asked if the composure and fearlessness he showed there came from his upbringing or the training he received from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He said, "Both."

He told me stories of his lineage more off-color than I care to share here. He said that what looked like courage in "Eyes on the Prize" was really just reconciliation with a lifetime, 16 years to that point, of knowing you already were dead. Violence was so common, assumed, sudden, random, unprosecuted and ingrained in everyday life that he and his peers expected short lives.

We spoke of his learning tenets of non-violence from SNCC leader James Lawson in Nashville. The philosophy of non-violence made sense, Webb said, because "we were outmatched" in any violent battle for rights and dignity. I asked his advice on how to put non-violence into action in my life. What stuck with me was to go slowly and accept small victories. He drew the analogy of a drunk who waited until 9am to start drinking instead of the previous day's 8am. "If you get into something too quickly, you can end up getting out too quickly, too."

I asked more details of his journey. After the Selma-to-Montgomery march, he ended up in the Marines, sent to Viet Nam, though he saw no combat. He found a mentor, Guido, who eventually reached the Pentagon and sought to promote Jimmy to an adjutant's position. Jimmy said: "I asked, Guido 'Do you need an adjutant? Or do you need a butler?' "

Satisfied the position was legit, and with Guido navigating the necessary clearances despite Jimmy's civil rights arrest record, Jimmy eventually was signing requisitions with the made-up title of acting undersecretary. "If you assume authority, people give you authority," Jimmy explained. That was until Caspar Weinberger called him on it.

Jimmy continued working within the Reagan Administration. He was instrumental in helping establish Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a national holiday. He helped negotiate the release of Nelson Mandela and escorted him from Victor Verster Prison. Jimmy now is a minister, public speaker, leader of tours to South Africa and builder of homes for children in South Africa, who have lost their parents to AIDS.

My posts. See www.facebook.com/SojournProject and @SojournProject and videos at http://bit.ly/1KrFQH4