



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

ANNOTATED LIST OF RESOURCES ON THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves

By Adam Hochschild

2005. Boston, New York: A Mariner Book, Houghton Mifflin Company.

This is an account of the world's first grassroots movement to free the slaves of the British Empire.

Capitalism and Slavery

By Eric Williams

1994. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press.

The book provides a foundation for future studies. It looks at the role of slavery in financing the Industrial Revolution and establishes the centrality of the African Slave Trade in European economic development.

Ceux de Nigger Rock: Enquête sur un cas d'esclavage des Noirs dans le Québec ancien

Par Roland Viau

Éditions Libre Expression 2003.

L'anthropologue Roland Viau a fouillé le passé du site de Nigger Rock à la manière d'un véritable enquêteur, afin de découvrir la vérité historique : y avait-il à cet endroit, à Saint-Armand-Ouest, dans la MRC de Brome-Missisquoi, des sépultures d'esclaves noirs, comme le voulait une longue tradition orale ? Le fruit de ses recherches est présenté ici, dans cet ouvrage où refait surface surface notre passé esclavagiste.

Embracing Darkness, Making Waves Volume 6:3

Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada

2007: Toronto

Reflections, poems and prayers that critique the light/dark dichotomy in our language and present positive images of Darkness.

The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada

By Daniel Hill

1992. Toronto: Stoddart.

This book chronicles the struggle of slaves coming to Canada via the Underground Railway to break the chains of slavery and gain the full rights of citizenship in their adopted country.

From Chains to Bonds: The Slave Trade Revisited

Edited by Doudou Diène

2001. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Africa's state of development can only be understood in the light of the widespread dismantling of African societies that the continent was subjected to by the slave trade, which also transformed the Americas and the Caribbean. The writers in this book raise crucial questions and offer new perspectives on the slave trade.

The Hanging of Angélique

By Afua Cooper

2006. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

This book narrates the tragic life of Marie-Joseph Angélique. Integral to her story is the history of the transatlantic slave trade that took a people's freedom and sometimes their

lives. This is a story that has disappeared from Canada's historical chronicles and one to jar our self-understanding as a country where slavery did not exist.

How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

By Walter Rodney

1972. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.

This classic book analyses the insidious relation between Europe and colonial Africa.

The Popes and Slavery

By Joel S. Panzer

1996. New York: Alba House, Society of St. Paul.

This book documents the role of the Catholic Church in opposition to slavery from 1404 when there were pleas from Rome to halt the practice of slavery.

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing

By Joy DeGruy Leary

2005. Milwaukee: Uptone Press.

This book focuses on the lingering impact of the physical, psychological, social and spiritual abuse of enslavement on Africans. It explores the relationship between racism and slavery and opens windows to innovative models for healing.

Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches

Edited by Gregory Baum and Harold Wells.

1997. Geneva: WCC Publications; New York: Orbis Books.

Here are 15 original essays on the efforts of church-based groups to foster reconciliation between former combatants in many different contexts.

The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal

By Dorothy W. Williams

1997. Montreal: Véhicule Press

Blacks have been part of the Canadian experience since the 16th century yet the historical record remains silent, causing Montreal's Black population to be invisible even today.

Seeking Salvation: A History of the Black Church in Canada

2005. Toronto: A Travesty Production.

90 minutes

A video documentary spanning four centuries, *Seeking Salvation* is a celebration of the Black Church and its deep history in Canada. Stunning coverage from inside the nation's most hallowed Black Churches, dynamic editing, and soul-lifting gospel music collide with compelling stories from clerics, historians, poets and musicians to create a rich tapestry of individuals and communities from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. The film honours the legacy of peoples who survived against impossible odds.

Set All Free: Act to End Slavery

2007. A project of Churches Together in England

Churches Together is a network of over 80 churches, church-related groups, and organizations that are working on a wide variety of projects related to the abolition of the slave trade in the British colonies. For its extensive resources see www.setallfree.net.

Commemorations of the Slave Trade The United Nations

On December 5, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Some 160 countries, including former colonial powers—the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as all the countries on the African Continent—supported the resolution. It recognizes the slave trade as among the worst violations of human rights in the history of humanity particularly and acknowledges that the institution of slavery is at the heart of “profound social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice which continue to affect people of African descent.”

The General Assembly designated March 25 as the International Day for the Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the end of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. On March 26 the General Assembly will convene a special commemorative meeting in remembrance of the event

Plaque to honour Marie-Joseph Angélique

Marie-Joseph Angélique, a slave owned by a Montreal merchant, was only 29 when she was accused of burning down half the city of Montreal in 1734. She was convicted, hung and her body burned and ashes scattered to the winds. In 2006, a commemorative plaque was installed at *Maison Parent-Roback*, a woman’s centre on St. Thérèse Street in Old Montreal, drawing attention to the existence of slavery in Quebec and Canada’s participation in the transatlantic slave trade. See also the website www.canadianmysteries.ca and click on *Torture and Truth – Angélique and the Burning of Montreal*.

Middle Passage Monument Project.

On July 3, 1999, a monument commemorating the estimated millions who died during the Transatlantic Slave Trade was lowered to the floor of the Atlantic some 427 kilometers off

New York’s harbour. Wayne James organized the memorial which was attended by scholars, clergy, political leaders, entertainers and ordinary citizens. The plan was that replicas would be placed in Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, North and South America.

Ghana’s “Project Joseph”

In preparation for its 50th anniversary of gaining independence—the first country in sub-Saharan colonial Africa to do so—Ghana is launching a major tourism campaign aimed at Blacks scattered across the globe by the slave trade. They will be offered the opportunity to trace their history to the slave trade by reconnecting with the land of their ancestors.

With more than 50 monuments featuring relics of the slave trade, Ghana is considered a mecca for Blacks exploring their roots. Guides will describe the dense bush and jungle that ring the coastline, the various diseases that wiped out the early slavers and their wives, the brutal overland march for columns of hundreds of African men and women forcibly dragged into the forts, subdued by chains and whips. Visitors will see forts like the Elmina Fortress built by the Portuguese in 1482 which could hold 1,000 men and women in its dungeons and through whose “Doors of No Return” millions of Africans branded with hot irons passed through to be packed like “pieces in ebony” into waiting ships.

Acknowledging that the European slavers could not have prospered without some local help, the name of the project comes from the Old Testament story of Joseph sold by his brethren into slavery who became better off than they and brought a new life to his family. The hope is that people of African descent in the diaspora will feel sufficiently comfortable to return to Africa and contribute to its development.

For further resources on racism see the 2006 Resource for Racial Justice Week at www.ccc-cce.ca

THEOLOGICAL STARTING POINTS FOR UNDOING RACISM

Steering Committee, Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network

...and the leaves on the tree (of life) were for the healing of the nations... (Revelations 22:2)

The time to dismantle and eradicate racism is now. It is urgent for us and our churches to acknowledge our complicity with and participation in the perpetuation of racism, slavery and colonialism, or we are not credible. This acknowledgment is critical because it leads to the necessary acts of apology and confession, of repentance and reconciliation, and of healing and wholeness. All of these elements form part of redress and reparations that are due the victims of racism, past and present.¹

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. . . (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1)

Introduction

After five years of work together on undoing racism in Canadian churches, the members of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network proposed to document some of the principles and practices they believe were strongly shared and have grown out of their own cumulative experience working to undo racism in Canadian churches. These may be used to encourage more Canadian churches to undertake anti-racism ministry, as criteria to assess ongoing anti-racism efforts, and as touchstones to help focus our own practice.

Principles

Principles can be described as “starting points for action”. The following principles have been distilled from relevant theological convictions: creation, sin, history, Christian identity, and making all things new.

Creation

God created diversity and unity all through the story of creation, and declared it good. Every person is unique, different from all others. Each person is breathed with the breath of God, created in God’s own image, a person of infinite and singular dignity and worth. At the same time, we are all related. Every person is a member of one human race, uniquely related to every other human being.

Sin

Racism is a sin. It is contrary to God’s will for love, peace, equality, justice and compassion for all. It is an affront to human dignity and damages the human person. Human dignity is the gift of God’s image and likeness in every human being. “Racism desecrates God’s likeness in every person.”² Racism puts in peril human lives on a daily basis.

1 This text is adapted from the Statement of the Ecumenical Caucus at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that was held in Durban, South Africa in September 2001.

2 Ibid.

History

It is extremely important to remember rightly: to speak in love the truth of history and relationships between peoples, including history ignored, neglected or unknown to the majority population. It is extremely important to listen, hear, receive and carry the truth of history and relationships between people in love. Racism takes many shapes and forms: personally, institutionally, linguistically, culturally and between civilizations. It ranges from personal prejudice to communal genocide. It constantly adapts to new situations: consequently, there can be no one solution to racism; we do not have all the answers for all time.

However, we believe racism has been done through the concrete actions of people and peoples, therefore it can be undone. Authentic anti-racism work is Spirit-led: only the Holy Spirit can change hearts. It is always a journey unique to each person or community.

Christian Identity

A transformed identity is always anti-racist. A transformed identity - conversion, cannot include personal, institutional or communal racism. This is an ongoing process, a continual transforming of relationships that divide.

“Behold I am Making All Things New”³

The Book of Revelations reports that all nations will come and worship God. God’s justice demands apology and confession, repentance and reconciliation, truth-telling and reparations, toward healing and wholeness, that all may be one. Undoing racism is not optional. Creation is being restored.

Current Practice & Experience of Anti-Racism Work in Canadian Churches

Much of current anti-racism and multi-cultural ministry in Canadian churches is conducted through training, teaching and education. When facilitating learning events of all kinds, the following practices have been useful.

- Start with the concrete experience of racism, with the people affected (victims and beneficiaries).
- Always aim at consulting with the group for whom a training is planned: do a learning needs and resources assessment.
- Historical timelines are helpful in seeing and feeling how racism has been done. We need to know our histories.
- Dialogue works better than monologue.
- Avoid anti-racism pedagogies that promote trauma, crisis or conversions, avoid the mentality of a quick fix.
- Story-telling must be mutual, should lead to a structural naming of the truth, not used to “prove” that racism exists, never lead to a kind of “voyeurism” of the victim.
- Caucus groups can be helpful from time to time.
- A circle of chairs is a good practice.
- The primary task is to listen without defensiveness. This is hard work.
- Use differences to get things done – a diversity of voices, also in Bible study, helps to come to a fuller understanding.

3 Revelations 21:5

Resources for Further Study and Learning

- Honour non-European voices in theology. Seek out theological voices from around the world.
- Leadership is best shared.
- Link concrete experiences to social structures... analyze and name the specific relationships of power and influence.
- Be prepared to unlearn, and for the fear, sense of guilt, blame and woundedness that goes with it... it is a kind of exorcism.
- Anti-racism sessions often provoke anger and rage. Be ready to receive and carry the other's rage, and be ready to stand your ground in the face of denial.
- Anti-racism policies can be helpful in building new practices.
- It is unhelpful to work with people, then leave them. There always needs to be a follow-up process.

From our combined work there are additional experiences that we have all shared. We document them here as a reference for others.

- Accountability must be to those who are oppressed, not to structures and systems that perpetuate racism.
- Trust in each other is foundational. Talking about racism is not safe, and it is not possible to build a process that gives safety for everyone. Rather, the hard things that are spoken and heard need to arise in the context of shared belief that everyone in the room is committed to waking the journey of change together.
- This is not simply intellectual work. It is deeply emotional. The impact of the discussion on the emotions is important for the transformation of hearts. Guilt and anger will surface. Expect it. Give space for it. Don't try to make it go away without full expression.
- Anti-racism work must address white privilege.
- Beneficiaries of racism will avoid addressing it whenever possible.
- The primary obligation of white people is to work with white people... this doesn't mean the work should be done separately. It should be genuinely shared.
- Personal relationships, friendships, and hospitality are critical to anti-racism efforts.
- We need both the work of undoing racism, and living into a multi-cultural life, we can't have one without the other.
- Racism cannot be trained or educated away.
- In fact, formal education is often a stumbling block, wisdom on undoing racism is rarely dispensed from an expert.
- Racism cannot be organized away, although anti-racism policies can be helpful in building new practices.

Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network

Members of the Steering Committee, Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, a working group of the Commission on Justice and Peace, Canadian Council of Churches:

- Esther Wesley, (co-chair), Anglican Church of Canada
- José Zarate, Primate's World Development and Relief Fund, Anglican Church of Canada
- Ani Shalvardjian, Armenian Holy Apostolic Church
- Hazel Campayne, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Peter Noteboom, (secretary), The Canadian Council of Churches
- Steve Kabetu, Christian Reformed Church in North America
- Alice Shuda, The Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries
- Julie Graham, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
- Keith Regehr, Mennonite Church Canada
- Gail Turner, (corresponding member), Presbyterian Church in Canada
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- Norah McMurtry, (co-chair), Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada



Credit: Bushra Junaid