

Canadian Churches'

Racial Justice Week



God so loved the people of the world

March 19 - 26, 2006

CANADIAN ECUMENICAL ANTI-RACISM NETWORK

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The title of this resource, *For God so loved the people of the world*, comes from one of the lectionary texts, John 3:16. As we compared versions and translations of the text, we settled on this phrase from the Chinese *Kuo-yu* Bible, an ecumenical translation done in the 1930s and still in use in most Chinese congregations.

Thank you to all contributors to this resource: Gillian Barfoot, Hazel Campayne, Sarah Cooper, Julie Graham, Cheryl Horne, Norah McMurtry, Wenh-In Ng, Peter Noteboom, Keith Regehr, Jeannette Romkema, Janet Somerville, Andrew Wesley, Esther Wesley, Fred Witteveen, and Janet Yee. The cover art was created by Janet Campbell, a Calgary-based artist and activist who died in 2004.

The Canadian Council of Churches

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) is the largest ecumenical body in Canada, now representing 20 churches of Anglican, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions. The CCC is one of the few ecumenical bodies in the world that includes such a range of Christian churches. The officers and staff of the Council are drawn from the whole diversity of traditions represented by the member churches.

The Commission on Justice and Peace

The Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of Churches provides a forum for sharing information and concerns among those involved in ecumenical work on peace and social justice in Canada and the world; reflecting biblically and theologically on peace and social justice; and facilitating the cooperation of the churches in peace and justice concerns. One program area of the Commission on Justice and Peace is “Undoing Racism in Canadian Churches.”

The Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN)

This network is an expression of Canadian churches working together to support anti-racism programs and educators who are working in member churches, sharing resources and learning among anti-racism educators, and supporting long-term change in Canadian churches and church organizations.

The CEARN Steering Committee is made up of representatives from various Christian denominations, and also benefits from the active participation and leadership of staff from sister ecumenical organizations, the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC) and KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

Introduction

Welcome to this pilot project of a resource kit for marking a week of racial justice in Canadian churches.

This Canadian churches' week of racial justice and the kit of resources is the fruit of five years of learning, reflecting and acting together in the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN).

This resource kit represents our first attempt to jointly lift up the importance of anti-racism ministry in the member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches. Because we are still at the beginning of this journey, it does not yet include contributions from all the Christian traditions with a home in the Council.

Because this is a pilot project, and because we are eager to improve our work, we strongly encourage you to provide substantial feedback to the Steering Committee regarding what you like in this kit, and what you would like to see improved or changed. We want to know how this fits into your church's efforts to undo racism. We want to know how this resonates, or not, with your church's worship traditions, and which of the resources you were able to use (see the evaluation form on page 37).

The contributors to this resource kit come from a variety of traditions. Each of them has worked from the heart, offering the best of what they know now of the topic at hand. We are grateful for their time and efforts, their graciousness and courage in accepting feedback, and their willingness to learn and change.

Over the past five years, we have learned and experienced how emotionally charged the topic of racism is. We are committed, however, to not shying away from "racism," to pursuing a dialogue, learning and action process so that all things are made new (Rev. 21:5), so that the world might know "that God so loved the people of the world..." (John 3:16).

Join with us in learning how to do this better. Contact one of the members of the Steering Committee to offer your feedback and suggestions. Consider volunteering your time, energy and resources to help create next year's resource.

The members of the Steering Committee are:

Esther Wesley (co-chair)	<i>The Anglican Church of Canada</i>	<i>ewesley@national.anglican.ca</i>
Cheryl Curtis	<i>The Anglican Church of Canada (PWRDF)</i>	<i>ccurtis@national.anglican.ca</i>
Hazel Campayne	<i>The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops</i>	<i>hacampayne@canada.com</i>
Peter Noteboom (secretary)	<i>The Canadian Council of Churches</i>	<i>noteboom@ccc-ccc.ca</i>
Steve Kabetu	<i>The Christian Reformed Church in North America</i>	<i>kabetus@crcna.ca</i>
Julie Graham	<i>KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives</i>	<i>jgraham@kairoscanada.org</i>
Keith Regehr	<i>The Mennonite Church of Canada</i>	<i>keith@decisionsmediation.ca</i>
Gail Turner (corresponding)	<i>The Presbyterian Church of Canada</i>	<i>gturner@presbyterian.ca</i>
Kim Uyede-Kai	<i>The United Church of Canada</i>	<i>kuyede@united-church.ca</i>
Wenh-In Ng	<i>The United Church of Canada, (Toronto Conf.)</i>	<i>wng@torontoconference.ca</i>
Norah McMurtry (co-chair)	<i>Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada</i>	<i>mcmurtry@wicc.org</i>

March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

On March 21, 1960, police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire on a peaceful group of young students demonstrating against the apartheid laws, killing 69 people. In 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed that date to be the "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination."

In Canada, the Day has been recognised annually since 1989, supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage of the Government of Canada. The goals of the campaign include heightening awareness on a national scale of the harmful effects of racism. The Canadian campaign is focused on youth, as the Canadian government believes that youth "have the energy, commitment and creativity to advance the struggle against racism. They are the voice of the present and the future."

Since 1989, the government of Canada has taken action on racism in a number of different ways. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation was created in 1996, in accordance with the terms of the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement, signed in 1988. It continues to work towards "building a national framework for the fight against racism in Canadian society." At the moment, it has two foci for its work: racial profiling and redress.

Canada, and Canadian churches, also participated in the United Nations' World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. Recently, the Department of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism released Canada's *Action Plan Against Racism* which details the plan for combating racism in Canada.

In proclaiming the Day, the United Nations condemned "all policies and practices of apartheid, racial discrimination and segregation, including the practices of discrimination inherent in colonialism." It is good for Canadians to remember this, as we acknowledge the ongoing impact of Canada's heritage of colonialism.

A story As told by Esther Wesley

Esther Wesley is the Coordinator of the Indigenous Healing Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada. She has been involved with anti-racism education and awareness work for many years, and is a co-chair of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, writing the story was hard – not because of the work, but because it is hard to capture and convey the meaning of the story the way it was told to me by my mother, Katherine. Also, I found it hard to have to think in English while working on this story – especially when I have to add gender to the story. For example, the moose became “he” and it’s just something that doesn’t enter the picture when the story is told in my language, Cree.

Storytelling has always been a vital part of the cultural identity of the Aboriginal peoples. Stories were told to teach lessons, to entertain, to give warnings and to keep history alive. Stories at one point could bridge the gap between generations and transport the children and adults alike to a place that they might never experience for themselves... a place created through imagination – no illustrations.

Through the stories, each group or tribe self-identifies as separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. What one person gets out of the story depends on the person’s journey in life. As a child listening to the story – my mind would automatically focus on the physical characteristics of each animal and the animals’ behavior.

I would think that this story was told – at the times it was told to me – as a way of teaching. I imagine it would have been to teach me (as a child) of the uniqueness of each individual – the gifts and talents each person is born with. It is up to each individual to nurture that gift and to use that gift. I don’t imagine it was for diversity (multicultural) purposes as there were very few people, other than my people, living around the trapline area where I grew up. Today I can put the focus on the diversity of people... this is where I am in my journey.

Long, long ago, when the world was young, the animals of the world all wore the same kind of coat. They were all about the same colour and had no special features, except for their sizes to tell them apart. And because they were all basically the same and they lived as one big family, they were all on speaking terms. The rabbit was a good friend of the lynx and they could often be seen together. The wolf and the deer could also be seen hanging out together.

Their coats weren’t all that warm and the animals suffered much during the long, cold winter months. After one especially long, cold winter, a group of animals were sitting around talking and wondering what the following winter had in store for them. They decided to call a great council together. The great council included every kind of animal. The bear was chosen to call together the great council.

“My brothers and sisters of the wilderness, as you all know, we just came through a very long and cold winter. We all suffered and many of our brothers and sisters, both young and elderly, did not make it through the winter. Every one of us that survived the winter felt the cold. We need to do something about our coats. We need warmer coats.”

All the animals agreed that they needed warmer coats, but what would they do?

“Let us ask our big brother, Weesukayjack,” said the deer. “Maybe he can help us or at least tell us what we should do.” Everyone agreed they should find and speak with Weesukayjack right away.

The porcupine, a petite fellow, spoke up and said: “Our brother bear has spoken well. I would like to add that we should also ask for different kinds of coats and special accessories. We could ask for special headwear, special footwear and... maybe in different colours. We need accessories that will highlight our special features and individual personalities.”

Everyone thought that was a great idea. Others added that this would solve the age-old concern about how humankind would tell them apart. It was understood by everyone that someday humankind would arrive in this world.

A small group was formed and charged with finding Weesukayjack and asking him for help. The bear, the porcupine, the deer and the rabbit were among the small group chosen by the great council to speak to Weesukayjack at once. After some time, they found Weesukayjack and spoke to him about the request of the great council.

Now Weesukayjack had seen what a hard winter all the animals had had, and was quite willing to seek the advice of the Source of all Beings. He said he would carefully think about their request, and speak to the Source of all Beings.

A short time later, Weesukayjack called the group and told them that he had been instructed to provide everyone with a new coat. Each coat would be especially made and fitted to the particular needs of every animal. Accessories would also be provided to highlight the individual’s personality.

Weesukayjack named the time in the coming autumn when the animals were to come and get fitted for their new wear. He named the location of the great gathering. And so the small group was instructed to make sure everyone knew the time and the location of the great gathering.

The news of the great gathering spread rapidly far and wide. There was a great flutter of excitement and anticipation everywhere. Everyone expressed his or her ideas and thoughts on the subject. The bear said he thought there should be a variety to choose from. The deer said that he would like a special headwear that will give him a unique look. The rabbit said that he would like a very special coat and maybe some special footwear. The porcupine said he wanted a special coat of which there should be none like it. And the beaver and the otter both said that their coats should have special linings since they liked being in the water so much.

Weesukayjack worked hard all summer and by autumn he had piles of coats. There were so many shapes, sizes and colours of coats, but he still had a long way to go. There were special headgears to make, special footwear, and so on...

By late autumn, Weesukayjack was finished.

He went to the site of the great gathering and built a huge teepee. He hauled all his bundles inside the teepee. There were bundles everywhere. There were tiny bundles, small ones, large ones and huge ones. He carefully placed the bundles all around the teepee. Then he waited.

The appointed time came and the animals began to arrive – full of excitement. Upon their arrival they saw a huge teepee and know that it was Weesukayjack's.

The bear was called in and came out wearing a shiny black coat and long, long claws. The lynx came out wearing a handsome yellowish coat and a headwear with little tufts on the ears. The wolf came out wearing a grey/black combination coat with thick lining. The fox came out wearing a beautiful reddish fur coat with long bushy tail tipped in white and pointed black ears.

Next the beaver was called in. Weesukayjack said: "You will spend most of your life in water and therefore your coat is waterproof. Your footwear is especially made for swimming, your hand-wear is made for hard work and your headgear comes with sharp front teeth. Your coat comes with a large flat tail covered with scales. You will need a tail to steer when swimming or for balance when sitting on dry land. If an enemy is near, you will use it to warn your family of danger. When humankind comes to this world, you will be hunted. You will be part of their food and clothing supply."

A rabbit was called in. "I have a very special coat for you," Weesukayjack said. "It is a magic coat. Your coat will turn brown in the summer and blend in with the earth colours. In the winter, it will turn all white and blend with the snow. This will be your protection. Your leggings and footwear will allow you to run with great speed. Your footwear will allow you to run on top of the snow in the winter. Your headwear comes with large ears. You will rely on your ears to warn you of approaching danger. You will be sought by humankind for their survival needs. Your coat will be of great value to them."

Once inside, the porcupine was given a bundle. He opened the bundle and put on his quill coat. He noticed that every time he moved, he could hear clicking sounds. He was so proud that he could not help but parade around the teepee. "Your coat is so special that it is not like any other" said Weesukayjack. "Your footwear comes with long curved claws that will allow you to walk very slowly. The back and the tail are covered with thousands of quills and set with tiny, scale-like barbs. You will rely on your coat for protection since you will not have speed like many others."

The deer was called in next. He was given a beautiful brown coat with a white tail. His headwear consisted of a set of beautiful sleek antlers, and his footwear was built for speed. Weesukayjack said, "Your coat and other gear is built for speed because that will be your protection. You will provide food, tools and warmth for humankind when they come. Other animals will seek you out as their food source".

One by one, the animals were called into the teepee, and one by one, they came and went.

Only one animal had not yet arrived: the moose. As the animals left the great gathering, the moose was still busily eating succulent fresh leaves off the young saplings. Finally, when he realized that it was getting late, he sauntered over to the teepee. As he entered, he looked around and saw Weesukayjack. "Everyone has come and gone," said Weesukayjack. "You are the last to arrive. There is one bundle left." The moose opened the bundle and found a huge loose coat. He put it on and it hung in floppy folds and did not fit well at all. The teepee was bare, except for one huge pair of flat antlers, footwear that looked too small and awkward. He tried on the antlers, the footwear and just stood there at a loss for words. Then Weesukayjack said, "As the largest one of your family, humankind will rely heavily on you for their survival. Your coat will be invaluable to them. They will depend on it for warmth and other tools. Your headwear will provide for many tools, but will not hinder your travel or safety in the forest. Your footwear will allow you to run with great speed in rough terrain, but will be a disadvantage on a smooth surface." The moose wasn't still quite sure of what to think of his outfit as he walked out of the teepee, but he was soon hungry and forgot all about his ill-fitting outfit.

And so from that day on, the animals went on to live their own lives, each kind living according to its gifts and talents. This is the story of how all creatures of the world became diverse. And today we have diversity among people of the world, both in how we live and the gifts that we have.

Sermon notes: Introduction

HERE ARE INCLUDED SERMON NOTES from Rev. Andrew Wesley, Dr. Janet Somerville, Rev. Fred Witteveen, and Rev. Dr. Wenh-In Ng. They were asked, not to write a sermon, but to provide notes for use in preparing a sermon or homily. The texts that they worked from are the lectionary texts for March 26, 2006:

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3

Epistle: Ephesians 2:1-10; with 14-17 included

Gospel: John 3:14-21

These writers were asked to reflect on these lectionary texts in the light of their own tradition, background, and the occasion of a week for racial justice. We are grateful for their willingness to share their insights, in keeping with the working model of the Canadian Council of Churches as *forum* where everyone's voice matters and all voices are equal. We come together not to judge each other but to listen, learn and discover how much we find ourselves in agreement and capable of acting in concert. A key value in anti-racism work is recognition of and respect for diversity. The notes that follow represent some of the diversity within the Christian faith.

Acting in concert can be difficult when Christian traditions approach scripture differently, according to different levels of authority. A particular challenge arises when the writers and books of the Old and New Testaments seem to contradict each other. Interpreting scripture in a contemporary context has always been a challenge for churches, and different Christian traditions have developed their own unique principles for proclaiming the Good News. The readers of Numbers, Psalms, Ephesians, and John were from different religious traditions, including Jewish and Gentile, and each community needed to struggle with its own understanding and application of the Word.

From time to time the challenge and diversity within Christian churches, in inter-faith relations, and in the world create a healthy tension that can pull us forward and renew us. Our hope is that these Sermon Notes will contribute to this process. Member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches are united in their belief in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures.

Sermon notes by Andrew Wesley

Rev. Andrew Wesley is an Aboriginal Anglican priest providing pastoral care for the Aboriginal people living in the city of Toronto, including the homeless. He is the first Aboriginal priest appointed by the Anglican Church to an urban Aboriginal ministry. Even though he was appointed especially to work with Aboriginal people, his work has led him to work with multicultural groups.

Numbers 21:4-9: God not only led the Israelites from slavery and bondage. He led them to victory over others, but even victory does not satisfy the people. They complain against Moses and God. They grumble about the desert. They grumble about the food God has provided. They grumble about everything. And what does God do? In judgment, he sends venomous snakes. Finally the people show repentance (v. 7). Moses makes a bronze snake and lifts it up on a pole in the center of camp. All who are bitten can travel to the center of the camp, look at the bronze snake and live.

Christ refers to this incident in John 3:14-15. There is nothing medically significant in looking at the serpent. Only trust in God's word will bring a person to the bronze image. Only trust in God's word will draw a person to Christ.

The ultimate reason for accepting all people, regardless of colour, background, class or social status, is love as manifest in the cross of Jesus. It is here that God, our Creator declared and proclaimed His love for all people. He expressed before the whole world His willingness to accept all people as His children if they will only repent of their sins.

This scripture relates to one of the traditional teachings of Aboriginal people – *all my relations*.

Psalm 107:1-3: *A Psalm of Redemption from wandering*

The Psalms are filled with expressions of emotions: despair, anger, anguish, loneliness and fear, along with gratitude, wonder, peace and sheer joy. The book provides a unique perspective on our human emotions. While feelings have subjective reality, they are not the ultimate reality. Our feelings can and do change. If these feelings are somewhat negative or fearful, they can cause great stress. Through relationship with God we can move from fear to trust, from alienation to comfort, from envy and jealousy to joy.

The medicine wheel used by the Aboriginal people is a symbol that represents the dynamic system of mind, body, emotions and spirit, and the need to relate to each of these aspects if we are to develop our full human potential.

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Ephesians 2:1-10: All this has been done through God's perfect and gracious plan. It is a plan that does not rest on any merit of our own. Even faith must be viewed as a gift from God (vs. 8-9).

Our value then is not just related to the fact that God has chosen us. It is related to God's working in us, transforming us so that we can do good works. We are no longer in our old, powerless state. We have a commitment to do good works for which we've been made in Jesus. And one of the most important good works is to love each other as ourselves.

John 3:14-21: The Old Testament introduces the theme of renewal and hints at the great revelation Jesus unveils in John 3. More than one prophet communicated a promise that God would one day transform hearts, take away the stone; thus, give humankind a new heart that will be alive and responsive to God.

The New Testament uses this inner renewal to a new birth. The beautiful picture of a newborn baby is an apt illustration of what God does in our lives, and is full of hope and excitement. Birth speaks of an intimate relationship with our Creator and new birth makes us "new creation." And this new birth is available to whoever will trust himself to Jesus, the Son of God. Then, if we are to have an intimate and loving relationship with God, then, we must also have an intimate and loving relationship with each other as His children. We come from one family – God's family.

Sermon notes by Janet Somerville

Dr. Janet Somerville is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic parish in downtown Toronto. She retired in 2002 after serving a five-year term as General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches. Janet has had a life-long interest in helping people savour the radical social justice dynamic that is one of the compelling dimensions of biblical revelation.

Sometimes, sacred scripture throws a painfully harsh light on the human situation. Our TV sets are filled with messages from public relations artists of all kinds, and paid for by feel-good advertisers. But the Bible is as stark as the international news. It can cut like a surgeon through our mighty illusions.

In the reading from the Book of Numbers, we meet our spiritual ancestors in a panicky, complaining, blaming mood – a mood we know too well. Manna isn't good enough. God can't be trusted to give us a satisfactory standard of living. Moses is a pedlar of illusions. Then, suddenly, there are the snakes – and the chosen people, thoroughly frightened, see the snakes as a punishment from God and ask Moses to pray that they will vanish.

But God doesn't make the poisonous snakes vanish. Snakes are part of the desert, a fact of Exodus life. What God does provide is a *remedy* that can make people stronger than the poison, if they will just look steadfastly at the truth of what is going on. They are invited to look at a snake image – held up on a staff by the leader whose staff, earlier in their journey, had opened a path even through the sea. Danger was still real, but a sign was given: God would make life prevail over death.

Saint Paul is in a post-Exodus mood as he writes to the Ephesians. He is lyrical about the mercy of God; about *the great love with which God loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses*. But without God's power to transform us, there is no doubt for Paul about the toxic mess we humans are in. Without God's redeeming action, we're *dead*. Paul, no less than the authors of the book of Exodus, sees us as a poisoned people, helpless to make ourselves anything but "children of wrath, like everyone else." By ourselves, we have a cancerous kind of vitality that keeps on reproducing violence, oppression, disease, deceit and poverty – in spite of all our resolutions promising to make things more equal.

Yes, we can blossom and produce world-transforming "good works." Indeed, that's why we have been re-created in Christ Jesus: to live a new way of life made possible by faith. That new way is anchored in the risen Christ, lifted above the destructive pull of the world's habits of ego and dominance. But we can't escape those patterns by ourselves – not just by applying a layer of politeness over the unfair, life-crushing shapes of the world we have built. We need to be saved by God's mercy.

Or, in the language of the Gospel of John for today: God loves the world, even though God knows how passionately the world resists its own salvation. God knows that even when light comes to the world, our tendency is to avoid it because we don't want to know what we're really doing. We deny the light that would reveal how trapped we are...until

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we learn to do what is true.

Today is Racial Justice Sunday. Are you a racist? Of course not. Am I a racist? Heaven forbid. But you know what? We breathe racist air. We live inside structures and systems that reliably reproduce racism, and classism, and sexism, and wealthism. We participate in a world in which young Black men in Toronto shoot each other dead, with a kind of internalized despair. In which Aboriginal children dull their despair by sniffing gas or starting early on alcohol. In which Arab youth in French cities burn the schools that teach contempt for their culture, burn the cars they will never be able to afford. A world which offers Africa shining millennium goals of aid and technology and inclusion – but which keeps *delivering* crushing debt, domination by alien economic interests, hunger, cultural destruction, and a steady diet of pious international hand-wringing.

Racism is deep, deep in the ways of the world, always to the advantage of the privileged... and many Canadian congregations, in world-wide terms, are privileged. The protection of privilege runs so deep that we find ourselves helpless to change what racism has wrought in ourselves and in our society and in our churches... helpless to change... unless we look steadfastly at what has poisoned us, and *let ourselves be truly transformed*. Brought into the light. Cleansed of poison. Drawn out of the death that a history of sin has piled on the shoulders of those who have been despised and dominated. Made alive in Christ, who took on all that poison, died from it, and rose to a radiant life which makes those who receive it *stronger than the poison*... free in the Spirit from the age-old power games that wrap the world in fear and bear the bitter fruits of contempt.

To face and understand racism, and to accept with Christ the cost of overcoming it, is a concrete way to receive into history the grace of salvation. Making real, vital room for each other in our racial diversity is a costly, just path towards the joy that rings out in today's words from Psalm 107. *O give thanks to the Lord for he is good*, says that psalm, because God has *gathered us in from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south*.

Sure we have differences, but our diversity is part of God's creative delight. God has given us God's beloved Son, not to condemn the world but *in order that the world may be saved through him*, with all of us invited into one family, nourished by God. May it be so! May we welcome that day! Alleluia!

Sermon notes by Fred Witteveen

Rev. Fred Witteveen is a pastor of Friendship Community Church, a Christian Reformed congregation, and works from an Evangelical, Reformed tradition. The Christian Reformed Church is a predominantly White church of Dutch heritage, with some congregations, such as Fred's, becoming a multi-racial, anti-racist church.

Theme: Taking down the Wall

To prepare a sermon on Ephesians 2:14-17, five natural questions arise from the text that need to be answered:

- 1) What is the Wall of hostility?
- 2) Why is it essential to the Gospel that the Wall come down?
- 3) How did Christ take it down?
- 4) What is the implication of taking down the Wall for human relationships?
- 5) How does the Church dismantle barriers and create a community that truly welcomes others?

George Yancey writes, "As society diversifies, local churches find themselves interacting with people from every tribe and tongue."¹ As Reformed churches, the motivation to respond to this changing Canadian reality is grounded in Jesus' command "Go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). However, even if we agree this is God's will for the church, it is challenging to achieve. There are "dividing walls of hostility" that separate us from our neighbors, but as the recent Adam Sandler movie "Spanglish" points out in a humorous way, White culture is often unaware of them. However, the Apostle Paul was very aware of these walls. Ephesians 2 provides a profound challenge for the church to undo racism and its destructive effects on human beings, who are the image bearers of God.

"The dividing wall of hostility..." It is no secret that the New Testament describes religious and cultural hostility between Jews and Gentiles that no one could bridge but God. This wall of hostility was visible in Jewish law by which Jews justified themselves before God and excluded Gentiles. Elements of the Jewish purity law of the day excluded Gentiles, and Gentiles (such as the Roman Empire!) had provoked hostility through their poor treatment of Jews.

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It is noteworthy that the Apostle Peter initially resisted God's revelation in Acts 10 that it was now permissible for him to eat what was formerly "unclean" and to socialize with those who ate "unclean" food. Only after the third time was Peter ready to cross that divide between Jews and Gentiles.

"destroyed the barrier..." refers symbolically to Christ's death and resurrection which made the law ineffective for making people right with God. By offering salvation to all kinds of people Christ created in himself one new humanity in place of the two. In Christ there is no longer Jews and Gentiles but a mixture of the two combined as Christians who make up the body of which he is head.²

"And in his one body to reconcile both of them to God through the Cross, by which he put to death their hostility..." Jews and Gentiles were reconciled to God and to each other through the saving work of Christ. Christ's death put to death any remaining hostility between them. It makes sense to say that Christ did more than tear down the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile: he tore down the wall of hostility between all peoples. Oneness in Christ doesn't support the continuing existence of walls of hostility.

Application

If Christ has torn down the wall, how can churches, as the body of Christ, reflect that reality? In 14 years of ministry in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, one of Canada's most ethnically and racially diverse communities, I have learned that sharing of hearts, give and take (reciprocity), real power-sharing, courage to change, practicing reconciliation, and even facing the question of reparations for the sins of racism are crucial actions for knocking down the wall. Taking down the wall is not easy work and never done perfectly, but it is possible if there is willingness to submit to the demands of the Gospel.

¹ Yancey, George. *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 2003)

² Barton, in *Life Application Bible Commentary* (ed. Philip Comfort, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton IL. 1996) [editor's note: In this passage, Paul was addressing a community of both Jews and Gentiles who had decided to follow Jesus.]

Sermon notes prepared by Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng

*Rev. Dr. Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, Associate Professor Emerita of Christian Education at Emmanuel College, Victoria University in the University of Toronto, is editor of **That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward Racial Justice** (United Church Publishing House, 2004), and of **Our Roots, Our Lives: Glimpses of Faith and Life from Black and Asian Canadian Women** (United Church Publishing House, 2003), and currently serves on the Racial Justice Advisory Committee of the United Church of Canada.*

These notes assume that the user has consulted the usual lectionary aids for preaching, and will therefore focus mainly on the emphasis of this week, that is, on the theme of racial justice. As John 3:14 refers to the episode in Numbers, these two passages will be dealt with before the Ephesians passage.

Numbers 21:4-9

When you reflect on this first generation of Israelites, what issues and questions are raised for contemporary Christians? What issues are raised when we confront the continuing existence of racial discrimination in Canada and our churches?

Are our society and our churches like these Israelites in our reluctance to journey into the wilderness of anti-racist learning and acting? It is hard to own up to the racism in Canada's history, and it can be still harder to acknowledge racism in the present day. We would much rather remain in the comfortable "Egypt" of unacknowledged or unconscious White privilege (for dominant White folk), or (for racialized minorities) of general assimilation and subordination. It is extremely difficult to take the risk of recognizing the ways in which racism holds us captive. And yet it is through undertaking risky wilderness journeys that we can hope one day to enter the realm/era of racial justice. (Such risky journeys can include being fully aware of systemic racism, or unlearning White privilege or internalized racial oppression)

It is also important to distinguish between ungrateful complaint and legitimate protest. The latter can often look like mere "complaint," as in the case of the call for compensation for Native/Aboriginal peoples who were taken away to church-run residential schools, or of Japanese Canadians for the unjust treatment received during World War II (internment, confiscation of property), or the protest of Chinese Canadians and their descendants for having to pay an unreasonably high "head tax" to come to work in Canada in late 19th and early 20th centuries, or the empty promises of land

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made to Black loyalists coming to what is now Nova Scotia.

Finally, we might ask: what 'icon' do we exalt/lift up or look up to for our 'salvation' these days? How can we make sure they are not false ones? Are we willing to let ourselves be "purified," as by Moses' bronze serpent?

John 3:14-21

It is ironic that although verse 17 asserts that "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world..." yet in the very next verse "those who do not believe are condemned already..." Granted, such strong words must be understood in the context of the all-consuming desire of the early church (and of the Fourth Evangelist) to witness Jesus.

In the globalised world of the third millennium, and in our own country with its many faiths, these words can sound condemning, and indeed have been used to condemn the very differences of faith and practice that are part of God's creation. Preachers must take care to help their congregations nuance these verses sufficiently to make sense of the assertion in 3:16, "God so loved the [people of] the world" – a world, we now realize, that is created and loved by God, a world with many cultures and peoples who have developed a variety of cultural and faith traditions which we must learn to respect and honour. To cultivate such an attitude becomes doubly important when we engage in anti-racism endeavours that cross faith and racial-ethnic lines.

And it is not only people of non-Christian cultures and faiths that can take offence at such categorical condemnation: think of how John 3:18 and 19 might sound to first-time visitors to a church, those of a generation who, although growing up in a nominally Christian land, are actually "without Christian memory."

All this points to the caution that the Biblical text can sometimes be problematic, if interpreted without attention to how it might be heard by everyone, especially those not in the majority, and those living on "the other side of sin" (the "sinned against"). In this connection, we need to struggle with the dominant "light versus dark" image of the Fourth Gospel. Equating darkness with evil and light with goodness/salvation has subliminally led to racist devaluing of people of darker skin and hue. This is something so strongly present in our "metaphoric-speak" that those committed to anti-racist action must take every opportunity to demystify and counteract it.

Ephesians 2:1-10

One approach to interpreting this passage in light of the goals of Racial Justice Week is to take seriously the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' pronouncement, in the days of apartheid in South Africa that "apartheid is heresy and a sin." On such a premise, the "trespasses and sins" in which we "once lived" could be the state of unawareness of our complicity in the racism that still pervades Canadian society. The coming into consciousness of our (often involuntary) involvement can constitute the first stage of "salvation," whether it be through awareness of White privilege as dominant/majority individuals or through awareness of our passive compliance in the existing system as racialized, minoritized individuals or groups. How to discern our divine calling into anti-racist work and ministry then constitutes the second stage.

A tension arises, however, when as Christians we acknowledge that it is only by grace, a gift of God, that we are "saved." Does this mean that we must not participate in anti-racist "good works" at all? Or is there room for active engagement toward racial justice in our time? Verse 10 seems to allow for such possibility, that we are "created by Christ for good works..."

In conclusion, Christians willing to begin working towards, or are already committed to, racial justice in both church and society can continue to look to Jesus as both "our judge and our hope."

Worship resources

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.
Nations rise together in harmony and sing praises to our God, for all creation is a gift to the people of the world. Embrace the diversity that God has blessed us with, and see that together we are one body in Christ.

Yashoda Sutton,

from One Race The Human Race: Racial Justice Sunday 2003, published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland: Churches Commission for Racial Justice, London.

Lamentation and Confession

Lamentation

Let us pray.

One: We cry out to you, oh God,
as oppressed people and as oppressors.
From our places of struggle, we cry to you together, oh God.
We cry out to you with tears born of broken dreams and unfulfilled potential.

Sung response: *Senzenina – what have we done?*

One: We cry out to you, oh God,
as oppressed people and as oppressors.
From our places of struggle, we cry to you together, oh God.
We cry out to you with pain of loneliness, misunderstanding and isolation.

Sung response: *Senzenina*

One: We cry out to you, oh God,
as oppressed people, and as oppressors.
From our places of struggle, we cry to you together, oh God.
We cry out to you with anger at being excluded, ignored and made invisible.

Sung response: *Senzenina*

One: We cry out to you, oh God,
as oppressed people, and as oppressors.
From our places of struggle, we cry to you together, oh God.
We cry out to you with bewilderment and dismay. We are paralysed; we do not know where to turn.

Sung response: *Senzenina*

Silent reflection

All: We place before you the torn fabric of our lives and our communities.
Day by day, God is witness to every thought, act and word. God holds our pain and cries out, “how long oh my people, how long?”
We place our pain and our hope in Your hands, loving God, trusting in your holy power to liberate and make all things new. Amen

Pieces of cloth may be torn before each sung response of “Senzenina” to represent the torn fabric of our communities and selves. Written by participants in Anti-racism Education for Ministry course at Emmanuel College, June 2002.

Confession

O God, we confess our complicity and indifference:
We do not allow the suffering of others to disturb our comfort
We forget our country’s history and deny responsibility.
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison *(sung)

O God, we confess our ignorance:
We have shut out the voices of those whose experiences are different from ours.
We rely too much on the media to tell us what to think.
We know only our own reality.
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

O God, we confess our evasion and silence:
We allow our fears to control us.
We have allowed evil to go unchallenged.
We try to confront the world’s evils without
Confronting our own heart.
Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Forgive us, Holy One.
Help us to walk out a road of justice
That will lead to paths of peace
In ourselves and for the world.
**O God hear our prayer. O God hear our prayer.
When we call, answer us.
O God hear our prayer. O God hear our prayer:
Come and listen to us.**

**Suggested music: For a “Kyrie”, sing one you know well, or choose from #704 in the Anglican Common Praise, or #945 in the United Church Voices United.
Based on a prayer of confession by Claudia Genung Yamamoto, CCA News. Christian Conference of Asia 38/2 June 2003.
Adapted by Wenh-In Ng for UCC Toronto Conference Anti-Racism Training event, October 2003.*

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Confession

As we come before our God,
We know that we have much to grieve.
We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves
And we have not always gathered in the strangers.
This space has weeping within it,
Tears of sadness and loneliness,
Tears from rejection and hate,
Tears of loss and shame.

Silence

Let us hear a lament from the Hebrew people: *Psalm 13*
is read.

Assurance of Pardon

Our God grieves with us and offers us grace.
We are forgiven and called to a new day.

Thanks be to God.

*from Subverting Racism 2003: Social
Justice Sunday by Uniting Justice Australia*

Prayer of Affirmation of Diversity

We believe God created all people equal in worth and
dignity, that differences of gender, culture, race,
religion, abilities, sexual identities, are gifts of God for
the people of God.

We believe that the nature of God is multi-dimensional
and that we are made in God's image.

We believe that the miracle of God's creation is
manifested through our many differences.

We believe that to embrace diversity we must empty a
place within ourself so there is room for others.

We believe that our transformation rests in openness to
the gifts and perspectives of others.

We believe that to embrace diversity requires an explicit
commitment to become a new kind of community.

We believe God's love is perfected in our collective
communal experiences as diverse people.

*Written by the Celebrating Diversity Committee at
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church, Toronto, 2002*

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God
you hold us in your hands
for we are all made in your image.
Help us to celebrate our differences.
Help us to use our diversity
to share with each other
the richness of our many cultures, languages and back-
grounds.

Help us to dissolve the barriers of race
and work for a just society
in which none are despised and discriminated against
on the basis of false divisions of race
and in which each is valued
for their true humanity.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who saw beyond all human divisions
and reached out to the good within each person. Amen

*From the ecumenical service "Christians Unite Against Racism" at
the World Conference Against Racism 2001*

Hanta Yo

*(Hanta Yo means "clear the way" in the Lakota language of the
North American Plains)*

God of surprises,
You call us
From the narrowness of our traditions
To new ways of being church
From the captivities of our culture to
Creative witness for justice
From the smallness of our horizons
To the bigness of your vision

Clear the way in us, your people,
That we might call others to freedom
and renewed faith.

Jesus, wounded healer,
You call us

From preoccupation with our own
histories and hurts
To daily tasks of peacemaking
From privilege and protocol
To partnership and pilgrimage
From isolation and insularity
To inclusive community.

Clear the way in us, your people,
That we might call others to
wholeness and integrity.

Holy, transforming Spirit,
You call us

From fear to faithfulness
From clutter to clarity
From a desire to control to deeper trust
From the refusal to love
To a readiness to risk

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Clear the way in us, your people,
That we might all know the beauty and power
And danger of the gospel.

*by Gwyn Cashmore and Joan Puls,
from One Race The Human Race: Racial Justice Sunday 2003, published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland:
Churches Commission for Racial Justice, London.*

May your church be a place
of open arms and open mind,
embracing all those for whom you came,
Jesus Christ.
We pray this in your name, Amen.

*from Subverting Racism 2003: Social
Justice Sunday by Uniting Justice Australia*

Prayer

How will we pray in such a time as this?
How will we bring our world before our God
For healing, justice and compassion?

Silent reflection

O God, we pray for those who believe
That they are lesser human beings
Because of the way they have been treated
By other races of people
And whose culture has been crushed
Because it was different to those in power.
Specific prayers may be offered

Make us part of your new world, O God.
Create in us brave hearts
To make the changes in ourselves
And to invite changes in others.

O God, we pray for those
who fear to walk the streets
because they may face abuse or violence,
and for children who do not feel welcome
in school playgrounds.
We pray for young people
who have become bitter and hurt
because they live between two cultures,
struggling to honour their history and their present.
Specific prayers may be offered.

Make us part of your new world, O God.
Create in us brave hearts
To make the changes in ourselves
And to invite change in others.

And now we pray for ourselves, O God.
Open our hearts to receive gifts
from those who are different,
open our eyes to see you present within their lives,
open our ears to hear their stories
and open our mouths to be a voice
for those who suffer in silence.

Litany for Racial Justice

Wise and loving God,
You have created – and are still creating –
a world rich with difference and diversity.
You have created all people in your image,
each expressing their being and living their life
in valid, special relationship with you.
For all this, we praise you.

For historical acts of injustice and oppression
perpetuated against Aboriginal communities,
Black, and Japanese and Chinese communities
in this abundant land of the First Nations:
Forgive us, merciful God.

For the times we have failed to recognize racism
in ourselves, in our church, and in our society,
and the times we have failed to take action,
Forgive us, long-suffering God.

For complicity in systems of privilege and power
over those whose skin colour, culture, or creed
differ from those of the majority, even today:
Forgive us, compassionate God.

Grant us courage never to let a racist joke
pass in our hearing,
daring to insist on equitable treatment
of all persons and groups,
including ourselves if oppressed,
even at the risk
of being unpopular or misunderstood:
We beseech you, God of justice.

Grant us patience in enduring periods of non-action,
persistence in resisting the evil of racial oppression,
and faithfulness in working toward racial justice
among your people, in the church and in the world:
We beseech you, God of hope.

And grant us humility and wisdom to discern

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when it is that your Spirit must come to accomplish
that which human beings and groups cannot.

We pray in the name of Jesus, himself,
the bread of justice and the cup of solidarity. Amen

by Wenh-In Ng,

*from That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward
Racial Justice (Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations unit,
The United Church of Canada, 2004, p77. Reprinted with per-
mission)*

Prayer

God, who speaks through stillness and quiet,
In word and symbol,
We thank you for this time set apart for our pondering,
our struggles, our listening, and our growing.

You are able to accept in us
What we cannot even acknowledge.
You are able to hold in your memory
What we have tried to forget.
You are able to hold out to us
A reconciliation we cannot even conceive of.

Give us courage to name the stones
Of racial discrimination within us
And the stones outside of us;
To name all that we have rejected in ourselves,
And all that we have rejected in others.
May we find no part of your creation
To be alien or inferior to us.

We open up our hands to You
And release our grip on that which harms ourselves and
others,
So that Your creation may be healed and made whole.
Amen.

Kim Uyede-Kai

*from "A Reflection on the United Nations International Day for
the Elimination of Racial Discrimination"
The United Church of Canada*

Closing Prayers

A Commissioning

Go into the world with strong faith and daring hope.
The world was created in the image of God.
The world is made beautiful by its diversity.

Help us to recognize God's image in every race.
Help us to accept and honour the values of others.
Help us to hold hope that all may be one.

Remind us that Jesus came into the world,
died, and was risen for all people,
and that the Holy Spirit inspires people
from every race, tribe, nation, and language
to praise together the name of the Holy One.

The world has become a global village.
All people long for unity, peace and harmony.
We are called to respond.

by Sang Chul Lee,

*from That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating
toward Racial Justice (Justice, Global and Ecumenical
Relations unit, The United Church of Canada, 2004, p79.
Reprinted with permission)*

Commissioning and Blessing

Go in faith to be part of
the new creation of human community.
Go in love to take the hand of those
who long for inclusion.
And may God the Creator speak to us in all creation,
Christ Jesus bring all people to the table
And may the Holy Spirit be our constant companion.
Amen

*from Subverting Racism 2003: Social
Justice Sunday by Uniting Justice Australia*

Song suggestions

Roman Catholic

a) From the *Catholic Book of Worship III*, (published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops):

- #529 In Christ There Is No East Nor West
- #630 Lord, Make Us Servants Of Your Peace
- #503 For the Healing of the Nations

b) From *Glory and Praise* (published by North American Liturgy Resources, Phoenix, Arizona):

- #206 We See God In His People Everywhere
- #56 A Time for Building Bridges
- #40 Lord, make me a means of your peace

Common Praise – Anglican

- #59 Jesus Calls Us Here to Meet Him
- #171 What Does the Lord Require?
- #418 Draw the Circle Wide
- #482 Come and Journey with a Saviour
- #504 Jesu, Jesu, fill Us with Your Love
- #576 For the Healing of the Nations
- #581 Lord, Who Left the Highest Heaven
- #583 When God Restored Our Common Life
- #597 Lion and Lamb Lying Together
- #600 You Call Us Out to Praise You
- #603 Holy Spirit, Storm of Life
- #613 We Lay Our Broken World

The Book of Praise – Presbyterian Church of Canada

- #632 Help us Accept Each Other
- #471 We are One in the Spirit
- #736 For the Healing of the Nations
- #528 Jesus Calls us Here to Meet Him

Voices United – United Church of Canada

- #411 O God We Call
- #611 Out of the Depths, O God We Call to You
- #612 There is a Balm in Gilead
- #677 O God of Every Nation
- #679 Let There be Light
- #688 O Day of God, Draw Nigh
- #691 Though Ancient Walls
- #695 God Is Passionate Life
- #697 O for a World
- #713 I See a New Heaven

Songs from other sources:

“Stand Firm,” Cameroon Traditional, from *There is One Among Us* by John Bell (Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community Glasgow, Scotland, 1998.)

“Blessed Darkness,” from *Circles of Care* by Ruth C. Duck (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, 1998.)

“Healing River of the Spirit,” from *Circles of Care* by Ruth C. Duck (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, 1998.)

“Walls Mark our Boundaries,” from *Circles of Care* by Ruth C. Duck (The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, 1998.)

Senzenina

traditional Xhosa and Zulu: South Africa

Leader

Se - nze - ni - na
 What have we done?
 Qu'a - vons - nous fait?

All Se - nze - ni - na, Se - nze - ni - na,
 What have we done? What have we done?
 Qu'a - vons - nous fait? Qu'a - vons - nous fait?

Se - nze - ni - na
 What have we done?
 Qu'a - vons - nous fait?

Se - nze - ni - na, Se - nze - ni - na, Se - nze - ni - na, Se -
 What have we done? What have we done? What have we done? What
 Qu'a - vons - nous fait? Qu'a - vons - nous fait? Qu'a - vons - nous fait? Qu'a -

Se - nze - ni
 What have we
 Qu'a - vons - nous

nze - ni - na, Se - nze - ni - na, Se - nze - ni - na.
 have we done? What have we done? What have we done?
 vons - nous fait? Qu'a - vons - nous fait? Qu'a - vons - nous fait?

Transcription as sung in the Western Cape by Maggie Hamilton. Published by the World Council of Churches in the "Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!" Worship Book, 2005. Permission sought.

Passionate God

by Colleen Fulmer

1 God is pas - sion - ate life, strong and vi - brant in us as

2

3

4

1 we seek jus - - - tice for all peo - - - ple.
 2 we seek free - - - dom for all peo - - - ple.
 3 we seek e - qual - i - ty for all peo - - - ple.
 4 we seek dig - ni - ty for all peo - - - ple.
 5 we seek peace in our day for all peo - - - ple.

Dieue, source de passion,
 Force vibrante en nous,
 Enfante nos choix
 Pour la justice.

...Pour la liberté

...Pour l'égalité

...Pour la dignité

...Pour une vraie paix.

The Loretto Spiritual Network, 725 Calhous, St. Albany, CA U.S. 94709. Permission sought.
 French added for the *Daring Hope* Conference, 1998, Canada.

Bible study by Janet Yee

Janet Yee currently lives, works and plays hard in Calgary, and prays for peace. She is a member of the Racial Justice Advisory Committee of the United Church of Canada.

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9 (NRSV)

⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’ ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous* serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous* serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’ ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live. [*or “fiery”]

Commentary

So where do we go from here?

This question was probably central in the minds of every man and woman who was “freed,” whether it was through the exodus of slaves out of Egypt, the abolishment of Black slavery in the Americas, or the ongoing struggle against apartheid and its legacy in South Africa. Hundreds of years of master-slave relationships can leave one “lost” and “abandoned” when there is “freedom” or liberation (though legal and political only). In this story, the people of Israel are complaining about their lot, perhaps because they are confronted with freedom. They have left behind the seeming security of slavery and are wandering in a difficult wilderness, dependent on God’s guidance.

Historically, many systems of colonization and imperialism have been racially constructed. Race factors became the justification and legitimacy for master-slave relationships that created our very social fabric. Our thoughts, beliefs and actions may still reflect our self-image as “slave” or “master.” White domination and oppression of people of colour may still prescribe our relations with one another.

Are we in the wilderness? If so, it is a wilderness in which God is leading us. And yet, we have become fearful, uncertain, blaming, angry, doubtful, filled with regret and dissension, and lacking faith that God will guide us to the Promised Land. Sometimes, the master-slave relationship seems more comfortable, predictable and secure. It’s what we know and continue to live by. As God leads us in the wilderness, this comfort is challenged.

In an environment of uncertainty and fear, like that of the wilderness, we often find a breeding ground for racism. Racism is a way of life where one race is ‘above’ another race; where one race is master and the other race is slave.

God sent venomous snakes that bit the people, and the people died. We cannot survive a venomous bite. Racism is that venomous snake. Have we not seen racism in the forms of racial genocide, or in our beliefs of violence and annihilation, and in beliefs and actions of racial supremacy?

The bronze snake is an image of the venomous snakes; God asked Moses to make it so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and live. If we are to look past racism, and live, we need to see the construction of racism. We need to see how it breeds, how it works, what it can do, how it can cause death. When we are bitten, when we are privileged by racism as White people or confronted by racism as people of colour, the only way to remove the venom is to see racism for what it is.

The struggle for freedom challenges us as God leads us through the wilderness. We need to seek new ways of relating to one another across and beyond racial differences and power.

Reflection questions

- 1) What parts of the story sound familiar to you? Which make no sense at all?
- 2) Where do we see master-slave relationships around us today? What are some of the effects that we can see today?
- 3) Where could we begin with healing? Personally? In our relationships with others? Structurally? What areas of our lives need healing? What can help us move towards a place of healing? What would we need to change to move towards healing?
- 4) Bringing about racial justice is a huge task. Where can we start? What can we commit to that will move us forward?

Notes for workshop facilitators by Keith Regehr

FACILITATING DISCUSSION AROUND ISSUES OF RACISM is fraught with complications. Discussion of racism in a racially mixed group that brings together Aboriginal people, people of colour and White people is very different from such a discussion in a racially mixed group that does not include White people. Both of these are different from discussion in a racially homogenous group. And, discussion in an all-White group, an all-Aboriginal group and a group composed entirely of another single group of people of colour will all be different. In each case the race of the group facilitator will also have an impact on the discussions.

Conversation about racism is emotionally complex. Many people of colour experience the conversation about racism in a group that includes White people as oppressive. That sense of oppression may come from an expectation that one or two people of colour may be expected to speak for all people of colour, even if the experience of racism is different. Or there may be an expectation in the group that the people of colour “teach” the White people about racism. For many White people the dominant emotional response to the conversation is one of guilt, a sense that they are individually responsible for the system of racism and for undoing it.

The dynamics of each group will vary, both according to the individual membership and the distribution of racial groups. The notes that follow are intended to provide some assistance in navigating these complexities.

Core Principles for the Conversation:

- Invite and obtain group agreement at the beginning to adhere to the principles outlined here. The group may want to add others to the list.
- It is important to remember that this is an initial conversation. There needs to be on-going conversation as the new questions raised are dealt with.
- Voice is important. All voices need to be heard. It may be important to have separate space for people of colour, Aboriginal people and White people at some point in the workshop no matter what the balance of numbers.
- Neither people of colour, nor Aboriginal people, nor White people are a single homogeneous group. One person cannot represent or speak for all people from their racial group.
- 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.
- Discomfort is to be expected. It will happen. And it's okay.
- Invite a commitment to understanding, struggling and changing.
- 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 walking the journey of change together.
- The primary task is to listen without defensiveness. This is hard work.
- What is said in the room must stay with those who were there. Without the assurance of confidentiality, participants cannot take the risks needed for the conversation.
- It is almost always beneficial to have a facilitation team of a White person and a person of colour. The White person will need to be willing to take a supportive role rather than a lead role in many circumstances.

The notes that follow are an attempt to build on these principles for different groups.

An all-White group

This is a group in which the White people will feel most comfortable. In a church context, it is more common than not to have groups of all kinds that are White only. Most may not even notice the irony of a group of White people discussing racism without the presence of any people who have experienced the harms of racism. (This is the approximate equivalent of a group of only men meeting to discuss the issue of sexism.)

What to watch for:

- White people find it easy to avoid clear, focused conversation about racism. An all-White group makes it easier for this to happen.
- It is easy to drift towards a conversation that downplays the harms caused by racism.
- It is not uncommon for conversations about racism in all-White groups to remain very superficial
- When the topic of racism is addressed in any depth, the issues of White guilt and denial are raised.

Advantages:

- Racism is an uncomfortable topic. An all-White group relieves some anxiety and may contribute to honesty in conversation.
- Racism is a topic that White people must own—it cannot be dealt with by people of colour alone. An all-White group may allow the participants to speak honestly, challenge one another, and not take the easy (and inappropriate) “out” of asking the people of colour in the group to take the lead in addressing racism.

Facilitator

For a White facilitator there are two dangers:

- Being drawn into the possibly racist assumptions and attitudes of the participants,
- Being drawn into a negative emotional response against the participants for the attitudes they express.

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For a facilitator who is a person of colour:

- The danger is being caught between being a facilitator and being a voice for people of colour who are not there to counter the attitudes and assumptions of the White people in the group.

What to do

There are two possible responses to these issues:

- Have a White facilitator who has sufficient background awareness to resist the temptations of the role.
- Use a facilitation team that includes both a person of colour and a White person. In this situation the White facilitator will need to be prepared to take a more supportive role in order to validate the leadership of the person of colour.

A mostly White group with a few people of colour.

This group structure mirrors many situations where organizations have begun the process of becoming more racially diverse (in many cases without addressing the underlying power structures). It may be helpful to imagine a parallel gender structure—a largely male group or organization with one or two women gathered to discuss sexism. This is not a particularly comfortable or safe place to be. It puts a number of pressures on the people of colour.

What to watch for:

It is not uncommon for White people to turn to people of colour for information, or ask them to speak on behalf of all people of colour. This can take several forms:

- White people may ask the people of colour: “What do people of colour want?” This assumes that the people of colour in the room can answer the question and that there is a single answer to the question.
- White people may turn to the people of colour to teach the White people about racism.
- White people may request that people of colour tell White people how to fix racism.
- There is again the possibility of White guilt that may express itself in denial.

Advantages

This group structure is probably the least desirable. The disadvantages significantly outweigh any benefits.

Facilitator

For a facilitator who is a person of colour:

- The facilitator will face pressure from the participants

in a way that may detract from the facilitator’s credibility as facilitator.

- The facilitator may feel the need to ally with other people of colour in room to strengthen their voice, in a way that affects their ability to attend to the needs and questions of the White people.

For a White facilitator:

- They may get hooked into the White guilt and denial and strengthen that voice.
- They may attempt to draw on the people of colour in the room to do the teaching of the White people about racism.
- They may find that they fail to adequately support and affirm the experience of the people of colour.

What to do

Use a facilitation team that has both a White person and a person of colour.

A group that is evenly divided between people of colour/Aboriginal people and White people

This group structure is perhaps the best context for learning and discussion. That does not mean that it will be easy.

What to watch for:

White people are used to having the dominant and majority voice, even in groups where they are the minority. If the group is facilitated in a way that ensures equal voice for the people of colour, the White people may experience this as being silenced.

This being said, the experience of having to listen to people of colour is a useful one for White people. The facilitator will have to monitor the emotional atmosphere around this.

Advantages

The most important strength of this group structure is that it ensures that the people of colour are not lonely voices. The strength of numbers enables them to support and affirm each other so that this is not a role that is dependent on the facilitator.

This structure ensures that there are a variety of experiences of racism present in the room, and it ensures that this variety is described. This ensures that no one person of colour is expected to speak for all experiences, nor is any one person of colour left to carry the burden of defending their experience on their own.

A group that is primarily people of colour and/or Aboriginal people with a few White people

What to watch for:

A group of this structure will tend to strengthen the White participants’ sense of being silenced. Just as the mirror image structure is not safe for people of colour, this structure may not

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be safe for White people. While some level of discomfort for White people is important this needs to be balanced with the experience of the conversation space as one where they want to participate. A group like this may tilt the balance too far.

Advantages:

This group will even more clearly empower the people of colour as they will have the experience of being the majority voice.

Facilitator

If the facilitator is a person of colour the lack of safety may be more sharply experienced by the White people.

If the facilitator is White, they may be drawn into attempting to defend the White participants or otherwise strengthen their voice so as to shift the balance of power in the group back to what is the norm in society.

What to do

Shared facilitation with a White person and a person of colour is important. This models respectful relationships, and

enables a balancing of the needs of the participants.

A group that is all people of colour and/or Aboriginal people

What to watch for:

A group with this structure will tend to take on a different character than all the others as it may function as a group in which the participants shape ways to support each other in their struggles with racism.

Advantages:

If the group is diverse, it can provide an opportunity for the participants to explore the different ways racism has functioned to damage them and the groups they are part of.

Facilitator

It is important that this group be facilitated by a person of colour and not by a White person. The presence of the White person would potentially limit the honesty and the ability of the participants to explore the pain of their experiences.

A note on language

Capitalizing Black as a self-affirmed identity has become widely accepted in North America. Capitalizing White is an emerging standard in anti-racism work: Lowercasing it may suggest that white is “normal”; capitalizing it draws attention to Whiteness as an identifiable dominant cultural group with attendant privileges, history, and responsibility.

From *The United Church of Canada Style Guide: For Staff, Writers, and Editors Who Prepare United Church Resources*, by Resource Coordination, Resource Production and Distribution Unit, The United Church of Canada, November 2005, p13. Reprinted with permission.

Workshop *Reflections on racism in my church* by Cheryl Horne

The Reverend Cheryl Horne is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is currently attending Knox College, Toronto School of Theology, doing a Master of Religious Education degree and is doing a field education placement at the Canadian Council of Churches.

Who is this workshop for? This workshop is for church members who would like to explore their experience of racism in the church and what the Bible says about racism. Ideally, the workshop will include people from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds. It is also designed to be used in any setting and with a variety of participants. Facilitator notes have been prepared to assist the workshop leader in facilitating the learning tasks (see pages 19-21).

Why this workshop? Even in our predominantly White, middle-class churches there will be many who have experienced or observed racism in their church or community. This workshop gives participants an opportunity to explore their own attitudes toward racism and analyze how institutions – including the church – perpetuate racism.

Time & location Times given are suggestions only; discussions may take longer, especially storytelling. This workshop is designed as a half-day workshop running for 3 ½ hours. *Alternatives:*

1. Run this workshop as scheduled from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
2. Start at 10 a.m., break for lunch after task 3 and meet again after lunch for 1 ½-2 hours
3. Divide the workshop into two 1-hour-45-minute sessions on two days: Day 1 - Tasks 1-3; Day 2 - Tasks 4-5. Homework at the end of the first session could be to collect materials from 20+ years ago, and contemporary materials as well as children's books.

You will need a meeting space that has comfortable, moveable chairs and good light. You will also need access to either a blackboard or flip charts and easel paper.

Objectives By the end of the session the participants will have:

1. Named words and phrases associated with the word "racism".
2. Examined a series of Biblical texts and identified terms and concepts that can inform our perspective on race, difference and racism
3. Shared stories and reviewed examples of racism in Canada and in our own community
4. Named some of the causes of long term systemic racism in society
5. Named and started to plan a congregational initiative to celebrate diversity and combat racism
6. Made a commitment to create at least one personal goal to combat racism.

Program Opening worship
Task 1: Word Association
Task 2: Biblical Images that inform our theological perspective of race, difference and racism
Task 3: Sharing our stories
Task 4: Systemic racism
Task 5: Where do we go from here?
Closing worship

Supplies

- Pens for each participant
- Supply of brightly coloured 3"x5" file cards
- Markers in different colours
- Flip chart and paper
- Masking tape for posting file cards
- Writing paper
- A copy of *Journey to Justice* available from the National Film Board (www.nfb.ca) or a local library
If this film is unavailable, use another resource such as a chapter from *Seasons of Rage* by John Cooper (see Resources page 31) that models storytelling.
- Church school curriculum from 20 years ago and current (works best if they include graphics)

Prepare in advance

- Children’s books (with pictures) from home and the church library
- A chart with the heading “Racism” for use in Task 1
- A chart with the heading “Celebrating diversity and combatting racism” for Task 4
- A T-chart with the headings “Things we can do on our own” and “Things we can do together” for Task 4
- Copies of the covenant form for each participant (see page 25)

15 minutes

TASK 1: Word Association

Pen and paper for each participant

Racism

What words come to mind when you see or hear the word “racism” and “racial justice”? *Hot down* the words that come to mind on a piece of paper.

With a partner, briefly *compare* the list of words you have named.

Flip chart labelled “Racism”

In the larger group *call out* your responses and *record* them on a sheet of flip chart paper under the heading of Racism.

- What strikes you about our list?
- What new perspectives do you see?
- What questions come to mind?

30 minutes

TASK 2: Biblical Images and Concepts Relating to Diversity and Racial Justice

Colourful file cards
markers
masking tape

Introduction

The Bible is not silent on the subject of racism. If we are honest, we recognize that there are passages that seem to justify racism. Some of those passages are included in what we will be looking at today. However, the Bible also provides us theological principles which can positively inform our thinking about race, difference and racism.

In groups of 2 or 3, select one of the Biblical texts from pages 25-27.

Circle the words that can lead us to the theological foundation for understanding difference and undoing racism.

Underline the words that indicate imperialism, belief in the superiority of one group over another, or which could be used to justify racism.

On a file card, *write* the theological principles that your circled words reflect. Write large enough that your responses will be readable when the card is posted.

Back in the large group, we will hear and post all the responses

- What themes do you notice?
- What connections do you see between the various principles?
- How do you understand those passages which seem to justify racism?

60 minutes

TASK 3: Shared Stories

Journey to Justice, pre-set to the story of racism in Nova Scotia

Watch a story of racism in Nova Scotia (a 12-minute clip) from the video *Journey to Justice* (National Film Board, 2002).

- What evidence of racism do you see?
- What are the characteristics of racism in this Canadian story?

paper & pen for

Break into groups of 3-5 and *tell* your own stories of either racism experienced or racism observed in your community or church. Once you have had enough time to share your stories, *reflect* on these experiences

Reporter in each group in light of the theological principles identified in Task 2.
Return to the large group. Choose one member of each group to *bring the group's insights* to the whole group.

40 minutes **TASK 4: Systemic Racism and its Causes**

Paper & pen for reporter in each group *In groups of 3-5, choose one of the first three questions for reflection and then move to questions 4 and 5.*

Curriculum materials from 20 years ago and currently in use.

Children's books with pictures in them from home and from the church library

1. Review a Sunday School Curriculum from 20 years ago and one currently in use. This works best if the curriculum includes graphics.
 - A. Which racial groups are present and which are absent in the materials?
 - B. In what roles are the various groups portrayed?
 - C. What do we "know" about these people from the way they are presented?
 - D. What does this tell us about the attitudes (conscious or unconscious) of those who prepared the materials?
 - E. What has changed in 20 years, and what has not changed?
2. Look at children's books that you use in your homes or at church.
 - A. Which racial groups are present and which are absent in the materials?
 - B. In what roles are the various groups portrayed?
 - C. What do we "know" about these people from the way they are presented?
 - D. What does this tell us about the attitudes of those who prepared the materials?
 - E. What has changed in 20 years and what has not changed?
3. Much of what we "know" about various racial groups is learned in childhood.
 - A. What do you "know" about people from Aboriginal nations based on what you learned growing up?
 - B. What do children currently in school "know" about Aboriginal people?
 - C. What has changed since you were growing up?

Keeping in mind what you have been discussing, consider questions 4 and 5 in your groups. Choose a reporter to share your discussions briefly with the larger group.

4. The distribution of racial groups across the full range of employment and leadership roles in various institutions gives us information about how institutions relate to various racial groups.
 - A. *Schools*
In what employment roles are White people?
In what employment roles are people of colour and Aboriginal people?
 - B. *Congregations*
In what leadership roles (paid and voluntary) are people of colour and Aboriginal people?
In what leadership roles are White people?
 - C. *Work*
In what roles do you find White people in the companies you work for?
In what roles do you find people of colour and Aboriginal people in the companies you work for?
 - D. *Questions for reflection*
In each case what does this tell you about the way things work in these institutions?
What are the foundational ideas about White people, Aboriginal people and people of colour that undergird or uphold the way society works?
5. Racism is a multi-generational issue. Racist attitudes and racist structures persist over the long term.
 - A. When and how did you learn that you have a racial identity?

- B. What did you learn about the meaning of that identity?
- C. When and how did you learn what you “know” about racial groups other than yours?
- D. How would you trace the history of your church’s attitudes to people of colour, to White people, to Aboriginal people?
- E. What are the historical and theological roots of those attitudes?

60 minutes TASK 5: Where Do We Go From Here?

Flip chart labelled “Celebrating diversity and combating racism” As a group, brainstorm and name the things your church already does to celebrate diversity and combat racism. (10 min.)

- How effective or ineffective have they been?

Flip chart labelled “things we can do together/things we can do alone” In small groups, name the things we can do on our own and together to make our celebration of diversity and our work to combat racism more effective. (10 min.)

Regroup as one group and list these things on a chart. (10 min.)

Flip chart

As a group, chose a specific item on the ‘together’ side of the chart and make a commitment to change. Make this commitment specific. Name what you want to see happen in your church, who can make it happen, and a time line for the change. One task may require several steps with different people making each step happen. (30 min.)

- Be realistic. What difficulties do you see in enacting your plan? What excites you?

Covenant form As part of closing worship, make a personal commitment to take action to celebrate diversity and combat racism. Fill out a covenant sheet and share it with a partner.

Closing Worship

Using materials found in this kit, create a closing worship that includes a commitment to change.

PERSONAL COVENANT TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY AND COMBAT RACISM

I, _____, with God as my helper, covenant to

to celebrate diversity and combat racism in my daily activities.

Biblical Texts and Background Notes for Task 3

All the texts as printed are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” ²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green

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plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 1 is prelude to all that follows in the biblical story. Here we see God as creator. In this particular passage the focus is on the creation of humans as being in the image of God.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19

¹⁷For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, ¹⁸who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. ¹⁹You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

This passage comes from the first part of the second speech of Moses (ch 5-11). It is a presentation of the basic stipulations of the covenant, the Ten Commandments and the Shema. It is set in the context of God's election of Israel, which in turn has implications for Israel's conduct. "The call to love the stranger is grounded in God's love of the stranger or sojourner and Israel's own experience as strangers and sojourners in Egypt."

Isaiah 61:1-9

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; ⁶but you shall be called priests of the LORD, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. ⁷Because their shame was double, and dishonour was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

This passage comes from a section of Isaiah known as Trito-Isaiah which was probably written, for the most part, against the background of the severe hardships after the Jews' return from exile and the bitter enmity between rival groups in Judah. Scholars find a picture of this group in the scriptures themselves. It was a small community that was oppressed and outcast and had no power or status in the larger community. This group loved Jerusalem and God's word, and disdained the worship of other gods. This meant that it was under active attack from foes, considered by the group to be enemies of God, within the larger community. This was an embattled group and this is a polemical document, defending the cause of a righteous group and pronouncing judgement on the ways of its foes. While it is polemical, its outlook is broad and universal, welcoming all faithful people to the temple. If verses 8 and 9 are read out of context, they may appear to be a declaration in favour of Israel over foreign nations, but read in context they would be a declaration in favour of those who mourn over Zion (vv 2-3).

Luke 10:30-37

³⁰Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

This story that Jesus told is connected to the immediately preceding question by the lawyer, “But who is my neighbour?” Notice that when Jesus asks the Jewish lawyer who was a neighbour, he avoids saying “the Samaritan” but says, rather, “The one who showed him mercy.” There are three points which are crucial to our understanding of this story. The first is the privileged sta-

Continued from page 26

tus of the priest and the Levite in Palestinian Jewish society. They were intimately associated with the Temple and the heart of Jewish worship life. The second is the defilement (“making unclean”) that was caused by contact with a dead or apparently dead body – this would affect those of priestly or levitical status more seriously than other Jews. The third point is the attitude of the Palestinian Jews toward the Samaritans. There was bitter tension between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were descendants of a mixed population which occupied the land following the conquest by Assyria in 722 BC. They opposed the rebuilding of the temple and built their own place of worship. They were seen as ceremonially unclean, socially outcast, and religiously heretical. The Samaritan is the very opposite of the lawyer, the priest and the Levite.

Romans 15:5-7

⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

The letter to the Romans was likely directed to the Christian community in Rome. This community was a mixed one, made up of converts from both Jewish and Gentile background, and disputes may have broken out over practices which may have occasioned the writing of this letter. These verses stress the mutual acceptance of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian community that is governed by the rule of Christ. Paul appeals for unity and harmony amongst the people based on the model of Christ. The motivation of it is to glorify God.

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called ‘the un-circumcision’ by those who are called ‘the circumcision’ – a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands – ¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

One focus of the book of Ephesians is the problem of the church in Ephesus (and in other places) with the growth of the Gentile church. It focuses, in part, on Christ who is the answer to ethnic rivalry and tension in his work of reconciling both Jews and Gentiles to God and to one another. This passage reflects an animosity that arose from fierce national identities. The unity of this church and society is nothing less than Christ’s body.

Revelation 7:9-11

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ ¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God.

Revelation 7 is an interlude scene between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals. What is being presented in the context of the whole of chapter 7 is a theology of the remnant, i.e., those who are saved. The remnant has three facets: destruction, salvation, and an opportunity for sinners to repent. This passage is a vision of the church at worship after the last day. John’s use of interludes focuses the hearer’s attention on the church’s situation within and after the apocalyptic drama, which encourages his audience to identify with the alternative vision which is presented.

References

Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), p. 125.

Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66, The Anchor Bible*. (New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 228.

Workshop for young adults (18+) *A faithful response to racism* by Cheryl Horne

Introduction

Racism is a reality in the world. God created all humans, in their diversity, to be equal. But somehow we have twisted God's ideal. Scripture calls us to understand that all humans are children of God and should be treated as such. In order to work against racism, we need to start by naming and defining it honestly.

Who this workshop is for

This workshop was designed for young adults age 18 and over. ***Please be aware that this workshop includes a video clip from a film that is rated "R"; permission needs to be sought for anyone under age 18 who maybe watching the video clip.*** Ideally, the group size would be from 10-20 participants.

Timing

This workshop is designed for an evening session of about 120 minutes including a break.

Supplies

Video: *Crash* (directed by Paul Haggis; see page 35 for more information)

Flip chart and markers, post-it notes.

Poster sheet titled "Racism is..."

Poster sheet of the Israelites/Egyptians graph.

Poster sheet of a proposed definition of racism "Racism equals prejudice plus the systemic misuse of power".

Key Bible Passage: Exodus 1:8-14

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, the participants will have:

1. Examined a working definition of prejudice and racism
2. Named characteristics of prejudice and racism that we find in our society and in Scripture (using Exodus 1:8-14).
3. Identified faithful ways of responding to racism.

The Workshop Program

Racism is...

Watch a video clip of the two opening scenes from the movie *Crash*. As you watch the video clip, **think** about the statement "Racism is . . ."

Write your conclusion to the statement "Racism is . . ." on the flip chart.

A Bible Story¹:

In groups of three, first **read** together Exodus 1:8-14. Then **respond** to the following questions:

- How did the Egyptians feel about the Israelites?
- How did the Israelites feel about the Egyptians?

Describe how you think each group might think, feel or act toward the other group. **Name** these thoughts, feelings and actions. **Write** one thought, feeling or action per card on post-it notes.

When the groups are ready, place your post-it notes on the appropriate place on the chart (illustrated on the opposite page).

- What similarities do you see in thoughts, feelings and actions toward the other group?
- What differences do you see in thoughts, feelings and actions toward the other group?

¹ Adapted from "Widening the Circle; Opening to Diversity and Undoing Racism" Christian Reformed Church in North America, Classis Toronto.

	Egyptians	Israelites	Similarities	Differences
Thoughts				
Feelings				
Actions				

- Which of these these similarities and differences did you notice in the video clip from Crash?

A Definition of Racism

Share aloud a word or phrase that characterizes the difference between prejudice and racism.

Using the handout from the Glossary of Key Terms, *read* aloud the definitions of prejudice and racism. (See Glossary of Key Terms on p. 35.)

Take silent time. *Reflect* on the differences between prejudice and racism that you heard.

Examine the definition on the flipchart: *Racism equals prejudice plus the systemic misuse of power.* What does this mean for us today? Where do we see prejudice and racism around us?

A Faithful Response and Closing

Select one of the following activities to respond to the lesson:

1. Write a letter to a person of another culture or colour about how you feel about racism.
2. Write a prayer or poem about your feelings about a faithful response to racism
3. Make a painting or line drawing to reflect your thoughts on anti-racism

Invite those who wish to do so to *share* their response.

Think prayerfully about what actions we might take individually and collectively to overcome racism. *Invite* participants to *name* these in one or two words. (Select one follow-up action to work on as a group.)

Close with prayer and the following benediction:

One: From a tiny seed grows a gigantic bush

All: From a pebble in a pond, then a ripple, then a tidal wave.

One: So may our actions and our prayers create God's kingdom in our midst

All: Let us go now in faith, seeking new opportunities to make a difference.

(From the Manitoba and NW Ontario UCC anti-racism kit)

Picture books speak a thousand words:

An anti-racism collection collected and reviewed by Jeanette Romkema

Jeanette Romkema works for The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada as the HIV/AIDS Education and Animation Coordinator. She is completing her PhD in Education with a focus on children's literature. Since living overseas for thirteen years, she has had a special interest in global issues such as justice, peace, discrimination, gender and human rights. Jeanette serves as an elder at First Christian Reformed Church, Toronto.

"Anti-racism books" are often thought of as books that deal directly with racism or are clearly working to eliminate the destructive forces of racism. This collection of anti-racism books approaches the issue more broadly. The following types of books are offered below: **Naming Racism** (racism is named but not fully dealt with); **Dealing With Racism** (racism is named and dealt with); **Personal Identity and Race** (a character in the book discovers and learns to celebrate her/his racial identity); **Multicultural** (there are people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, without it being the issue of the book); and, **Leaders in the Fight Against Racism** (a few well-known people children should know about). All the books in this collection are picture books and were chosen for their quality, date of publication, and positive approach to the topic.

NAMING RACISM

Dear Willie Rudd (gr. K-3)

by Libba Moore Gray and Peter M. Fiore
New York: Alladin Paperbacks, 2000

It has been fifty years since Miss Elizabeth was a little girl but she still remembers Willie Rudd, the Black housekeeper who worked for her family and helped raise her. She is so troubled by how Willie was treated by her family and society that she is moved, from love and a desire to ask for forgiveness, to write a heart-felt letter. The letter is an invitation to Willie to come into her life again, but this time as an equal: a woman, a friend, a part of her family.

This book was chosen for the collection for the courage it demonstrates to name racism in one's past, the desire to heal the pain caused, and the change experienced as a result of this reconciliation.

Grandmama's Pride (gr. K-4)

by Becky Birtha and Colin Bootman
Morton Grove, Ill: Albert Whitman & Company, 2005

Every summer six-year-old Sarah Marie, her mother, and her little sister travel down south by bus to visit Grandmama. It is 1956. All summer the young girls don't take the bus because Grandmama tells them they have good feet for walking; they don't drink from the public drinking fountain because she tells them the water at home is so much better; they don't use the public restrooms because Grandmama says they are too dirty. It is not until Sarah Marie learns to read that she sees all the "Whites only" signs, and she learns some hard lessons about life.

This is a sensitively written book looking at the history of racism that we share in North America. A book like this is critical to any anti-racism collection.



DEALING WITH RACISM

Henry and the Kite Dragon (gr. K-4)

by Bruce Edward Hall and William Low
New York: Philomel Books, 2004

In the 1920s, a group of Chinese children would fly their handmade kites in the neighbourhood every afternoon. When a group of Italian children start throwing rocks at them, they are ready to fight. It is only when they start to talk with each other that they realize there are reasons for their behaviour and that they are not as different as they had always believed.

This book was chosen for the collection because it exposed the fact that much racism stems from misunderstanding and misinformation.



Sister Anne's Hands (gr. K-4)

by Marybeth Lorbiecki and K. Wendy Popp
New York: Puffin Books, 2000

Seven-year-old Anna is starting school and has a new teacher – a non-white teacher. This is the time of Martin Luther King, when extreme efforts were being made to separate Blacks and Whites. In the one year Sister Anne teaches at this all-White school, an unexpected and profound relationship grows between her and young Anna. Both learn lessons of unconditional love, the pain of racism, and how to work against it.

This book is recommended for its sensitive illustrations and text. It is truly a moving read.

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND RACE

The Name Jar (gr. K-3)

by Yangsook Choi
New York: Dell Dragonfly books, 2001

Unhei has recently arrived in a new country, a new town, and a new school. She wants to fit in but soon

realizes that nobody can pronounce her name. That week Unhei's teacher passes a "name jar" around the class so that classmates can help choose an "English name." This all sounds like a good idea until she realizes that people are interested in her unique name and changing it would also change who she is.

This book is well known to people looking for anti-racism and identity formation books. It was chosen for this collection because of its reflection on the significance of one's name in connection with identity formation.

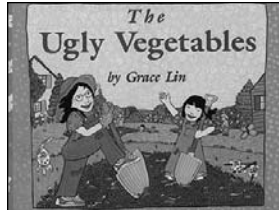
The Ugly Vegetables (gr. K-3)

by Grace Lin

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 1999

While a young girl and her mother tend their backyard garden one spring, the daughter is bothered that everyone is growing flowers while her garden is full of vegetables. What is more, her mother wrote all their little vegetable signs in Chinese! It is not until the neighbours ask if they can trade a bouquet of their flowers for a bowl of her delicious smelling soup that the young girl realizes that being different is something to be proud of.

This book was chosen for its simple message, vibrantly coloured illustrations and overwhelmingly positive tone. Good for younger children.



bow of people is truly celebrated in this book, while looking at the wonder of life.

To find a book that shows a variety of cultures playing, talking, and living together is rare – this is one of those books and the reason it is critical for a collection like this.

LEADERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

Malcolm X (gr. 3 and up)

by Walter Dean Myers and Leonard Jenkins
New York: Amistad, 2000

Malcolm X was a powerful and controversial leader during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. His strong message, that Black people need to demand equality, tragically cost him his life but his words live on: "I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being, neither white, black, brown, nor red."

This book was chosen because of its detailed description of Malcolm X's life and its alternative illustrations – with their colour, abstraction and message. This is a heavily charged story that invites a variety of discussions.

Rosa (gr. 2-6)

by Nikki Giovanni and Bryan Collier
New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005



Most people have heard about the woman in 1955 who dared refuse to give up her seat on a public bus for a White woman. Rosa Parks' quiet yet determined action worked to spark a revolution in America and has been the story of courage to fight systems of oppression since.

A book about Rosa Parks is critical for any anti-racism collection and this is a version of quality and depth, both in its written and visual text.

Season of Rage: Hugh Burnett and the Struggle for Civil Rights (gr. 4 and up)

by John Cooper
Toronto: Tundra Books, 2005

The Dawn Settlement in Dresden Ontario became a thriving community as slaves who made their way north through the Underground Railroad settled there. There they met with discrimination and hatred from the surrounding town. The rage over the racism began for 12-year-old Hugh Burnett when he and a friend were refused the right to sit down to eat their ice cream in a local café. As an adult, Hugh and others worked through the National Unity Association, worked to change the laws and people's attitudes.

This book was chosen because it is about a Canadian hero and a forgotten watershed moment in Canadian history.

MULTICULTURAL

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands (gr. PK-4)

by Kadir Nelson

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2005

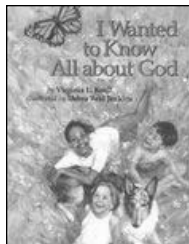
This is a magnificently illustrated book of the spiritual song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands". The origin of this song is unknown yet its influence has been felt by many people, cultures, and churches throughout the ages.

This book is a gift to the collection. It is rare that you see a Christian book that shows a non-White family celebrating God and God's creation. It is even rarer to find such quality illustration in a "Christian book."

I Wanted to Know All About God (PK-4)

By Virginia L. Kroll and Debra Reid Jenkins
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1994

A group of children of every race and culture are outside wondering about God and creation: "I wondered what God does in the morning, then I smelled the dew of the grass at dawn... I wondered where God is at nighttime, and I felt safe and warm in my bed... I wondered if God likes art, and I saw a spider's web in my uncle's barn." God's beautiful rain-



Continuing the learning journey

Anti-racism is not an end point, or a destination, it's a journey. It's ongoing, as we struggle to recognise and dismantle racism both within ourselves and structurally in society. In our work towards a just and equitable society, we need to continue to educate ourselves about racism and oppression.

To this end, here are some suggestions for ongoing reflection around issues of anti-racism. Whether individually or collectively, as a congregation or as a small group of committed individuals, these resources can be a good beginning for deepening your understanding of anti-racism. If you know of other good resources, please let us know – we are always looking for new resources to add to our list!

WEBSITES

● Canadian Race Relations Foundation

www.crr.ca

● Youth ROAR

www.youthroar.ca

● National Film Board of Canada

www.nfb.ca

● National Anti-Racism Council of Canada

www.narcc.ca

● Multicultural Nova Scotia

www.multiculturaltrails.ca/index.html

902-423-6534

This website lists a number of museums, centres, and organisations across Nova Scotia.

● The Ontario Black History Society

www.blackhistorysociety.ca

● Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee, Sioux Lookout, Ontario

www.slarc.ca

807-737-1501

The Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee “is dedicated to helping all residents and visitors to our community learn to work and live together while respecting and celebrating our differences.”

● UN Association of Canada – Youth Forums Against Racism

www.unac.org/yfar

This website is “a space where youth could meet to share experiences, discuss pertinent issues and design educational methods to prevent and combat racism.”

WEBSITES RELATED TO MARCH 21

● Department of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism

www.pch.gc.ca/march-21-mars

● CyberSchoolbus – the United Nations’ global teaching and learning project

cyberschoolbus.un.org

● United Nations’ Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

www.unesco.org/shs/againstdiscrimination

● The Dag Hammarskjöld Library (United Nations) – resources on racism

www.un.org/depts/dhl/racial

PLACES TO VISIT

Racism has the ability to hide or erase history that doesn't reflect the dominant perspective. Learning more about Canada's history can help us to understand the impact of Canada's colonial heritage. Here are some places to visit, to learn more about the history of Canada, often from a local perspective.

British Columbia

● The Japanese Canadian National Museum, Burnaby, BC

www.jcnm.ca

604-777-7000

The Japanese Canadian National Museum's mission is to “collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit artifacts and archives relating to the history of Japanese Canadians from the 1870s through the present, and to communicate to all the Japanese Canadian experience and contribution as an integral part of Canada's heritage and multicultural society.”

● The Nikkei Memorial Internment Centre, New Denver, BC

www.newdenver.ca/nikkei

250-358-7288

The Nikkei Memorial Internment Centre is dedicated to the history of the uprooting and internment of Canadians of Japanese Heritage during World War II. The buildings include some of the shacks built to accommodate the displaced citizens.

Saskatchewan

● Passage to Fortune, Moose Jaw, SK

www.tunnelsofmoosejaw.com/pastours.asp

306-693-5261

“Passage to Fortune” is a re-enactment/tour of a part of Moose Jaw's history. It tells the often horrific story of the early Chinese immigrants to Canada.

● Batoche, SK

www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/sk/batoche

306-423-6227

Batoche is a National Historic Site of Canada, and was the headquarters of Louis Riel's provisional government of Saskatchewan. The site depicts the lifestyles of the Métis in the late 19th century in Saskatchewan.

● **Wanuskewin Heritage Park**, Saskatoon, SK
www.wanuskewin.com

A Heritage Site, Wanuskewin is an area where Aboriginal people wintered for thousands of years in a valley off the Saskatchewan River. It is the site of a buffalo jump and there is a walk out to a sacred circle of stones on the prairie. In the building, the story of the slaughter of the buffalo and the impact on the people is told.

Manitoba

● **In Riel's Footsteps – Theatre in the Cemetery**,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
204-233-8343 or 1-866-808-8338

This is a play put on every summer, in the cemetery of the St. Boniface Cathedral. It describes the history of Manitoba, looking at the contributions of Francophones and Métis.

Ontario

● **African Canadian Heritage Tour**, Southern Ontario
www.africanhertour.org
519-354-7383

This is a self-guided tour, which looks at the Underground Railroad (a network of escape routes to Canada for enslaved Blacks in the United States) and early Black settlement in Ontario. It travels through some of the early Black settlements in southern Ontario around the Windsor/Chatham/Buxton areas. The whole tour could take several days, but another option is to do parts of the tour.

● **Woodland Cultural Centre**, Brantford, ON
www.woodland-centre.on.ca
519-759-2650

The Woodland Cultural Centre is a museum and educational centre, providing interpretation through a First Nations perspective. The museum provides a view of the history of the area up to the present day. Guided tours are available. The museum is located next door to the former Mohawk Residential School, and tours of the school are also available.

● **Discover Black History in Toronto**, Toronto, ON
www.blackhistorysociety.ca/BusTours.htm
416-867-9420

This tour of Toronto explores areas of Toronto where Black people lived and worked, and includes topics such as Black history, politics, industry and inventions. Tours must be booked for groups.

● **Great Indian Bus Tour of Toronto**, Toronto, ON
www.ncct.on.ca/historyproject/index_2.html
416-964-9087

The Great Indian Bus Tour of Toronto describes the Native history of Toronto, which is usually obscured by the skyscrapers and concrete. Call for more information.

Nova Scotia

● **The Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia**
www.bccns.com
902-434-6223

The Black Cultural Centre includes a museum which showcases the history and culture of various Black communities in Nova Scotia.

FICTION

Reading fiction can be a good way to understand another person's perspective in the world. Here are some authors to get you started.

Dionne Brand
Edwidge Danticat
Joy Kogawa
Lee Maracle

Leslie Marmon Silko
Maxine Hong Kingston
Thomas King
Zadie Smith

CHURCH RESOURCES

● **Anti-Racism Kit**

Communication, Education and Justice Unit;
Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.
2004: United Church of Canada. Winnipeg.

Developed as a Lenten study, this kit provides six two-hour workshops, facilitator notes, resources for children and an Ash Wednesday liturgy. Available from the Conference office at 170 St. Mary's Road, 2nd Floor, Winnipeg, MB R2H 1H9. It is also available on-line at www.mnwo.unit-ed-church.ca. (click Search and type in "anti-racism kit")

● **Eliminate Racial and Religious Discrimination: See Every Person as My Sister or Brother.**

Pastoral Message by the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs
and the Episcopal Commission for Interfaith Dialogue,
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Issued on March 21, 2004, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination it offers insights on the role of the Catholic community in eliminating racial and religious discrimination in the church, in communities, in its schools, in the media, in the policies of our governments and in the search for peace. The document also provides useful bibliographical references. Available on the website: www.cccb.ca/commissions.htm.

● **Naming Racism: Speaking Truth to Power**

Making Waves Volume 4:2; 2004: Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Toronto

A hands-on resource for congregations. Looks at Canadian churches' history of racism, provides Bible studies and liturgical resources, exercises to help understand systemic racism and how to bring about change, stories of how to be an ally and an outline of anti-racism policies of Canadian religious organizations. \$6 plus handling charges. Order from wicc@wicc.org.

● **That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward Racial Justice**

2004: United Church Publishing House

This handbook provides material for reflection, education and action to help individuals and congregations recognize, resist and eliminate racism. It contains excellent reflections and workshops designed to give life to the United Church anti-racism policy. Available from the United Church of Canada Resource Distribution Centre (www.united-church.ca/resources).

● **Toward Justice and Right Relationship: A Beginning**

2003: United Church of Canada. Toronto.

The study guide and accompanying video prepares participants for honest cross-cultural relationship as it examines dominant society encounters with and estrangement from First Nations peoples. Over five sessions, participants are asked to place themselves in the story, to explore the interaction of European and Aboriginal Peoples and impact of contact on both communities, to reflect on the living legacy of residential schools and, ultimately, to risk change and the building of right relationship. Video segments support and inform each step of the journey. Available from the United Church of Canada Resource Distribution Centre (www.united-church.ca/resources).

● **Transformative Justice: Being Church and Overcoming Racism**

World Council of Churches

An excellent study guide that explores the sin of racism and identifies signposts to building communities of transformative justice. Available from www.wcc-coe.org. Click on *site map > what we do > racism*, to download it.

BOOKS

● **Belonging: Constructing a Canadian Theology of Inclusion** By Kawuki Mukasa

2005: Kamu Kamu Publishing, Toronto

This book effectively weaves together an understand-

ing of racism as a multi-layered problem, experienced both at the individual and institutional levels of our churches.

● **Dancing on Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations** By Barb Thomas, Tina Lopes

2006: Between the Lines

Five years in the making, this book is a lively and crucial investigation into how racism, White power, and privilege operate in the ordinary moments of organizational life. It holds up familiar workplace interactions for scrutiny and offers concrete examples of racial justice work by a range of experienced activists. A hands-on book for people who are trying to create more equitable organizations.

● **The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society** By Frances Henry, et al.

1995: Toronto: Harcourt Brace

A comprehensive text that demonstrates how racist attitudes are embedded in the policies and practices of many Canadian institutions and organizations, particularly within government, education, the media, human services, employment, law enforcement and the justice system. Includes strategies for change. Chapter 3 provides an excellent overview of our legacy of racial prejudice, discrimination, and disadvantage in the earliest period of Canadian history. It focuses on the relationship between the dominant White majority group and Aboriginal people and then examines the four racial minority groups (Blacks, Chinese, Japanese, South Asians) that are the primary targets of racial bias. Immigration policies and practices of the Government of Canada in the past century and in contemporary society are scrutinized.

● **Educating Against Racism: An Annotated Bibliographic Tool of Anti-Racist Resources for Activists and Educators** By Bina Mehta and Joelle Favreau

2000: Canadian Race Relations Foundation / Fondation canadienne des relations raciales

A comprehensive bibliography of accessible resources that identifies the most recent tools and debates in the field of anti-racism training and education designed for use outside the formal school setting. Online at www.ccr.ca or call toll-free 1-888-240-4936.

● **The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against** By Andrew Sung Park, and Susan L. Nelson, eds.

2001: State University of New York Press.

For 2000 years, Christian theologians have focused on the experience of sinners, but treated their victims inadequately.

ly. The diverse writers in this book consider sin “from the other side” and challenge our theology by offering a comprehensive analysis of human participation in evil and its reconciliation.

● **Uprooting Racism: How White People can Work for Racial Justice** By Paul Kivel.

2002: Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. 2nd edition.

A how-to book to help readers understand the dynamics of racism in our society, through stories and exercises for working together to fight racism. Includes timely discussions of affirmative action, immigration issues, institutional racism, humour, political correctness, and the meaning of whiteness and specific consideration of Latino/a, Asian American, African American, Native American and Jewish issues. It explores how entrenched racism has been revealed in the new economy, voting rights, increased Arab attacks and health care policy.

VIDEOS

● **Journey to Justice**

2000: National Film Board

Six episodes show Black Canadians who refuse to accept inequality (in areas such as fair employment practices for railroad porters and fair accommodations practices) by taking racist perpetrators/institutions to court. Brings history to life. 47 min. Available from the National Film Board (www.nfb.ca) or local public libraries.

● **Seeking Salvation: A History of the Black Church in Canada** Directed by Phillip Daniels, produced by S.W. Clarkson and P. Daniels, written by Lawrence Hill.

2004: Produced by Travesty Productions, Toronto

This compelling film takes the viewer on a journey through the heritage and passion of the Black Church, an important institution in the building of Black communities from coast to coast. The film challenges the image of Canada as “the promised land” and moves from an era in which Black settlers battled vicious racism to the present day. Available from www.seekingsalvation.ca

● **In the Shadow of Gold Mountain** Directed by Karen Cho, produced by Tamara Lynch, written by Karen Cho.

2004: National Film Board

This film explores the stories of the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act. The stories of Chinese Canadians who survived the era, and of the ongoing impact of

the Act today, are shared through a rich mix of poetry, history, and raw emotion. Available from the National Film Board (www.nfb.ca) or public libraries.

● **Crash** Directed by Paul Haggis, Produced by Paul Haggis and Bobby Moresco.

2005: Lions Gate Entertainment

Crash follows a day in the life of multiple characters in downtown Los Angeles, examining fear and bigotry from different perspectives. Available from video stores.

Groups

● **National Anti-Racism Council of Canada**

A national network of Canadian community-based non-governmental organizations and individuals committed to anti-racism, to sharing of anti-racism related information and resources and to building and supporting local, regional national and International strategies to effectively address racism and related forms of intolerance. #300 – 160 Springhurst Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6K 1C2. Ph: 416-588-6288. Web: www.narc.freesevers.com

● **Canadian Race Relations Foundation**

A national organization committed to exposing the causes and manifestations of racism, providing advocacy and acting as a resource in the pursuit of equity and social justice. It produces a number of publications and research reports on racism and racial discrimination. Ph: 1888-240-4936 (toll free) Web: www.crr.ca

● **Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network**

Housed with the Canadian Council of Churches, this network exists for mutual support and resource sharing and to organize for long-term change in Canadian churches and church organizations so they become anti-racist. To contact the co-chairs of the steering committee email Esther Wesley at ewesley@anglican.church.ca or Norah McMurtry at mcmurtry@wicc.org

Glossary of key terms

These are some terms that come up regularly in anti-racism work.

Aboriginal: Original inhabitants and Indigenous peoples of Canada: Indian (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis.

Anti-racism: A process aimed at eradicating racism by identifying, challenging, and changing attitudes, behaviours, and structures that perpetuate racism.

Discrimination: An action or behaviour based on prejudice, manifesting itself in excluding or restricting persons and groups from participation in the community's normal activities and "goods"; can only be exercised by a group with more social, economic, or political power over another group.

Diversity: A condition in which elements, including persons, differing from one another are manifested in the same region-space/organization/institution; usually used with a positive connotation.

First Nations: Aboriginal peoples or nations who negotiated and signed treaties with the British Crown's representatives as nation to nation.

Internalized racism: This is where the 'poison' of racism seeps into the psyche of people of colour and Aboriginals leading to their acceptance of Euro-centric values and causing them to see themselves as inferior to White people. Internalized racism takes place as a direct result of discrimination and mistreatment. This is a form of "internalized oppression" that also pervades other oppressions such as sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ablism.

Intersecting oppressions or "isms": The multiple oppressions – racism, classism, sexism, and so on – experienced simultaneously by persons or groups who are marginalized by reason of racial discrimination, economic status, gender and so forth.

Multiculturalism: The practice of recognising and celebrating cultural diversity. Since 1971, it has been nominal federal government policy in Canada to affirm and support a diversity of ethno-cultural communities to preserve their distinct languages and cultures alongside official English-French bilingualism and biculturalism.

People of colour: People other than [Aboriginal or] White people living in Canada and the United States (where it originated as a term for African Americans) regardless of their place of birth or immigration status; could be a self-chosen term.

Prejudice: Literally, "pre-judgement." An attitude or state of mind casting another person or group negatively or positively based on stereotyping or misinformation.

Privilege: Unearned power giving certain groups economic, social, and political advantages simply by virtue of their belonging to those dominant groups in any society (e.g. male rather than female, able-bodied rather than dis-abled, higher rather than lower social-economic class, and so on); often enjoyed unconsciously.

Race: A contested term referring to a socially defined group seen by others (or seeing itself) as being distinct by sharing external features such as skin colour, facial or bodily characteristics, hair texture, and/or a common descent. There is no proven scientific basis

for such categorization. Historically, race is an arbitrary socio-biological category created by European [male] colonists in the 15th century and used to assign human worth and social status with themselves at the top.

Racial discrimination: Discrimination based on "race," denying equal treatment, civil liberties, and equal opportunity to targeted groups and individuals.

Racial justice: That dimension of justice embodying justice with respect to race; all anti-racism efforts have racial justice as their ultimate goal.

Racial prejudice: An unfounded state of mind that casts one group in an inferior light, despite the absence of scientifically proven evidence.

Racial privilege: The condition that exists in any society where, because of their racial identity, members of one race derive advantages and benefits over others. This preferential treatment, often invisible to those benefiting from it, pervades all facets of their life.

Racism: A system of advantage and privilege based on "race," in which one group of people exercise abusive power over others on the basis of skin colour and racial heritage. A set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology which accords inherent superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another or others. Racism is measured not by intent, but by its effect on those oppressed. Racism can be overt or covert, individual or systemic, intentional or unintentional. Racism confers privilege on and sustains the dominant/powerful group. Racism exists everywhere in our society, all institutions, and in our church.

Reverse Racism: A term used mistakenly to refer to hostile behaviour by people of colour toward White people, or to refer to affirmative action policies which allegedly give "preferential treatment" to people of colour over Whites.

Stereotype: A false or generalized image/picture and conception of a group of people resulting in the conscious or unconscious categorization of each member of that group without regard for individual differences.

Systemic or institutional racism: Racism embedded into the very structures of society and its institutions; seen in visible effects (e.g. racially-oriented, non-academic streaming, lower quality of housing in non-White neighbourhoods), experienced subjectively as in internalized oppression including internalized racism, and often unrecognized by dominant members who benefit most from it.

White: A social rather than scientific construction (thus something that could shift over time as to which groups are considered "White") creating a racial hierarchy that has shaped all the social, cultural, political, and economic institutions of society worldwide. Linked to domination, Whiteness is a form of racial privilege that is invisible to White people unconscious of its pervasive power.

White privilege: Unearned power enjoyed by Whites and giving them economic, political, social and cultural advantages.

From *That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward Racial Justice* by JGER Unit, The United Church of Canada, 2004, pp. 80-82. Reprinted with permission.

Evaluation Form

This Racial Justice Week is a pilot project for Canadian churches for 2006. Members of CEARN have prepared this packet of materials for congregations to use in worship services and study groups and we need your feedback. Your input will help us decide whether this is a good project to promote each year and what kind of resources would be most helpful to congregations in their learning journeys. Please take the time to fill out this form. If you have more to say, please add it to the back of the sheet and send it to:

Racial Justice Week Evaluation, c/o Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada,
47 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C3 or mcmurtry@wicc.org

1. Please indicate which resources you used. You may write additional comments on the back of this sheet.

Introduction

Comments:

March 21 (background information)

Comments:

A story

Comments:

Sermon notes

Comments:

Worship resources

Comments:

Song suggestions

Comments:

Bible study

Comments:

Notes for workshop facilitators

Comments:

Workshop: Reflections on racism in my church

Comments:

Young Adult Workshop: A faithful response to racism

Comments:

Picture books speak a thousand words

Comments:

Continuing the Learning Journey

Comments:

Glossary of Key Terms

Comments:

2. How did you hear about the Racial Justice Week and resource packet?

3. How/where did you get the resource packet? (website, denominational source, mail)

4. How did you use the material?

5. What was useful? Why?

6. What was not useful? Why?

7. How did the resource complement your tradition?

8. What was missing?

9. What suggestions do you have for the future?

10. How many people participated in your program?

Please send us prayers, songs, liturgies, stories that you used. We could use them in next year's resource. Thank you!