

sacred conversation on race

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**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



resource guide



The background of the cover features a series of vertical stripes in various shades of brown, tan, and beige. Overlaid on these stripes are several wavy, white, brush-stroke-like lines that flow horizontally across the lower half of the page. The overall aesthetic is warm and textured.

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**resource guide**

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# Sacred Conversation on Race

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# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Introduction

**A**pril 3, 2008, marked the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s last sermon and the inauguration of a new Sacred Conversation on Race. During a press conference held that day at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, the Rev. Otis Moss, Senior Pastor of Trinity UCC, the Rev. John Thomas, President of the United Church of Christ, and the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, called for a sacred conversation that is “urgently needed in our churches, in our homes and work places, and in the halls of power.”

On May 18, UCC pastors across the nation delivered sermons on race as an important first step toward beginning a longer-term Sacred Conversation on Race in their churches. Since that time, conversations have begun in local churches, Associations, Conferences, and among national staff. Reports of Sacred Conversations have been featured in newspapers around the country and on YouTube.

In early May, a Sacred Conversation Inter-Ministry Team was established by Justice and Witness Ministries to coordinate the development and dissemination of resources for local congregations and other ministry settings. The Inter-Ministry Team has designed this Sacred Conversation Resource Guide to assist you in discerning and planning what the Sacred Conversation should look like in your local setting. Many of the resources in this guide were designed with local congregations in mind. For those of you who are initiating sacred conversations in non-parish settings

(e.g. seminaries and church-related organizations), we encourage you to adapt the resources to meet your needs.

In developing this Resource Guide, we have sought to take seriously the needs, questions, and concerns that local pastors and lay leaders have expressed in their email inquiries and phone calls. For example, some of you have asked for recommendations of films, books, and study guides on race, racism, and White privilege. Others have asked how and where you might find trained facilitators who can help lead your conversations. Yet others have felt overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and have wondered how and where to begin.

We hope that the tools provided in this Resource Guide respond to these and other concerns that have been voiced. The Sacred Conversation on Race can take many forms and there are many points of entry. Your Sacred Conversation will also evolve and change over time. It is our hope that you view this Sacred Conversation as a journey over time, and that your initial round of conversations prove to be only the first leg of that journey.

For those of you who do not feel ready for the journey, please know that you do not have to undertake it alone. There are fellow sojourners – within your congregation, your local community, and the wider church – who are willing to offer their assistance and companionship if asked. At heart, this journey is a process of personal and social transformation. None of us has arrived; we are all in process. We can’t do this perfectly;

we are bound to make mistakes. If we bring an open mind, a compassionate heart, and a spirit of humility, we will get ready along the way. To quote the closing lines of the Pastoral Letter on Racism,

“For those of us who are White, neither the sins of our ancestors nor our own past failures to confront racism, need mire us in guilt. For those of us who have suffered the ravages of racism, neither our rightful indignation nor

our temptation to despair need keep us from trusting once again. We are blessed by the abundant grace of a forgiving God, a God who knows our pain and will be with us in our healing. Our call is to trust that reconciliation is possible, but can only be achieved by beginning the process together.”

May your sacred conversations be a source of light and leaven for you, your church, and your community!

**The Sacred Conversation Inter-Ministry Team:**

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# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Planning Your Sacred Conversation on Race

**R**egardless of the scope and length of your Sacred Conversation on Race, we recommend you engage in a thorough planning process before launching your Sacred Conversation. What follows are some steps and intentional elements you might consider in this planning process. These should not be considered a blueprint or template, because every church has its unique features and history. **Please feel free to add, embroider upon, or change the order of the steps suggested so that this process best serves the needs of your congregation.** For example, if you choose to invite people from outside the congregation to serve as facilitators, you may want to invite them into your planning process at an earlier stage than we have suggested below. Additionally, we encourage you to document your approach to the Sacred Conversations to provide ideas for other congregations as they move forward in their own processes.

### **1. Select a planning committee**

To increase a sense of ownership in the Sacred Conversation process and to hear from different voices within your congregation, we recommend that a planning committee of 4-6 people be chosen. In considering potential members of the committee, be mindful of how the committee can best represent the diversity of your congregation with regard to such things as race, age, gender, length of membership in the congregation, and spiritual gifts. It is important that members of the committee are known and trusted by diverse groups within the congregation. Perhaps most important of all is to recruit committee members who bring passion and commitment to developing a Sacred Conversation process that will flourish in your congregation.

### **2. Pray for the Spirit's guidance**

Before you plunge into the committee's work, take time to pray for the Spirit's leading in all that you do. These Sacred Conversations are intended to be times of individual and congregational spiritual discernment. You can model that intentionality by listening deeply to one another and to God, and by calling upon the Spirit's transforming, healing power in your planning process.

### **3. Spend time getting to know one another and the subject matter**

We encourage you to devote time to becoming better acquainted and familiarizing yourselves with the resource materials in the Sacred Conversation Resource Guide. Even if you have known each other for some time, you may not have had the opportunity to share with each other your experiences, values, and spiritual longings related to race, racism, and racial justice. This is the perfect time! Your Sacred Conversation can begin here as you learn about the hopes and yearnings that brought each of you to this committee. Successful anti-racism, healing, and reconciliation process oftentimes begins with building relationships across differences. The time and care you take in nurturing relationships across difference will provide a much needed foundation for strengthening trust and authenticity throughout this important process.

As a way of beginning your conversations on the planning committee, we recommend that you read and discuss the Pastoral Letter on Racism and Talking Points that were issued by the Collegium to help launch the Sacred Conversation last May. The Pastoral Letter, contained in this Resource Guide, articulates

the challenges and opportunities of a Sacred Conversation at this time in our nation's history. We especially encourage you to read aloud the following section of the Pastoral Letter on Racism that states: "this conversation on race will be sacred if we..."

- ◆ Invoke God's presence and wisdom whenever we gather, reserving time for prayer at opening and closing and whenever anyone in the group feels a need for it.
- ◆ Establish safe space with a commitment to mutual respect and Christian love.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of anger, pain, and joy in those who have been the targets of racism.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of shame, fear, and grief in those who are waking up to the reality of racism in our churches, neighborhoods, and nation.
- ◆ Do not let the conversation stop with an exploration of individual feelings, attitudes, and behaviors but continue on to examine the realities of cultural and institutional racism.
- ◆ Recognize that our deepest common humanity is not grounded in race, religious creed, or national origin but in the extravagantly inclusive love of God.
- ◆ Recognize that within our common God-given humanity resides a glorious array of colors, cultures, sexualities, and beliefs.
- ◆ End each conversation with at least one tangible and specific commitment to action on behalf of racial justice in our communities.
- ◆ Understand that this conversation is not a one-time event, but a continuing journey."

We suggest that you post this list of qualities on newsprint each time you meet and return to them from time to time, asking: how is our Sacred Conversation intentionally incorporating these elements?

There are two resources in this packet that can help facilitate discussion between committee

members. The Individual Reflection Questions can be an excellent way of "priming the pump" for your time of getting to know each other better. The planning committee might also find it beneficial to read and discuss the Frequently Asked Questions. As you read through the FAQ together, consider whether these are the questions you are asking or hearing from people in your congregation. If so, discuss together what other responses you might make. If you are asking or hearing questions not named in the FAQ, add them to the list and discuss together the responses you would make to those questions.

#### **4. Join the Sacred Conversation E-list**

A Sacred Conversation E-list can be found on the Sacred Conversations web page (<http://www.ucc.org/sacred-conversation>). If you sign up, you will receive periodic announcements of additional resources to assist your efforts in promoting and implementing your Sacred Conversation.

#### **5. Engage in self-assessment**

Before you develop goals for your Sacred Conversation or begin to map out the specifics of format, time frame, and subject matter, we recommend that you engage in a process of congregational self-assessment. This process is designed to help you assess such things as:

- ◆ Where your congregation stands currently in relation to talking about issues of race and racism.
- ◆ How you got to where you are.
- ◆ What issues may seem particularly difficult or potentially divisive.
- ◆ Your congregation's involvement in community-wide efforts for racial justice.
- ◆ Your congregation's demographic make-up related to race and other identities and the challenges and opportunities this poses for your Sacred Conversation.

To assist you in this process, we have developed the Congregational Self-Assessment Form. We recommend that the planning committee devote an entire meeting to filling out and discussing this form. We also recommend that the form be distributed to different groups within the congregation (e.g. church council, board of

deacons, youth fellowship, study groups, etc.) so that the planning team receives input from a representative cross-section of your congregation.

## 6. Develop goals and objectives

Based on your congregational assessment, discuss and develop goals and objectives for your first round of Sacred Conversations. Below you will find examples of goals and objectives that might be helpful as you work on developing your own list. The list is intended to give you ideas; you are not required to choose items from this list.

Consider doing an initial round of conversations and not attempt to undertake all the work at once. At the close of the first round of conversations, and after you have evaluated the experience, you can develop a new set of goals and objectives for the next round of conversations. With this in mind, we recommend that you develop four or five goals for your first round of conversations. An additional option is to develop short-term goals for the initial round of conversations and develop long-term goals for ongoing journey and organizational change process. Examples of goals and objectives:

- ◆ Share personal stories of how race and racism have impacted our lives.
- ◆ Enlarge our capacity to talk openly and honestly about difficult issues related to race.
- ◆ Explore the difference between individual prejudice and institutional racism.
- ◆ Learn about White privilege – what it is, how it affects us, and what we can do about it.
- ◆ Develop skills in building authentic relationships across racial differences.
- ◆ Practice the skills of interrupting racism.
- ◆ Learn about the cultures and critical issues of diverse groups in our local community.
- ◆ Learn about the history of the UCC – how our ancestors supported or resisted racism.
- ◆ Explore what it means to be an anti-racist ally.
- ◆ Honor those who have gone before us and draw strength from their witness against racism.
- ◆ Learn more about the struggles for racial justice within our community.
- ◆ Encourage members to participate in organizations working for racial justice.
- ◆ Begin to explore the costs for all of us for colluding with or maintaining racism.
- ◆ Begin to explore what our congregation and community might look like if we truly operated as an anti-racist, inclusive institution.
- ◆ Practice being in dialogue rather than debate about issues of race and racism.

## 7. Consider options for format, content and timeline

Your initial round of Sacred Conversations can take many different forms and address many different topics. As you consider different topics, be sure that your conversations incorporate times of worship, ritual, or prayer. As stated previously, this Sacred Conversation on Race is not – first and foremost – a class to be taken, but a journey to be *lived*. These are just a few examples of the kind of program you might consider:

- ◆ A sermon series followed by in-depth discussion about topics raised in the worship service (held after the service or another time during the week).
- ◆ A series of conversations that incorporate some of the questions found in the Pastoral Letter Talking Points and the Individual Reflection Questions.
- ◆ A book study and discussion. If your congregation has not undertaken a book study and discussion on the topics of race and racism, we especially recommend books with accompanying study guides. For example, *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* by Joseph Barndt or *Witnessing Whiteness: First Steps Toward an Antiracist Practice and Culture* by Shelley Tochluk.
- ◆ A weekend retreat led by trained facilitators from outside or within your congregation.
- ◆ A film series (with ample opportunity for discussion) featuring issues of particular

relevance to your congregation and your community (e.g. immigration, racial profiling, the treatment of Arab Americans after 9/11, Native American treaty rights).

- ◆ Conversations with people and organizations that are working for racial justice in your community.
- ◆ Exploration of what it might mean for your congregation to become a multiracial-multicultural church (see appendices).
- ◆ Exploration of Sacred Conversations that are taking place in different parts of the world (e.g. Peace Camps for youth in Chile, interfaith dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian women, and tables of reconciliation in Asia).
- ◆ A series on White privilege – what it is, how it affects us, and what to do about it.
- ◆ Encourage people in your congregation to participate in racial justice workshops and trainings held in other places. Be sure these teams share their discoveries and insights with the congregation as a whole.
- ◆ Encourage people to participate in events or organizations working for racial justice and reconciliation in your community. Again, find ways that those participating can share their discoveries and insights with the congregation as a whole.

The possibilities for format and content are endless. You may wish to mix and match elements from different options listed above or create something not found at all on the list. As you discuss possible topics, avail yourselves of the resources found in the Sacred Conversation Resource Guide. In light of your discussions in response to reading the Pastoral Letter, filling out the Congregational Self-Assessment Form, and developing goals and objectives, what would be the best subject matter, format, and time-line for your first round of Sacred Conversations?

Whatever you choose as a means of launching your first round of conversation, take care that the format incorporates elements that address heart, mind, and spirit. Be mindful of including time and resources that nurture the spirit and invoke

God's Spirit and presence. Music, poetry, prayer, and ritual are just some of the ways that call us to remember that this conversation is sacred because our hope is grounded in the radically inclusive love of God.

**8. Explore how the Sacred Conversation can be integrated into every aspect of your church's life.** The Sacred Conversation on Race is not for adults only and it need not be limited to only one realm of church life at a time. All of us have stories to share from childhood when we learned our first lessons about race and racism. Too often, those messages were laced with fear, shame, or prejudice. The Sacred Conversation on Race provides an opportunity to heal from those early messages and to offer different, life-affirming messages to our children.

The Sacred Conversation Resource Guide contains a multitude of ideas, activities, and resources for different realms of church life: worship, Christian education, youth group programs, Bible studies, community outreach, and global ministries. Check out the resources available online, consult with other churches in your area to learn what they are doing, and create your own.

**9. Select facilitators for your conversation** Careful consideration needs to be given to the question of who should facilitate this first round of conversations. In almost all cases, we recommend a facilitator team rather than one individual as leader because a team can model racial diversity and can incorporate the gifts and skills of two or more people. In selecting leaders from within your congregation, the following qualities should be paramount: 1) the individuals are known and trusted by diverse groups within the congregation; 2) they have experience and skill as group facilitators; 3) they have a demonstrated and sustained commitment to understanding and addressing White privilege and racism; 4) they have gifts for leading a prayerful time of spiritual discernment.

You may prefer to invite a facilitator team from outside your congregation to lead your Sacred Conversation. Choosing someone who is not a part of your congregation can allow your pastor and lay leaders to fully participate in the conversations. Furthermore, people who are not

members of your congregation can bring a fresh, non-aligned perspective to the conversations. In searching for trained facilitators, you may wish to get recommendations from racial justice organizations in your community (e.g. the local NAACP or the Department of Multicultural Affairs at a nearby university). Justice and Witness Ministries is collecting names and contact information of people within the United Church of Christ who have skill and experience in leading conversations about race. If you contact [RaceTalk@ucc.org](mailto:RaceTalk@ucc.org), we may be able to provide names of people in your region. Your Conference staff members may also be an excellent source for referrals. In addition, the Sacred Conversation Resource Guide has a list of organizations that provide racial justice training and education in different regions of the country.

Whether you choose to contract with outside facilitators or invite members of the congregation to lead your conversations, we recommend that you interview the prospective facilitators to be certain that they are the best fit for your local setting. To assist you in this interviewing process, we have developed a set of questions for your use (see Interview Questions for Prospective Facilitators). As with any resource in this Guide, we encourage you to adapt this list of questions to reflect the needs of your local setting.

### **10. Recruit process observers**

You might also consider inviting two or three members of the congregation to assist the facilitator(s) by serving as observers of the process. Being observers does not preclude their participation in the conversation. Rather, they are charged with the responsibility of listening deeply to how the group is forming: what is being said and what may be left unsaid. Ideally, these observers will reflect the racial diversity of the congregation. We recommend that the facilitators introduce the observers to the group and describe what their role will be.

### **11. Announce your Sacred Conversations**

We invite you to use the Pastoral Letter on Racism as a means of initiating the Sacred Conversation in your local congregation. The Pastoral Letter is invitational in tone and seeks to address the following issues: 1) why this Sacred Conversation on Race is crucially important at this time in our nation's history; 2) why and how the United Church of Christ can play a unique

and pivotal leadership role in this conversation; 3) what this conversation might address and; 4) what makes this conversation "sacred."

You may wish to read portions of the Pastoral Letter aloud from the pulpit with an invitation for people to stay after church to hear the full letter and talk about next steps. Or you might make copies of the letter available for people to read in advance of a specially called event. Whatever context you choose, the letter can serve as an introduction to the Sacred Conversation as well as a starting point for discussions about how your congregation wishes to engage this sacred conversation over time.

### **12. Encourage individual self-reflection prior to the first session**

As you well know, members and friends of your congregation will come to the Sacred Conversation with very different experiences, backgrounds, and levels of awareness about race and racism. Because this is a conversation open to all, attention will need to be given to helping everyone feel welcome by familiarizing all participants with language and concepts that may be new to some. For this purpose, we have provided a Multiracial/Multicultural Glossary of Terms in the Resource Guide and we encourage you to share it with participants in your Sacred Conversation.

Depending on the content of your first round of conversations, you may wish to distribute an article or chapter of a book that can provide a good and accessible introduction to the subject matter.

We also recommend that you make use of the Individual Reflection Questions, distributing them well enough in advance of your first session to allow people ample time to ponder and respond to the questions. The introduction on the Individual Reflection Questions emphasizes that it is not a test and the answers will not be handed in. It also states emphatically that there are no wrong answers. People are encouraged to use these questions as a tool for personal exploration and discovery. Nevertheless, it might be helpful if one or two planning committee members make known to the congregation that they are available should anyone have questions about the reflection sheet or want to talk about what they are discovering.

### 13. Develop norms and guidelines for your Sacred Conversations

When your Sacred Conversations get underway, one of the first things you will need to do is develop guidelines or norms for the group that help create a safe and welcoming space. These might include agreement that:

- ◆ Everyone's story is heard and respected.
- ◆ Things shared in confidence are held in confidence.
- ◆ People are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and growth.
- ◆ It's okay to disagree.
- ◆ It's not okay to shame, blame or attack.
- ◆ Hurtful or offensive remarks and behaviors do not go unaddressed.
- ◆ People can practice speaking the truth in love.
- ◆ People can practice trying on new ideas.

#### Sample guidelines

You may want the group to help create the guidelines by naming things that would enable them to bring their whole selves to the Sacred Conversation. It can also be helpful to list a few guidelines in advance and then ask the group members to add others. Among the guidelines you might wish to list are these:

- ◆ Listen carefully before responding and check out what you are hearing.
- ◆ Speak from your own experience; use "I" statements.
- ◆ As you share insights gained from the group, respect confidentiality.
- ◆ Honor your own discomfort at things that are being said or done by members of the group, so that expressions of racism (and other "isms") do not go unaddressed.
- ◆ Pay attention to times when you are responding (verbally or nonverbally) with

defensiveness and denial, and be open to exploring what lies beneath those responses.

- ◆ Share the time and space with others.
- ◆ Allow each other and ourselves to change.

When the list is complete and the group has agreed to covenant together to uphold these guidelines, post them in a spot visible to all and let the group know that they will be posted during each conversation. Invite people to speak up if individuals or the group as a whole deviates from these guidelines or if additional guidelines need to be added as the conversations continue.

### 14. Evaluate your Sacred Conversation

Creating space where everyone's voice is heard and respected, and where challenge and growth are encouraged, is a process that requires ongoing attention and care. Therefore, it is important that opportunities be given for people to express both their appreciation for the process and their concerns about how it might be improved. You might invite people to fill out a simple evaluation with questions such as these:

- ◆ What were the most useful parts of this conversation?
- ◆ What were the least useful parts of this conversation?
- ◆ How might this conversation better reflect your hopes and concerns?

Community will be deepened and strengthened as people have opportunities to share with others how they are growing and changing. One way of soliciting these testimonies is by asking people to complete these sentences toward the close of each session of your conversations (first reflecting individually and then sharing their responses in the group):

- ◆ Some of the insights and discoveries from this conversation that I take with me ...
- ◆ Something unsettling or unfinished that I am going to continue reflecting on ...
- ◆ One thing I commit to doing and/or learning more about ...

Debriefing in the whole group at the end of each session can also provide an opportunity to hear ideas for subsequent topics of conversation.

We also recommend that you invite people to fill out a written evaluation at the end of your initial round of conversations. This evaluation can provide helpful feedback as the facilitators and planning team meet to assess what worked well in this round of conversations and what could be improved in the next round of conversations. In addition to providing an opportunity for people to assess the strengths and limitations of this round of conversations, the evaluation form can also solicit ideas for future Sacred Conversations.

You may wish to use the Evaluation Form found in the Resource Guide or you may create your own evaluation form by adding additional questions. For example, you may want to formulate questions that invite evaluation of how well the group did in achieving the goals and objectives of your Sacred Conversation.

#### **15. Share your experiences with the wider church**

The Sacred Conversation on Race will be happening in churches all across the country, in small towns and large metropolitan areas;

in congregations that are racially homogenous and in congregations that are racially diverse. Sacred Conversations will be occurring in local congregations, Association gatherings, Conference Annual Meetings, and General Synod 2009. The *UCC News* will continue to provide a montage of experiences from different regions of the country. You have the opportunity to learn from, and contribute to, these many different levels of conversation by sharing something of your church's story in these different venues.

Please let us know how your conversation is going. Share resources with us that have proven particularly useful. Announce special events in your area that others might wish to attend. We assume that there is a wealth of wisdom and experience within our churches that, when shared more widely, can enrich us all.

#### **16. If you need additional assistance or consultation**

If you wish to explore specific resources, questions, or concerns related to engaging the Sacred Conversation in your local setting, please email [RaceTalk@ucc.org](mailto:RaceTalk@ucc.org).





# Sacred Conversation on Race

## A Pastoral Letter on Racism

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly,  
saying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace.  
– Jeremiah 8:11

### **From the United Church of Christ Collegium of Officers:**

John H. Thomas, General Minister and Presdident; Edith A. Guffey, Associate General Minister; M. Linda Jaramillo, Justice and Witness Ministries; Stephen L. Sterner, Local Church Ministries; Cally Rogers-Witte, Wider Church Ministries

### **Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**O**n May 18, in United Church of Christ pulpits all across the nation, pastors will be preaching on race in the hope of inaugurating a sacred conversation in the coming months that is urgently needed in our churches, in our homes and work places, and in the halls of power. Racism remains a wound at the heart of our nation, a wound that cannot be wished away or treated carelessly. In this sacred conversation, we seek to engage one another in a deep and sustained dialogue that may be uncomfortable at times but is absolutely necessary if our nation is to find genuine healing of its past and present sins. Not only the health of our nation is at stake, but also truth-telling and racial reconciliation are crucial to our spiritual, physical, and emotional wholeness.

Our conversations will be sacred if we trust in the Spirit of the living God to do a new thing in our midst and create beloved communities where, as Dr. King envisioned, descendants of former slaves and descendants of former slave owners sit down together with Native peoples and immigrant peoples and their descendents to share our lives, our fears, and our dreams. Our conversations will be sacred if we pray for the grace and courage to speak the truth in love and to hear one another all the way through. Sound bites and simple answers cannot be the order of the day.

Unfortunately, there has been so much violence perpetrated against People of Color throughout our nation’s history, and so little acknowledgment, remorse, or repentance on the part of White people, that the trust required for these conversations will have to be nurtured with care. Engaging in this sacred conversation will be difficult and soul-stretching. This same conversation can potentially be exhilarating and renewing if we allow the spirit of Christ to dwell among us.

There may be those who would object to these conversations, who would cry “peace, peace,” when there is no peace – and who would insist that the civil rights movement leveled the playing field years ago or would contend that we now live in a “post-race” society. This reasoning denies the deep racial divisions that still exist in our country and trivializes the pervasiveness of contemporary racism. If we fail to acknowledge honestly these racial tensions or to examine their underlying causes, the anger, backlash, and misunderstanding that are resident in our communities will only go underground and fester. We will continue to be susceptible to the tactics of those who wish to keep us racially divided and distracted from addressing the issues we share in common.

### **Spirited resistance to racism**

As members of the United Church of Christ, we have a rich history of spirited resistance to racism that can serve as both a resource and an inspiration for this sacred work. One such resource is the *Pastoral Letter on Racism and the Role of the Church* published in 1991 by the Commission for Racial Justice. The biblical, theological, and political analysis of this groundbreaking document remains relevant for our day. The *Pastoral Letter on Racism* boldly names the “sin and idolatry of racism” and calls Christians to renew their commitment to be a people grounded in the love and justice embodied in Jesus Christ and the beloved community that King envisioned.

*The Pastoral Letter on Racism* documented what it called “a sobering truth” – namely, that despite the meaningful progress achieved during the civil rights era, “quality of life for the majority of racial and ethnic people is worse today in many ways than it was during the 1960s.” The letter went on to name a number of disturbing trends that signaled growing racial intolerance and hostility: increasing inequities between the rich and the poor; charges of “reverse racism” and attacks on affirmative action; a resurgence of racially motivated hate crimes and; fear of “foreigners” surfacing in movements such as “English Only.”

Seventeen years later, in 2008, we might wish to believe that we have made significant progress in addressing and reversing those alarming trends. Lamentably, that claim cannot be substantiated.

We have witnessed a systematic assault on affirmative action policies at the state and national level. In the wake of the “war on terror,” our Arab American and Muslim brothers and sisters contend daily with discrimination, racial profiling, and misunderstanding about the true nature of Islam. As unemployment rates soar and jobs are outsourced overseas, frustration and rage are unleashed upon the most vulnerable within our borders – immigrants and those who some call “illegal aliens.” After more than two years, thousands of dispossessed residents of New Orleans are still in diaspora, awaiting our government’s promise to help rebuild their homes and neighborhoods. The divide between rich and poor is greater than at any time since the Great Depression. Despite the rise of a Black

middle class over the past 40 years, the average net worth of White families in 2008 remains 10 times greater than the average net worth of Black families. Racial segregation in our public schools has intensified and has now been condoned by the United States Supreme Court.

Perhaps as disturbing as the glaring economic and social inequities between the races is the increasing disparity of perception about the *continuing* reality of racism. For People of Color in our nation, racism is an ever present reality that White people too often deny. When the prophets of our day name injustice and seek redress, the urgency of their appeals is too frequently met by the trivializing charge that they are “simply playing the race card.” If the wound of our people is to be treated with care, our sacred conversations must address this callous and dismissive spirit.

### **Interrupting historical amnesia**

One of the gifts of this sacred conversation can be an honest and in-depth examination of the social, economic, and religious history that has brought us to this present time. Our denominational history can serve as a microcosm of the wider society in helping us understand both the systems of racial oppression and the movements for racial justice that have been at work for centuries.

We have the high and holy calling to interrupt our nation’s historical amnesia by passing on to our children a history of our church and nation that is authentic and complex; a history that neither demonizes nor sanitizes our ancestors. For example, the congregational stream of the United Church of Christ has roots that reach back to the Puritans who left Europe in the 1600s to found a “city on a hill” that could be a light to the nations. The “New World” that the Puritans sought to found, however, spelled death, devastation, and displacement for the Native inhabitants of North America when the Puritans failed to recognize the indigenous spirituality of American Indians as divinely inspired and failed to respect their inherent right to their sacred homelands. Were we, with all humility, to critically examine the cultural and spiritual world view of the Puritans, we might gain new insight into the historical antecedents of the current U.S. foreign policy that has divided the world into the forces of good vs. the forces of evil and pronounced that God is on our side.

We also have stories of spiritual forebears who were leaders in the struggle to end slavery and to create new institutions in the reconstruction era. Before the Civil War, African-American teachers from New England, the Midwest, and as far south as Virginia, went to Canada to teach fugitive slaves and prepare them educationally for life back in the United States. During Reconstruction, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association, men and women – Black and White – founded schools for freed men and women. These teachers were often reviled and hated, yet they persisted to carry out their work under the threat of violence or death.

We remember that our ancestors' ministries during the 19th century included the abolition movement, the struggle for women's suffrage, and the creation of social justice organizations and churches that assisted immigrants new to our shores. In the early 20th century, the Social Gospel movement emboldened our forebears to denounce economic injustice and express their solidarity with immigrants who endured pain and hopelessness in urban tenement communities. During the Second World War some of our forebears spoke out against the internment of Japanese citizens, and some congregations helped to sustain their Christian sisters and brothers during their forced relocation. In the 1950s we spoke up for Native Americans whose land was once again being stolen in order to build a dam that would devastate their communal life. In the 1960s our church provided sustained support for civil rights organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and participated fully in the racial justice work of the National Council of Churches. In the 1970s we stood with migrant farm workers demanding just wages and dignified living conditions. We are, indeed, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses whose faith and witness can embolden ours. The United Church of Christ also took concrete action to address and redress historic wrongs done when, in 1993, UCC leaders extended a formal apology with restitution to Native Hawai'ians for injury done to them and their culture and religion by the White Congregational missionaries sent there in the 1800s.

### **Qualities of a sacred conversation**

This conversation on race will be sacred if we ...

- ◆ Invoke God's presence and wisdom when we gather, reserving time for prayer at opening and closing and whenever anyone in the group feels a need for it.
- ◆ Establish safe space with a commitment to mutual respect and Christian love.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of anger, pain, and joy in those who have been the targets of racism.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of shame, fear, and grief in those who are waking up to the reality of racism in our churches, neighborhoods, and nation.
- ◆ Do not let the conversation stop with an explosion of feelings, attitudes and behaviors, but continue on to examine the realities of cultural and institutional racism.
- ◆ Recognize that our deepest common humanity is not grounded in race, religious creed, or national origin but in the extravagantly inclusive love of God.
- ◆ Realize that within our common God-given humanity resides a glorious array of colors, cultures, sexualities, and beliefs.
- ◆ End each conversation with at least one tangible and specific commitment to action on behalf of racial justice in our communities.
- ◆ Understand that this conversation is not a one-time event, but a continuing journey.

On May 18, we are invited to take up this sacred work once again. Remembering with gratitude those who have gone before us, and relying on God's healing Spirit, let us covenant to treat the wound of our people with the care it deserves.

In the midst of peril, these sacred conversations offer promise. For those of us who are White, neither the sins of our ancestors nor our own past failures to confront racism need mire us in guilt. For those of us who have suffered the ravages of racism, neither our rightful indignation nor our temptation to despair need keep us from trusting

once again. We are each blessed by the abundant grace of a forgiving God, a God who knows our pain and will be present in our healing. Our call is to trust that reconciliation is possible, but can only be achieved by beginning the process together. As Christians, we profess and proclaim the outrageous conviction that nothing, absolutely

nothing, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Set free by that unconditional love, and emboldened by the faith of our sisters and brothers, we can find the courage to raise our voices for justice and make America and the church all that they ought to be.

Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.

– The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



## Sacred Conversation on Race

### Talking Points: Pastoral Letter on Racism

**A**s a way of beginning discussion of the Pastoral Letter and the issues it raises, we invite you to use some of the Talking Points listed below. There are many more points listed than can be used effectively in any one session, so you may want to select three or four Talking Points best suited to the time allotted as well as to the needs of your congregation.

1. As you consider participating in this Sacred Conversation on Race, what would enable you to bring your whole self to this conversation? What fears do you have about what might happen? What hopes do you bring? What could you and others do to help create and sustain a conversation where everyone's voice is heard and respected, and where challenge and growth are also encouraged?
2. The Pastoral Letter on Racism stated that our denominational history can help us understand both the systems of racial oppression and the movements for racial justice that have been at work in our society for centuries. What kinds of programs or study groups might your congregation begin that could help members learn more about the history of racism and anti-racism within the United Church of Christ?
3. In what ways were you aware of your ethnic background when you were growing up? How would you describe that background? In what ways do you think this background has shaped your current values, habits, practices, ways of worship, and personal priorities?
4. Every local community and region of the country has its own history of institutionalized racism as well as histories of individuals, communities, and movements that resisted racism and worked for racial justice. What are some examples of institutionalized racism in your local community? What are some examples of people, communities, and movements that have resisted racism in your community? How could you learn more about both of these histories – past and current?
5. In what ways does your local congregation reflect a particular cultural and ethnic tradition in its form of worship, meetings, leadership style, and the way decisions are made? Has this been a conscious choice on the part of your congregation's members and/or pastors? In what ways, if any, does your congregation reflect a variety of cultures and ethnic traditions in its forms of worship, meetings, leadership styles, and the way decisions are made? Has this been an intentional process? Has your congregation ever discussed what it would mean to become a multiracial, multicultural congregation?
6. Since 9/11, Arab Americans and Muslims in the United States have been the targets of increased discrimination and religious intolerance. What have been instances of this discrimination and/or religious intolerance in your local community? What might you and your church community do to become more informed about the discrimination and religious intolerance that Arab Americans and Muslims face in your local community? What might you and your church do to address this discrimination and religious bias?

7. The ethnic/racial makeup of the United States has changed dramatically throughout the last 20 years with significant immigration by people coming from the global South. Many towns and cities have experienced this phenomenal growth by instituting anti-immigration laws, particularly affecting Latinos/as. How have you seen this growth in your local community? In what ways do your personal ideals about the American dream affect how you think and feel about these new immigrants? How can reflection on the inclusive nature of the Gospel of Jesus Christ assist you in making the stranger welcomed in your community?

8. If we consider 1776 to be the birth of the U.S. government, our nation is approximately 230 years old. For all but the last 40 years of that history, slavery and/or segregation were legally enforced realities that systematically denied People of Color equal access, rights, and opportunities in every realm of American society (education, housing, health care, etc.) It is not logical that the effects of several centuries of systemic racism could be eliminated or equalized in only 40 years time. How would you respond to someone who

says, “Racism is a thing of the past and we now have a level playing field”?

9. How would you respond to a White person who says, “The town and church I grew up in had only White people in it. So, racism wasn’t even a part of my life until I was an adult and left my hometown.” How might you help that person understand that racism was at work in the social structures and institutions of his or her home town? How might you invite this person to reflect on how racism helped to shape their understanding of what it means to be White in this society?

10. It has been recommended that each conversation in this ongoing dialogue end with at least one tangible and specific commitment to action on behalf of racial justice in our communities so that these sacred conversations issue in deeds as well as words. This specific commitment might be something undertaken by individuals within the group or by the group as a whole. What process will enable your congregation or group to discuss and enact this recommendation? What mechanisms of follow-up or accountability might be helpful?



# Sacred Conversation on Race

## FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

In the months following the announcement of the Sacred Conversation on April 3, 2008, some of you wrote or called to express questions and concerns about this conversation. In the following FAQ, we have sought to give voice to the issues you have raised. As more and more Sacred Conversations get underway, new questions will surely arise as well as additional responses to the questions already named. Please feel free to expand upon this FAQ by sharing your experiences with us (RaceTalk@ucc.org).

### **1. What is the Sacred Conversation on Race?**

The Sacred Conversation on Race was announced on April 3, 2008, at a press conference convened by the Rev. John Thomas, President of the United Church of Christ, the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, and the Rev. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ. The press conference was held at Trinity UCC on the 40th anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last sermon. As all three speakers noted, events during the Presidential primaries underscored the painful fact that – 40 years after Dr. King's assassination – race continues to be a divisive issue in this country and racism a pervasive and pernicious reality.

John Thomas called upon pastors throughout the UCC to address race and racism from their pulpits on May 18 as an important first step in a long-term sacred conversation on race. In early May, the Collegium issued a Pastoral Letter on Racism that declared: "Racism

remains a wound at the heart of our nation that cannot be wished away or treated carelessly. In this sacred conversation, we seek to engage one another in a deep and sustained dialogue that may be uncomfortable at times, but is absolutely necessary if our nation is to find genuine healing of its past and present sins."

Over the past four months, conversations have begun in local churches, associations, conferences, and among national staff. At every level of the church, people have been at work developing processes that will lead to productive dialogue, deeper spiritual discernment, and action. It is the widespread consensus of those engaging the sacred conversation that this cannot be a one-time occurrence but rather a journey to be nurtured and sustained over time.

If your congregation has not yet engaged the sacred conversation, we encourage you to begin now. This resource guide is designed for congregations in different phases of the process, including churches who are just beginning to think about what a sacred conversation on race would mean in their local setting.

### **2. What makes this conversation sacred?**

The United Church of Christ has long recognized that racism is not only a pervasive system that perpetrates economic and political inequality; racism is a wound at the heart of our nation that has profound spiritual ramifications. As the Seventeenth General Synod declared, "Racism is a sin and an evil that stands as an affront to the Christian faith." To understand the call to conversation as

“sacred work” means that we refuse to settle for the way things are or to despair in the face of tenacious injustice. Remembering our call to be ambassadors of Christ, we cannot surrender the sacred work of racial reconciliation. Relying on the Spirit of the living God to embolden us, we dare to embrace the difficult task of recognizing, naming, and confronting the many realms in which we experience racism – personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. Additionally, in each of these realms, we have the ability and responsibility to create and nurture change.

Sacred conversations are never easy, especially when honest talk confronts our nation’s painful past and speaks directly to the injustices of the present day. Yet sacred conversations can, and often do, honor the value of diverse life experiences, requiring an openness to hear one another’s viewpoints. Growth often happens when honest conversations are communicated in a respectful environment.

In describing the qualities that characterize a sacred conversation, The Pastoral Letter on Racism says that this conversation on race will be sacred if we...

- ◆ Invoke God’s presence and wisdom whenever we gather, reserving time for prayer at opening and closing and whenever anyone in the group feels a need for it.
- ◆ Establish safe space with a commitment to mutual respect and Christian love.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of anger, pain, and joy in those who have been the targets of racism.
- ◆ Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of shame, fear, and grief in those who are waking up to the reality of racism in our churches, neighborhoods, and nation.
- ◆ Do not let the conversation stop with an exploration of individual feelings, attitudes, and behaviors but continue on to examine the realities of cultural and institutional racism.
- ◆ Recognize that our deepest common

humanity is not grounded in race, religious creed, or national origin but in the extravagantly inclusive love of God.

- ◆ Recognize that within our common God-given humanity resides a glorious array of colors, cultures, sexualities, and beliefs.
- ◆ End each conversation with at least one tangible and specific commitment to action on behalf of racial justice in our communities.
- ◆ Understand that this conversation is not a one-time event, but a continuing journey.

### **3. What will we gain by engaging in this sacred conversation?**

Simply put: we will gain from this Sacred Conversation what we are willing to invest in it. If we are open to having our opinions, attitudes, and behaviors challenged, we will learn and grow. If we are able to listen deeply to the stories that others share, we will have our perspectives broadened. If we are willing to hear how our words and actions impact others, we will see ourselves more clearly. If we open ourselves to the experiences, histories, and cultures of people who are racially different from us, the world as we have known it will be altered. If we desire to understand and practice what it means to confront racism where we live, work, and worship, we will enlarge our capacities as agents of change.

The scope, degree, and complexity of racism in our society is so vast that it is, at times, impossible to imagine our world without it. Believing that we can make a difference as we work to confront racism requires faith and community because there is much evidence to the contrary. The Sacred Conversation on Race provides a new opportunity to nurture truth-telling relationships with people committed to change.

We cannot do this work alone. We need friends, companions, and allies who can support, challenge, and hold us accountable. We need to hold up hope to one another when hope is faint. We need to buoy each other up with the stories, songs, and words of those who have gone before us and on whose shoulders we stand. We need to learn and

practice the skills of challenging oppressive behaviors and racist policies. We need to be reminded that the work of racial justice is never done once and for all.

In the midst of peril, these Sacred Conversations offer promise. If we allow the Spirit of Christ to dwell among us, this conversation will be challenging, soul-stretching, and exhilarating because we will have experienced more fully the beloved community we are called to be.

#### **4. Why a conversation on race when there are so many pressing issues deserving our time and attention?**

The United Church of Christ has a long history of prophetically naming and addressing the personal and institutional manifestations of racism in this country. Prior to the Civil War, the American Missionary Association (AMA) was formed in 1846 to assist with the defense of Amistad slaves. Since the early 1960s, General Synod has passed 11 resolutions, statements, and pronouncements condemning racism and declaring our intention to become a truly multiracial, multicultural and anti-racist church.

Despite the meaningful progress achieved within the UCC and the nation as a whole, recent events have made clear that the prophetic mantle of confronting racism cannot be abandoned by our churches. Race is still being used as a powerful weapon of fear to divide us from one another and to keep us from recognizing the issues we have in common. As the Pastoral Letter on Racism boldly stated: “Perhaps as disturbing as the glaring economic and social inequities between the races, is the increasing disparity of perception about the *continuing* reality of racism. For People of Color in our nation, racism is an ever present reality that White people too often deny. When the prophets of our day name injustice and seek redress, the urgency of their appeals is too frequently met by the trivializing charge that they are ‘simply playing the race card.’ If the wound of our people is to be treated with care, our sacred conversations must address this callous and dismissive spirit.”

Furthermore, racism has taken on new forms and targeted new victims in our day. Since 9/11, our Muslim brothers and sisters have suffered racial profiling and religious discrimination at an unprecedented rate. As jobs are outsourced and unemployment rates soar, race is used as a diversionary tactic that focuses attention on blaming immigrants rather than on the multinational corporations that are responsible for outsourcing and maintaining a desire for cheap labor. Three years after Hurricane Katrina devastated neighborhoods in New Orleans, thousands of dispossessed residents are still waiting for our government to deliver on its promise to help rebuild their homes and neighborhoods.

This election year is a *kairos* moment in our nation’s history for it sets in bold relief both the challenge and the hope of our time. Whether we identify as a Republican or a Democrat, whether we support John McCain or Barack Obama for President, we have the opportunity to declare – in word and deed – that our first allegiance is to God, the Creator and Redeemer who loves us with radical inclusiveness and grieves the continuing scourge of racism.

#### **5. Race is a very broad subject. How do we decide what this conversation should look like in our congregation?**

Race and racism are, indeed, very broad and complex subjects. Contributing to this complexity is how race continues to be a decisive factor in how people are viewed, evaluated, and provided social advantages or disadvantages. The historical roots of institutionalized racism reach back to the founding of our country and racism is still resident in every community throughout this nation. The struggle to end racism has an equally long and tenacious history and today, in every community, large and small, there are people working to dismantle racism.

This sacred conversation is an opportunity to shine a light on both the problem and the promise, past and present. Chances are, there are people in your congregation who have stories to share about the damage racism has inflicted and the spiritual power that comes with resisting and healing this damage.

Without a doubt, there are individuals and communities not far from your church who know exceedingly well what racism looks like in your town or city and who can testify to the possibilities for change. The Sacred Conversation on Race is an opportunity to invite these stories to be shared.

An important reminder as you consider the focus or content of your Sacred Conversation: Americans have traditionally had a tendency to view issues of race and racism within a Black/White paradigm. Given the fact that slavery was a foundational economic and political reality in this country for more than 300 years, it is understandable that racism is often cast in Black/White terms. However, limiting the discussion to Black/White relations can render invisible the many other racial/ethnic communities that experience racism on a daily basis, including Latino/a communities, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, Native Americans, and new immigrant communities.

As part of the Congregational Self-Assessment, we recommend that you take time to consider the importance of learning more about the diverse populations within your local community. What do you know about those different populations? For example, do you know how racism has affected the lives of new immigrants in your community economically and politically? Do you know about their efforts to resist racism or their cultural contributions to your community? In what ways has your church community been connected to, or disconnected from, those struggles and cultural contributions?

In the coming weeks and months, there will be additional resources available on the Sacred Conversations website that address the breadth and complexity of issues related to race and racism. For example, we intend to invite leaders from different racial/ethnic communities within the UCC to share their perspectives on issues of race and racism that affect their communities.

There is no template for a sacred conversation that would fit every congregation. Discerning what the conversation should look like in your local setting will entail an assessment and a

“pre-conversation” dialogue about where you are as a congregation and how you got there. The Sacred Conversation Resource Guide contains tools to assist you in this discernment, including the Congregational Self-Assessment Form and Planning Your Sacred Conversation. When you have completed this congregational self-assessment, there are other tools in the Resource Guide designed to assist you in choosing the content, format, and facilitators best suited for your first and ongoing rounds of conversations.

The good news is that wherever you are on this journey, a new beginning is possible. Whether your congregation never talks about race and racism, or whether race and racism are a constant topic of conversation, there is sacred work to be done.

## **6. Who should lead this sacred conversation in our congregation?**

We recommend that you give time and attention to finding skilled and experienced facilitators to lead your sacred conversation and we recommend that you pay these facilitators. When we speak of skilled and experienced facilitators, we mean people who are knowledgeable about both content *and* process when it comes to talking about racism and who understand the sacred dimensions of racial justice. Conversations on race can evoke deep emotions, conflicts, and misunderstandings, as well as foster new insights, behaviors, and spiritual growth. A skilled and experienced facilitator can help the group work through difficult dynamics in ways that neither shames people nor allows hurtful and oppressive behaviors to go unchallenged.

If you are considering asking someone within your congregation to facilitate, the following qualities should be paramount: 1) the person is known and trusted by diverse groups within the congregation; 2) the person has experience and skill as a group facilitator; 3) the person has a sustained commitment to understanding and addressing White privilege and racism; 4) the person has gifts for leading a prayerful time of spiritual discernment.

You may find it preferable to contract with a facilitator from outside your congregation. This allows everyone within the congregation

the opportunity to fully participate in this conversation. An outside facilitator can also bring a fresh and non-aligned perspective because s/he doesn't have a history of involvement in your congregation.

In many cases, a facilitative team is preferable to one facilitator. Because conversations on race can provoke deep emotions and disagreements, a team of facilitators can process together how to best address and work through conflicts that may arise. A racially diverse team can also provide an important model for how to nurture an authentic relationship across racial difference.

If you do not have the financial resources to contract with a trained facilitator team, you might want to partner with another UCC congregation in your Association. In some Associations, three or more congregations are collaborating in this sacred conversation and making an effort to build a racially diverse conversation.

If you choose to invite a person or team of people from outside the congregation to facilitate your conversation, be aware of the temptation to ask them to do all the work for you. The facilitators should work with you to nurture and educate your leaders so that when the outside facilitators leave again, they will not take the conversation with them. Instead, it will continue on under the leadership of people within the congregation.

### **7. How do we find skilled and experienced facilitators?**

There are several avenues you might pursue in your search for trained facilitators. You may wish to get recommendations from racial justice organizations in your community (e.g. the local NAACP or the Department of Multicultural Affairs at a nearby university). Justice and Witness Ministries is collecting names and contact information of people within the United Church of Christ who have skill and experience in leading conversations about race. If you contact RaceTalk@ucc.org, we may be able to provide names of people in your region. Your Conference staff members may also be an excellent source for referrals. In addition, the Sacred Conversation Resource Guide has a list of organizations that

provide racial justice training and education in different regions of the country.

### **8. How can we have a sacred conversation on race when all the members of our congregation are White?**

Joseph Barndt, a White Lutheran pastor and founder of Crossroads Ministries, tells of a life-changing encounter that occurred in the late 1960s. Barndt was working at the time for a civil rights organization in a Black community. An African-American co-worker confronted Barndt and asked him what he was doing in this predominantly African American community.

"I am working to end racism," Barndt responded. His co-worker then asked, "Why don't you go home and free your own people?"

At first Barndt was shocked and angry but his defensiveness soon gave way to gratitude and a deeper sense of calling to work for racial justice. He came to see that his African American colleague was befriending not rejecting him because Barndt was being pointed in a new direction. "The new direction," says Barndt, "was to work with White people and to work for change in the White community. For me personally, and for many others, it was the beginning of new discoveries." One of many new discoveries for Barndt was this: "White people, along with People of Color, are not free. Racism is a prison for us too" (*Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America* Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1991).

If you are White, you may have grown up believing that racism is a problem that primarily concerns People of Color and that White people can only experience, understand, or confront racism when People of Color are present. Racism does, indeed, affect us differently depending on whether we are White people or People of Color, but every single one of us living in the United States has been touched and shaped by racism regardless of whether we know people of a different race or not. For example, all of us are inundated with media messages about race that often reflect misinformation and stereotypes. Moreover, if we live in racially homogenous

communities, we can experience the insularity that racism and social segregation breed. The Sacred Conversation on Race is an opportunity for White people to learn more about what it means to be White in this country, as well as learning about what it means to be a Person of Color. Although there are discoveries that can only be made in a multiracial group, conversations about race and racism can and should take place in every congregation regardless of the racial makeup of its membership.

It can be very important for White people to learn how to talk about, analyze, and confront racism without depending on People of Color to be their teachers. It should not be the responsibility of People of Color to educate White people about the realities of racism anymore than it is their responsibility to always, in every situation, name and challenge racism. An all-White congregation could, for example, engage in study and conversations about White privilege (see the annotated bibliography for resources about White privilege). If members of the congregation have infrequent contact with People of Color, this could be an excellent time to explore why that is the case.

Having said that, it is also true that members of an all-White congregation may choose to see this Sacred Conversation as an opportunity to engage in new ways with People of Color in their community. This could be done by participating in educational or cultural events led by People of Color. It might also be possible to partner with other congregations in your community, Association, or Conference for the planning and implementation of this Sacred Conversation.

Whatever the form your Sacred Conversation takes, the purpose is not to point fingers, assign blame, or evoke guilt. The purpose is for each of us, whatever our race, to deepen our understanding of how racism damages all of us and to enhance our capacity to recognize, name, and confront racism.

#### **9. Is conversation enough? Isn't it more important to work for institutional change?**

The Sacred Conversation on Race is not intended to begin and end with words

alone. Neither is it intended to be a program that simply imparts new information and knowledge about racism. Because this is a *sacred* conversation, personal and social transformation are the ultimate goals. As new insights are gleaned, the Sacred Conversation can provide a context for people to challenge themselves and each other to ask: now that we understand this aspect of racism more fully, what are we going to do about it?

It is our conviction that racism is manifest in four realms – personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. For our Sacred Conversations on Race to affect change that is lasting and genuinely transformative, our study, dialogue, and action must address all four realms. Although we may choose to focus on one realm at any given time, if we remain in that realm, to the exclusion of the others, our work for racial change will be truncated and incomplete (see the Four Realms of Racism and Change).

#### **10. What if our Sacred Conversation stirs up feelings that prove hurtful to some?**

Talking openly and honestly about race can be challenging. Confronting the impact of racism on our lives, our communities, and our nation is difficult work. It requires openness of mind and heart, as well as humility of spirit, to risk discovering things about ourselves and the world we may not have known before. Along the way, we may very well encounter feelings in ourselves or others that are potentially hurtful: defensiveness, resistance, anger, self-righteousness, and moralizing. Skilled facilitators can help us acknowledge and deal with these feelings when they surface in destructive ways and they can invite us to engage in the emotional and spiritual work necessary to heal from hurt or misunderstanding.

It is especially important that all participants in the conversation take responsibility for their growth and learning. Too often in conversations about race and racism, White people look to People of Color for answers, approval, and acceptance. Skilled facilitators who understand the dynamics of racism can help ensure that People of Color are not put on the spot to explain issues of race and racism, respond to the comments of White people, or

speak on behalf of other People of Color.

Whatever the leadership and format you choose for your conversations, we recommend that you adopt norms and guidelines for the conversations that help safeguard the well-being, and foster the spiritual growth, of all who participate (see Planning Your Sacred Conversation for sample guidelines). It is not possible to guarantee participants that they will be spared painful or hurtful interactions. However, if adequate time and attention is devoted to the leadership, process, and content of the Sacred Conversation, participants can be assured that these interactions will be addressed in a manner that is both just and loving.

### **11. What happens if we get bogged down or feel overwhelmed by these conversations?**

You are bound to experience times when the conversation becomes stalled or people seem to be exhibiting low energy or lack of engagement. Many different factors can be at work and the facilitators will need to give attention to what may be contributing to the impasse and how best to respond. It could be that the conversation has become too intellectual or abstract and it is time for a change in activities – for example, the group might become re-energized if invited to do a role play of the issues being discussed. It might be that some people are dominating the conversation and others are not having sufficient opportunity to be heard. If this is the case, then the group guidelines may need to be reviewed and observed. There may be participants who are feeling threatened by the subject matter and it may be time to check in with the whole group to see how people are feeling about what they are learning.

It can be reassuring to everyone involved to know that getting bogged down and feeling overwhelmed are not unusual or insurmountable obstacles. Talking about race and racism can evoke strong feelings. In

fact, the more authentic the conversation, the more likely it is that challenging situations will occur. Tensions, such as feeling bogged down or overwhelmed, can be important messengers signaling that it is time for the group to pause and ask: why are we feeling overwhelmed? What is it about race or racism that bogs us down? If we are feeling stuck or overwhelmed, what feelings are below the surface that may contribute to that sense of being stuck or overwhelmed? What do those feelings tell us about what we need in order to stay with this process and move into deeper learning about ourselves and one another?

It is critically important that participants in the Sacred Conversation covenant to stay with the process when it becomes uncomfortable, difficult, or painful. Far too often, in conversations about race and racism, White people opt out when they grow uncomfortable or overwhelmed. This is one of the ways that White privilege is exercised. When White members of the group decide to leave, rather than work through the feelings of discomfort, this can have devastating effects on the group's efforts to create an environment that is authentic, compassionate, and inclusive. We therefore recommend that a covenant to stay in the conversation, and to learn from times of discomfort and tension, be talked about at the outset as group guidelines are developed. If individuals later have feelings of "flight," the group will be more prepared to take the time needed to talk about what is happening and what is needed.

The responsibility for safeguarding the trust and the community that are being created must be shared by everyone taking part in the conversation. Facilitators cannot do this alone; the entire group needs to covenant together to stay with the process and work through times of tension and growth. By sharing this responsibility, the possibility of authentic relationships across difference will be nourished and enacted.





# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix A: Four Realms of Racism and Change

There are four realms in which racism is manifest in this society: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. For change to be genuine and lasting, it must encompass all four of these realms. There are age-old debates about where change must begin or which realm is most important, but these four realms are inextricably related. They feed into one another and, even though change in one realm does not guarantee change in another, all are important and deserving of our time and attention.

The **personal realm** encompasses our values, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. Racism is expressed in the personal realm in such things as fear of difference, prejudice, and stereotypes. Examples include the belief that European American cultural and religious traditions are inherently superior or the belief that People of Color are less capable of academic excellence than White people.

In the **interpersonal realm**, individuals act on their fears, prejudices, and stereotypes. These behaviors, which can be conscious or unconscious, can be expressed as discrimination, condescension, verbal abuse or physical violence. Examples include such things as White people avoiding contact with People of Color or White people exhibiting paternalism in their interactions with People of Color.

Racism in the **institutional realm** finds expression in policies, practices, rules, or procedures that have been formally adopted or are informally in place. These policies, practices, rules, and procedures

function, intentionally or unintentionally, to grant unearned privileges to White people and to disadvantage People of Color. Examples of institutional racism include such things as racial profiling and searching for new staff members of a congregation through predominantly White friendship, publicity, and colleague networks.

The **cultural realm** refers to what groups value as right, true, beautiful, normal and worthy of our time and attention. Our cultural norms or beliefs affect what we understand to be normal or appropriate styles of behavior, expression, and thought. Cultural racism is manifest when the cultural values of the dominant racial group are considered the only acceptable values. Examples of cultural racism include such things as images of Christ as a White Person or the belief that European classical music and hymns are “real” church music.

For our sacred conversations on race to affect change that is lasting and genuinely transformative, our study, dialogue, and action must address all four realms. Although we may choose to focus on one realm at any given time, if we remain in that realm, to the exclusion of the others, our work for racial change will be truncated and incomplete.

*In preparing this resource, we are indebted to Visions, Inc., Roxbury, Mass., and the work of Dionardo Pizana and Karen Pace at Michigan State University Extension, East Lansing, Mich.*





# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix B: Congregational Self-Assessment Form

Please set aside time to reflect on the questions below and then write your honest responses, remembering that there are no right or wrong answers. Your input will help the planning committee better understand what is at stake for our congregation in talking about issues of race and racism, and how the Sacred Conversation on Race can be a fruitful and engaging process for everyone. Use as many sheets of paper as you need for your responses.

*Before completing this form, please review the terms “race” and “racism” found in Appendix F: Multiracial, Multicultural Glossary. Use additional sheets of paper for your responses to the questions below.*

**With regard to talking about issues of race and racism, what best describes your congregation (please circle one of the following):**

- A. We seldom, if ever, discuss race and racism
- B. We used to talk about race and racism but other issues are now more important to us
- C. Race and racism are issues that we talk about from time to time
- D. Race and racism are a constant topic of discussion

**If you circled A:**

1. Describe why you think issues of race and racism are seldom, if ever, discussed.
2. Is there resistance in your congregation to talking about race and racism? If so, how would you describe the resistance?
3. Are there particular issues (related to race or racism) that are too difficult or potentially divisive to discuss? If so, what are these issues and what makes them so difficult or potentially divisive?
4. If you were to begin discussing race and racism in your congregation, where might you begin and what would you need to make this a fruitful and engaging conversation?

5. What would be the benefits for your congregation in talking about race and racism?

6. What would be the costs for your congregation if you do not engage in these Sacred Conversations?

7. What issues of race and racism are particularly urgent in your local community? Who is taking the lead in addressing these issues? How might your congregation become more informed about, and/or involved in, these efforts on behalf of racial justice?

8. What would be some first steps that your congregation could take as it seeks to engage the Sacred Conversation on Race?

**If you circled B:**

1. Describe when and why issues of race and racism became less important.
2. Is there resistance in your congregation to talking about race and racism? If so, how would you describe the resistance?
3. Are there particular issues (related to race or racism) that are too difficult or potentially divisive to discuss? If so, what are these issues and what makes them so difficult or potentially divisive?
4. If you were to begin again to discuss race and racism in your congregation, where might you

begin and what would you need to make this a fruitful and engaging conversation?

5. What would be the benefits for your congregation in talking about race and racism?

6. What would be the costs for your congregation if you do not engage in these Sacred Conversations?

7. What issues of race and racism are particularly urgent in your local community? Who is taking the lead in addressing these issues? How might your congregation become more informed about, and/or involved in, these efforts on behalf of racial justice?

8. How might your congregation engage the Sacred Conversation on Race?

**If you circled C:**

1. Describe when, how, and where issues of race and racism are talked about in your congregation.

2. What have been the benefits for your congregation in discussing issues of race and racism?

3. Is there resistance in your congregation to talking about race and racism? If so, how would you describe the resistance?

4. Are there particular issues (related to race or racism) that are too difficult or potentially divisive to discuss? If so, what are these issues and what makes them so difficult or potentially divisive?

5. How might issues of race and racism become more central to your congregation's life and mission? What do you need to make this happen?

6. What would be the costs for your congregation if you do not engage in these Sacred Conversations?

7. What issues of race and racism are particularly urgent in your local community? Who is taking the lead in addressing these issues? How might your congregation become more informed and/or involved in these efforts on behalf of racial justice?

8. How might your congregation engage the Sacred Conversation on Race?

**If you circled D:**

1. Describe why and how race and racism are so often discussed.

2. What have been the benefits for your congregation in discussing issues of race and racism?

3. What are the growth areas for your congregation in relation to conversations across race? How can you move toward addressing these areas of growth?

4. Is there resistance in your congregation to talking about race and racism? If so, how would you describe the resistance?

5. Are there particular issues (related to race or racism) that are too difficult or potentially divisive to discuss? If so, what are these issues and what makes them so difficult or potentially divisive?

6. How might issues of race and racism become even more central to your congregation's life and mission? What do you need to make this happen?

7. What issues of race and racism are particularly urgent in your local community? Who is taking the lead in addressing these issues? How might your congregation become more informed and/or involved in these efforts on behalf of racial justice?

8. How might your congregation engage the Sacred Conversation on Race?



# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix C: Interview Questions to Ask Prospective Facilitators

### Introduction to the questions

We recommend that you use the questions below as you interview prospective facilitators of your Sacred Conversations. You may wish to add questions that are pertinent to your local setting. Before you interview prospective facilitators, we encourage you to review the qualities of a skilled facilitator that we outline in Step # 9 of *Planning Your Sacred Conversation* and Questions 6 and 7 of the *Frequently Asked Questions*. In your search for facilitators who can best lead your Sacred Conversation, we encourage you to select people who are knowledgeable about the subject matter, committed to doing their own personal work on issues of privilege and oppression, have experience leading conversations related to racism, and understand that the work of racial justice is deeply spiritual work.

### Questions for prospective facilitators

1. What is your current work/organizational affiliation?
2. Are you familiar with the United Church of Christ (UCC) and its Sacred Conversation on Race?
3. What experience or skills do you bring to the Sacred Conversation on Race?
4. What anti-racism and/or cultural competency trainings have you attended? Please list approximate dates attended, as well as topics, length of training, sponsoring organization and presenters.
5. Do you have on-going experience as a group facilitator? Describe this work briefly, noting topics, populations trained, etc.
6. Do you have colleagues with whom you have led anti-racism and/or cultural competency workshops or trainings? If so, are your colleagues also interested in being resource people for the UCC Sacred Conversation on Race?
7. How do you identify racially? How do you describe yourself in other ways (gender, age, disability, etc.)?
8. What types of groups, programs, or formats of anti-racism education and/or training are you most comfortable and confident leading? What strengths do you bring?
9. In which areas of anti-racism education and/or training do you feel most challenged or least confident?
10. Is there anything else you would like to say about yourself?
11. Please list the name and phone number for two people who have experienced your leadership as a facilitator.





# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix D: Individual Reflection Questions

### Introduction to the questions

The questions below are designed to assist you in preparing for the Sacred Conversation on Race. These questions are for your personal use only; your responses will not be handed in. Our hope is that they will offer you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences, values, and longings with regard to issues of race, racism, and your Christian faith. Please remember: *There are no wrong answers.*

We suggest that you set aside some quiet time to ponder these questions and write your responses in advance of the first meeting of your congregation's Sacred Conversation. It may be helpful to first read through all the questions and begin with those that most deeply resonate with you. You might also find it useful to consult the *Multiracial, Multicultural Glossary* if you come across terms in the questions that are unfamiliar to you. We recommend that you return to these questions after the Sacred Conversation has begun and continue your reflection and writing over time. Use as many sheets of paper as you need for your responses.

### Reflection questions

1. What hopes, expectations, and needs do you bring to these Sacred Conversations on Race?
2. What fears do you have about what might happen?
3. What could you and others do to help create a safe and welcoming conversation where: a) everyone's voice is heard and respected and; b) challenge and growth are encouraged?
4. Are there Biblical passages or spiritual themes that you believe are particularly relevant for this Sacred Conversation on Race?
5. In what ways were you aware of your racial/ethnic background when you were growing up? How would you describe that background?
6. In what ways has your racial/ethnic background shaped your current values, habits, practices, ways of worship, and personal priorities?
7. In what ways have you intentionally sought out experiences that helped you learn more about people who are racially different from you? What have you learned about yourself and others in those experiences?
8. In what ways do you experience disparity between your values/dreams about racial justice and your daily life? What feelings come up for you as you name that disparity? What do you intend to do about that disparity?
9. How has racism affected your life in specific, tangible ways?
10. How does your Christian faith affect the way you feel or think about issues of racism and racial justice?
11. What or who has helped you become more aware of how race and racism are at work in your life and your community?
12. What or who has inspired you to become more involved in efforts to confront and challenge racism in your life and your community?
13. When and how have you challenged racism)? What happened and what did you learn about yourself and/or others?
14. When and how have you failed to challenge racism? What happened and what did you learn about yourself and/or others?
15. What do you personally and spiritually have to gain by participating in these Sacred Conversations on Race?
16. What do you personally and spiritually have to lose if you do not participate in these Sacred Conversations on Race?
17. Do you have additional reflections about the upcoming Sacred Conversation on Race?







# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix E: Evaluation Form

Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form that will be read by those responsible for planning and leading this Sacred Conversation. All comments are welcome. Your honest feedback will help in the planning of future conversations. Thank you!

### Part I: Process and Content of the Sacred Conversation

Please circle the number that corresponds with your level of agreement with each statement, with **1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree.**

Circle N/A if the statement is not applicable to this Sacred Conversation. In your comments, please elaborate on what you have circled (be as specific as possible).

1. The sessions were well organized.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. The goals and objectives were clearly stated.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 The sessions were just the right length.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. The content was too elementary .....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. The facilitators were well prepared.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. The resource materials were helpful.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. The facilitators encouraged questions.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Everyone had a chance to speak and be heard.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Hurtful statements were not challenged.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10. I look forward to future Sacred Conversations.....1.....2.....3.....4.....N/A

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: Qualities of a Sacred Conversation**

Below you will find a list of Qualities of a Sacred Conversation on Race taken from the Pastoral Letter on Racism. Please circle the number that represents how successful our sacred conversation was in fulfilling these qualities: 1 = very successful and 4 = failed to fulfill this quality. In your comments, please elaborate on what you have circled.

Quality # 1: *Invoke God's presence and wisdom when we gather, reserving time for prayer at opening and closing and whenever anyone in the group feels a need for it.*

Succeeded in doing this      1      2      3      4      Failed to do this

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality # 2: *Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of anger, pain, and joy in those who have been the targets of racism.*

Deep listening and honoring occurred      1      2      3      4      Failed to listen deeply and honor

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality # 3: *Listen deeply to, and honor, the feelings of shame, fear, and grief in those who are waking up to the reality of racism in our churches, neighborhoods, and nation.*

Deep listening and honoring occurred      1      2      3      4      Failed to listen deeply and honor

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality # 4: *Do not let the conversation stop with an exploration of individual feelings, attitudes, and behaviors but continue on to examine the realities of cultural and institutional racism.*

Succeeded in doing this      1      2      3      4      Failed in doing this

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part III: Additional reflections**

1. Key things you learned about race and/or racism

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2. Key things you learned about yourself

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3. Things that remain unresolved or unclear

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4. Describe two or three ways you plan to act on what you learned in these conversations

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5. What should be addressed in the next phase of our Sacred Conversation?

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# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix F: Multiracial, Multicultural Glossary

### A

**Acceptance:** It is considered vitally important in multicultural education that differences between persons and cultures be accepted as significant and not something to be resolved. Some consider “acceptance” the second step toward multiculturalism: after “tolerance” and before “respect, affirmation, solidarity, and critique.”

**Acculturation:** The general phenomenon of persons learning the nuances of or being initiated into a culture. The term is sometimes used simply to acknowledge that culture is indeed something persons learn. Acculturation may also carry a negative connotation when referring to the attempt by dominant cultural groups to inculcate members of other cultural groups into the dominant culture in an assimilationist fashion.

Some critics have noted that in many cases multicultural education was conceived as:

- ◆ having to do with minorities, and
- ◆ having assimilation into the norms of the majority as its eventual goal.

Most proponents of multicultural education at present disparage the casting of multicultural education in terms of acculturation into a dominant culture. Yet some do wish to argue that the creation/celebration of a common culture is a legitimate aspect of multicultural education.

**Affirmative Action:** The creation of policies intended to redress existing imbalances in representation or power according to sex, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, physical, emotional or mental abilities. Taking positive measures to “advantage” members of a previously “disadvantaged” or suppressed group.

**Anti-bias:** *Anti-bias* is an active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination.

**Anti-Racism:** “A conscious intentional effort to eradicate racism in all its forms – individual, cultural, and institutional.”

**Anti-Semitism:** *Anti-Semitism* is a prejudice and/or discrimination against Jews. Anti-Semitism can be based on hatred against Jews because of their religious beliefs, their group membership (ethnicity) and sometimes on the erroneous belief that Jews are a “race.”

**Asian:** Recent Asian immigrants to the U.S. and second- and third-generation U.S. Americans of Asian descent are typically referred to collectively as “Asian” by many writers. Others are careful to designate U.S. Americans of Asian descent as Asian Americans. Groups of U.S. Americans with a common Asian heritage, however, are typically delineated as Korean American, Chinese American, and so forth.

**Assimilation:** A process by which outsiders (persons who are others by virtue of cultural heritage, gender, age, religious background, and so forth) are brought into, or made to take on and then live out of, as much as possible, the existing identity of the group into which they are being assimilated.

The term has a decidedly negative connotation in recent educational literature, implying a coercion and a failure to recognize and value diversity. However, this term is viewed quite neutrally in sociological and psychological literature, where adaptation and assimilation are simply understood as survival techniques for individuals and groups.

## B

**Bias:** *Bias* is an inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Bigotry:** *Bigotry* is an unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices.

**Black:** Used by some to designate a racial group distinguishable by skin color. Used by others to designate a cultural group or subculture such as U.S. Americans or Canadians with an African heritage. Race and culture are not synonymous: race designates lineage or genetics; culture refers to the particular historical and linguistic patterns which inform a person's or group's world view. Authors tend to capitalize "Black" when a cultural group is intended, and use "black" in reference to race. However, the *Harvard Educational Review* insists on "Black," and *The New York Times* consistently uses "black" in all cases. Through much of U.S. history, "black" has often been used negatively, especially by European Americans—as in identifying black with "dirty." Such usage reflects negatively back on people identified with dark skin hues.

It is not uncommon for individual authors to alternate inexplicably among "black," "Black," and "African American."

## C

**Cultural Racism:** "When whites use power to perpetuate their cultural heritage and impose it upon others, while at the same time destroying the culture of ethnic minorities."

**Culture:** *Culture* is the patterns of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by a group of people. These patterns can be seen in language, governing practices, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, dating rituals, and clothing, to name a few examples.

**Cross cultural:** Most writers seem to treat this term as synonymous with intercultural, referring to some sort of relating, or attempts to do so, between cultural groups. Others use the term to highlight the differences (or the gap) between cultures; Sleeter and Grant refer to "cross cultural differences which might interfere with communication."

## D

**Discrimination:** *Discrimination* is the denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking, and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudiced thinking.

**Diversity:** *Diversity* means different or varied. The population of the United States is made up of people from diverse races, cultures and places.

**Dominant Culture:** Used widely and rather unanimously to refer to the cultural group with the greatest political power in a given context, e.g., European American, Protestant, and/or male culture in traditional U.S. society.

## E

**Ethnicity:** Concerns the heritage, character, experience of people distinguished by political and geographic boundaries whether chosen or received. Refers to the "memory, response, mood coded into the soul, transmitted through generations." As such, ethnicity functions as a "public metaphor" for "a knowledge related to heritage, character, social experience of people" and can be distinguished from culture (which has to do explicitly with shared patterns of living) and race (which is often considered a matter of genetics).

**Ethnocentricity:** Considered by some to be an attitude that views one's own culture as superior. Others cast it as "seeing things from the point of view of one's own ethnic group" without the necessary connotation of superiority.

**Eurocentric:** The ethnocentric inclination to consider European culture as normative. While the term need not imply an attitude of superiority (since all cultural groups have the initial right to understand their own culture as normative for them), most writers use this term with a clear awareness of the historic oppressiveness of Eurocentric tendencies in U.S and European society.

## H

**Hate Crime:** Hate crimes are defined under specific penal code sections as an act or an attempted act by any person against the person or property of another

individual or group which in any way constitutes an expression of hostility toward the victim because of his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity.\* This includes but is not limited to threatening phone calls, hate mail, physical assaults, vandalism, cross burnings, destruction of religious symbols, and fire bombings.

*\* Elements of crime statutes and protected classifications vary state to state.*

**Hate Incident:** Hate-motivated incidents are defined as behavior which constitutes an expression of hostility against the person or property of another because of the victim's race, religion, disability, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Hate-motivated incidents include those actions that are motivated by bias, but do not meet the necessary elements required to prove a crime. They may include such behavior as non-threatening name calling, using racial slurs or disseminating racial leaflets.

**Hispanic:**

Technically refers to Spanish-speaking persons in general, but is most commonly used in the U.S. to designate persons native to, or whose lineage can easily be traced to Central or South America or surrounding islands (rather than to Spain or Portugal).

**I**

**Immigration:** The act or instance of coming to a new country, region, or environment for the purpose of settling there. Also refers to the number of persons doing so during a certain period, e.g., "a large immigration of Vietnamese during the 1980s."

**Inclusive:** Having a posture (attitude or policy) of inclusion of diverse others. Inclusion, however, does not inherently imply diversity or pluralism and can even be seen to imply the opposite in some instances. For example, a company may hire a prescribed quota of women and minorities but then expect and require these persons to take on the pre-existent white male corporate identity. This company may then refer to itself as "inclusive," but it is not pluralistic since a single dominating identity remains, which others are assimilated into. Or to put it another way, the newly "inclusive" company is seeking to be inclusive while ignoring or erasing diversity.

**Institutional Racism:** It is widely accepted that racism is, by definition, institutional. "Institutions have greater power to reward and penalize. They reward by providing career opportunities for some people and foreclosing them for others. They reward as well

by the way social goods are distributed – by deciding who receives training and skills, medical care, formal education, political influence, moral support and self-respect, productive employment, fair treatment by the law, decent housing, self-confidence and the promise of a secure future for self and children."

**L**

**Latino:** People of Latin American and Caribbean heritage. Often used interchangeable with Hispanic, Latino seems preferable on the U.S. West Coast and Hispanic on the East Coast. Some feel that Latino is more inclusive of these groups' African and indigenous heritage as well as their Spanish heritage. Others prefer Hispanic since Latino is masculine, and is not a clear ethnic designation (the word does not refer to a specific country or locale). Latino/a is sometimes used in an effort to avoid sexism. For some, the term more technically refers to people whose heritages are traced to countries where languages derived from Latin are spoken, e.g., Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, and Romania.

**M**

**Mestizo:** Literally "mixed" or "hybrid," this term is increasingly used to identify "the origination of a new people from two ethnically disparate parent peoples." The primary reference is to the Spanish and Native American cultural heritage of Mexico, but it has also been used to identify Hispanics in the United States.

**Minority:** A group or subgroup, or a member of such, which has limited access to positions of power and therefore little influence upon the larger group, institution, or society.

Since women (who are roughly 50 percent of the population) are often, but not always, referred to as a minority group (some use the phrase "minorities and women" to reference those outside the dominating "majority"), and African Americans and Hispanics retain their "minority" status even if they constitute over fifty percent of the population of an area, it is clear that "minority" is not determined numerically. The term is considered by some to have derogatory connotations, and some writers seek to avoid the term altogether by using positive designations such as persons of color or "primarily Black" schools and so forth.

**Multicultural:** This term is used in a variety of ways and is less often defined by its users than terms such as multiculturalism or multicultural education.

One common use of the term refers to the raw fact of cultural diversity: “Multicultural education ... responds to a multicultural population.”

Another use of the term refers to an ideological awareness of diversity: “[multicultural theorists] have a clear recognition of a pluralistic society.” Still others go beyond this and understand multicultural as reflecting a specific ideology of inclusion and openness toward “others.” Perhaps the most common use of this term in the literature is in reference simultaneously to a context of cultural pluralism and an ideology of inclusion or “mutual exchange of and respect for diverse cultures.” When the term is used to refer to a group of persons (or an organization or institution), it most often refers to the presence of and mutual interaction among diverse persons (in terms of race, class, gender, and so forth) of significant representation in the group. In other words, a few African Americans in a predominantly European American congregation would not make the congregation “multicultural.” Some, however, do use the term to refer to the mere presence of some non-majority persons somewhere in the designated institution (or group or society), even if there is neither significant interaction nor substantial numerical representation.

**Multiracial:** Designating a context or ideology of racial pluralism: “Black, White, Asian, Latino/a, Native American persons.” Multicultural generally intends wider diversity, implying recognition also of gender, economic, and political differences. “Multiracial education” is preferred over multicultural education by some since it conceptually addresses the issue of institutionalized racism more directly.

## N

**Nation:** A historically developed group of people with territory, economy, culture(s), and language(s) in common.

**Native American:** Person whose ancestors were long-established residents of North America prior to the fifteenth century. The term American Indian (or Plains Indian, Pueblo Indian, and so forth) is also used. Native American is more often preferred as a general designation since Indian originated as a misnomer and is offensive to some.

Yet “Native American” has never really been the preferred self-designation of people who understand themselves to be Cherokee, Pueblo, Aleut, and so forth therefore “Indian” (especially in conjunction with a tribal name) is a common self-designation.

**Non-White:** Used at times to reference all persons or groups outside of white culture, often in the clear consciousness that white culture should be seen as an alternative to various non-white cultures and not as normative.

**North Americans:** Usually refers to the peoples of Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

## O

**Other:** Referring quite simply to “those who are not me/us,” this term has taken on a special significance for many philosophers, ethicists, and educators who are concerned with issues of multiculturalism, pluralism, and diversity. The term is sometimes italicized or put in quotations to draw attention to this special usage.

An “other” in this context is someone who is “not me” or “not us” in some significant way. For example, women are “others” for men, and African Americans are “others” for Hispanic Americans. The challenge of multiculturalism, as many see it, is to acknowledge, respect, and celebrate the diversity of others present in a pluralistic society.

## P

**Person of Color:** Used in the United States by some to designate “Blacks and Hispanics.” For many others, this includes all non-whites. In South America and the Caribbean, it is most used to refer to blacks.

**Power:** *Power* is the key that locks the system of racism and any system of oppression in place.

**Prejudice:** *Prejudice* is a set of negative beliefs generalized about a whole group of people. All people hold prejudices, but only the dominant group has the power to enforce laws, establish institutions and set cultural standards that are used to dominate those who are the subject of their prejudice. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

## R

**Race:** It has been said that “race is a pigment of our imaginations” [source: Ruben G. Rumbaut]. That is another way of saying that race is actually an invention. It is a way of arbitrarily dividing humankind into different groups for the purpose of keeping some on top and some at the bottom; some in and some out. And its invention has very clear historical roots: namely, colonialism.

“Race is an arbitrary socio-biological classification created by Europeans during the time of world wide colonial expansion, to assign human worth and social status, using themselves as the model of humanity, for the purpose of legitimizing white power and white skin privilege.” [Source: Crossroads].

To acknowledge that race is an historical, arbitrary invention does not mean that it can be, thereby, easily dispensed with as a reality in people’s lives. Our world has been ordered and structured on the basis of race and that oppressive ordering and structuring is RACISM.

**Racism:** *Racism* is racial prejudice plus power. Racism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others. This use of power is based on a belief in superior origin, identity of supposed racial characteristics. Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism. Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, cultural, religious, educational, economical, political and military institutions of societies. Racism is more than just a personal attitude. It is the institutionalized form of that attitude. It is both overt and covert.

**Refugee:** There is significant political import at present attached to whether or not persons fleeing oppression in other countries and seeking asylum in the U.S. can be granted “refugee” status. “Political refugees” are granted asylum, but those judged to be fleeing economic oppression are generally turned away.

**Relativism:** This is most commonly understood as a posture which maintains that the basis for judgment in matters of ethics or knowledge is relative, differing according to persons and contexts. Therefore, universal judgments applicable to all persons and all contexts is difficult or impossible.

It does not follow, however, that all judgments are therefore equal in this view (that judgment could only be made from an objective perspective which the relativist denies), nor that one cannot assess judgments as better or worse from one’s own culturally bound point of view.

The issue of relativism is raised by discussions of cultural diversity, since the claim is often made that no one cultural perspective is absolute and universal but rather that there is much to be gained from a sharing

of multiple cultural vantage points (each relative to the peoples and contexts which form it).

## S

**Scapegoating:** *Scapegoating* is the action of blaming an individual or group for something when, in reality, there is no one person or group responsible for the problem. It targets another person or group as responsible for problems in society because of that person’s group identity.

**Stereotype:** A *stereotype* is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences.

## T

**Tokenism:** Hiring or seeking to have in representation a few women and/or racial or ethnic minority persons so as to appear inclusive while remaining monocultural.

**Tradition:** The handing down of stories, beliefs, customs, and so forth from generation to generation, or a long-established custom or practice which approximates an unwritten law. In its singular form, this term is often a point of contention in debates between “traditionalists,” who assert that the Western tradition is formative and normative for Western culture and therefore ought to form the core curriculum in Western educational institutions, and non-traditionalists (pluralists, postmodernists, multiculturalists), who contend that there are multiple and diverse Western traditions as well as multiple non-Western traditions that ought to be part of our cultural discourse and part of educational curricula.

**Tribe:** A group of persons, families, or clans believed to be descended from a common ancestor and which presently forms a closely knit community. The term is considered derogatory by some, but is often used, along with a tribal name, to highlight a group’s unique identity and to counter the tendency to stereotype or to fail to recognize diversity among peoples with a common or similar ethnic background.

# W

**White:** The most commonly used designation for Europeans and for Americans descended from them. The terms Anglo and European American are also used, but much less often. Non-white or persons of color are sometimes used in contrast to white in attempts to divide U.S. society into two groups, based not only on skin color but also and more importantly on historic social power. It is worth noting that Hispanics and Asians are generally not considered “white” no matter how light their complexion, while southern Europeans are generally considered “white” no matter how dark their complexion. This hints at the term’s usage as both a racial and cultural label.

The term is most often not capitalized (although it is always capitalized in some publications, such as the *Harvard Educational Review*). Some writers use “European American” to capture the cultural designation and then use “white” only in reference to race.

**White Privilege:** *White Privilege* is the spill over effect of racial prejudice and White institutional power. It means that a White person in the United States has privilege, simply because one is White. It means that

as a member of the dominant group a White person has greater access or availability to resources because of being White. It means that White ways of thinking and living are seen as the norm against which all people of color are compared. Life is structured around those norms for the benefit of White people.

White privilege is the ability to grow up thinking that race doesn’t matter. It is not having to daily think about skin color and the questions, looks, and hurdles that need to be overcome because of one’s color. White Privilege may be less recognizable to some White people because of gender, age, sexual orientation, economic class or physical or mental ability, but it remains a reality because of one’s membership in the White dominant group.

*This list is compiled from a variety of sources by the Racial Justice/Multiracial, Multicultural office, United Church of Christ, Cleveland-based team.*



# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix G: Organizations Offering Racial Justice Training and Education

### Introduction

We strongly recommend the use of trained facilitators as leaders of the Sacred Conversation in your local setting. In your search for trained facilitators, you might consider contacting organizations with a history of providing quality anti-racism education, training, and resources. Among the many organizations committed to dismantling racism through training and education, this list is comprised of organizations with whom the Sacred Conversation Inter-Ministry Team is familiar.

We have included a website link, location of the main office, and brief description of each organization's work and mission. Some organizations provide education and training only in the region in which their headquarters is located; others have nationwide outreach. While some of the organizations address particular issues (e.g. immigration, truth and reconciliation, etc.), most of the organizations listed focus on anti-racism training and education.

We recommend that you contact the organization directly to learn more about their area of focus, fees, and availability. If staff members of a given organization are not available for your chosen event, they may be able to recommend colleagues who do comparable work in the same region of the country.

An additional list of trained facilitators within the United Church of Christ is being developed by the Sacred Conversation Inter-Ministry Team and will be available in the near future.

### List of Organizations

#### **ASDIC – ANTIRACISM STUDY – DIALOGUE CIRCLE**, St. Paul, Minn.

[www.cherokeeparkunited.org](http://www.cherokeeparkunited.org)

The *Antiracism Study - Dialogue Circle* (ASDIC) is a community of twelve to fifteen people who gather as a "Circle" to create supportive relationship as they explore the ways their social behaviors and Identities have been formed in the context of "race" and the practices of racism in the United States. Binding them together as a Circle are values about the importance of relationship, the desire to eliminate personal and institutional racism, and a willingness to engage in an extended dialogue process that leads to an action plan.

#### **BELOVED COMMUNITY CENTER**, Greensboro, N.C.; [www.belovedcommunitycenter.org](http://www.belovedcommunitycenter.org)

The *Beloved Community Center* (BCC) is committed to fostering and modeling a spirit of community based on Dr. Martin Luther King's vision of a "Beloved Community." In this spirit, we envision and work toward social and economic relations that affirm and realize the equality, dignity, worth and

potential of every person. The BCC has served as the anchor organization of the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project (GTCRP), which is an innovative, grassroots initiative inspired by Truth Commissions in South Africa and elsewhere around the world.

#### **CROSSROADS**, Matteson, Ill.

[www.crossroadsantiracism.org](http://www.crossroadsantiracism.org)

The mission of *Crossroads* is to dismantle systemic racism and build anti-racist multicultural diversity within institutions and communities. This mission is implemented primarily by training institutional transformation teams. *Crossroads* offers intensive 2-1/2 day training sessions.

#### **CULTURAL BRIDGES**, Questa, N.M.

email: [cbjona@kitcarson.net](mailto:cbjona@kitcarson.net)

*cultural bridges* is a consortium of anti-racism educators and activists that offers training programs to dismantle oppression and forge justice in organizations and communities.

**HEALING THE HEART OF DIVERSITY,**  
Roanoke, Va.  
[www.leadingdiversity.org/ld/company.php](http://www.leadingdiversity.org/ld/company.php)

Mission is to provide Diversity Leadership Educational programs that promote sustainable social change through a deeper understanding of diversity issues and diverse relationships. Our goal is to foster and sustain change to achieve organizational, individual and community goals that contribute to the common good.

**INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL,**  
Claremont, Calif.; [www.race-democracy.org](http://www.race-democracy.org)

The *Institute for Democratic Renewal Project Change* (IDR•PC), a national joint antiracism, social justice collaboration, catalyzes, supports, strengthens and contributes to movements for racial and social justice. IDR•PC assists communities in dismantling racism and achieving full and equitable participation in the democratic process through a variety of convenings, networking, learning communities, projects, publications and technologies.

**KALEIDOSCOPE INSTITUTE,** Los Angeles  
[216.104.171.229/ki/index.html](http://216.104.171.229/ki/index.html)

Since 2001, the Rev. Eric H. F. Law and his associates have provided consulting and coaching for local churches and church leaders – sometimes with a group of churches, sometimes with individual congregations, sometimes with individuals. These programs range from basic diversity-skills training to dialogue programs addressing specific issues such as race, sexuality, interfaith concerns, class, intergenerational issues, etc.

**KENDALL AND ASSOCIATES,** Berkeley, Calif.  
[www.franceskendall.com](http://www.franceskendall.com)

Consultant for organizational change, specializing in issues of diversity and white privilege. Our focus is on working with organizations, institutions, and communities to create more inclusive, supportive environments in which people can bring their fullest selves into their work; and their talents, gifts, and skills are recognized, developed and encouraged to grow to their fullest potential.

**MUSASA TRAINING AND CONSULTING COMPANY,** Palo Alto, Calif.  
email: [stacy53@aol.com](mailto:stacy53@aol.com)

Provides teams of consultants who create, deliver, and evaluate training, consulting, facilitation, and coaching. *Musasa Training and Consulting* has years of experience, specializing in workplace diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion.

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION DIVERSITY & MULTICULTURALISM,** East Lansing, Mich.; [www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pagesetid=196505](http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pagesetid=196505)

*MSUE* offers intensive learning experiences that focus on increasing awareness of several areas of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, including racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism.

**NATIONAL COALITION BUILDING INSTITUTE (NCBI),** Washington, D.C.  
[www.ncbi.org](http://www.ncbi.org)

The *NCBI* is an international, non-profit, leadership training organization that, since 1984, has worked to eliminate racism and all other forms of prejudice and discrimination throughout the world.

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE,** Brooklyn, N.Y. and regional branches; [www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org)

Founded as the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1927, the mission of the *National Conference for Community and Justice* (NCCJ) is to fight all forms of bias, bigotry, and racism, and promote understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution, and education. In many regions of the country, NCCJ offers an anti-racism program entitled Dismantling Racism.

**NATIONAL TRAINING LABORATORY,** Arlington, Va.; [www.ntl.org](http://www.ntl.org)

Founded in 1947, *NTL Institute* is a not-for-profit educational organization whose purpose is to develop change agents for effective leadership in all varieties of organizations. *NTL* has a long, rich history of working with corporations, government agencies, community groups and non-governmental organizations to facilitate inclusion and the creation of equity, access and opportunity.

**NEW DYNAMICS ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANTS,** Laconia, N.H.  
[www.newdynamicsconsulting.com](http://www.newdynamicsconsulting.com)

Helps organizations eliminate preconceived notions about other people based on race, color, class, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation as well as other diversities. Our journey models guide individuals and organizations from behaviors which impede productivity to new ways of relating that make each powerful and whole.

**PAUL KIVEL**, Oakland, Calif.  
www.paulkivel.com/workshops.php

Among the workshops that Paul Kivel offers is *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. This is a highly interactive and participatory workshop looking at the intersection of race, gender, and class. Participants focus on the roots of institutional racism and white privilege, and how the work of uprooting racism remains central to eliminating male violence, and to rebuilding our divided communities.

**PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE FOR SURVIVAL AND BEYOND**, New Orleans; www.pisab.org/

Founded in 1980, *The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond* (PISAB), is a national and international collective of anti-racist, multicultural community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social transformation. Through Undoing Racism™™/Community Organizing Workshops, technical assistance and consultations, PISAB helps individuals, communities, organizations and institutions move beyond addressing the symptoms of racism to undoing the causes of racism so as to create a more just and equitable society.

**PROJECT CHANGE**, Oakland, Calif., Knoxville, Tenn., Albuquerque, N.M.; www.projectchange.org

*The Institute for Democratic Renewal/Project Change* (IDR/PC) strives to combat injustice in the United States through a variety of training centers, projects, convenings, presentations and technology initiatives. Our primary goal is to assist communities who are experiencing structural exclusion to participate more fully in the democratic process.

**SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**, Montgomery, Ala.; www.splcenter.org

The *Southern Poverty Law Center* was founded in 1971 as a small civil rights law firm. Today, *SPLC* is internationally known for its tolerance education programs, its legal victories against white supremacists and its tracking of hate groups.

**STUDY CIRCLES RESOURCE CENTER**, East Hartford, Conn.; www.studyircles.org

*Study Circles* helps communities develop their own ability to solve problems by exploring ways for all kinds of people to think, talk, and work together to create change. Racism is a key focus in their work because of its roots in our country's history and culture. *Study Circles* helps communities address

race and diversity on any issue in order to create community dialogue and change.

**TODOS INSTITUTE**, Oakland, Calif.  
Email: Todos@igc.apc.org

*Todos*, the Spanish word for "everyone," was started in 1985 to work with high school students on issues of race, gender and class, focusing on how to break down barriers and create alliances between groups. Today *Todos Institute* has broadened its work to include adults. Hugh Vasquez, Director of *Todos Institute*, is co-author of "Beyond the Color of Fear and Celebrating Diversity, Building Alliances."

**TRAINING FOR CHANGE**, Minneapolis  
www.trainingforchange.org

Since 1992, *Training for Change* has been committed to increasing capacity around the world for activist training. When we say activist training, we mean training that helps groups stand up more effectively for justice, peace and the environment. We deliver skills directly that people working for social change can use in their daily work.

**VETERANS OF HOPE**, Denver  
www.veteransofhope.org

*The Veterans of Hope Project* is a multifaceted educational initiative on religion, culture and participatory democracy. We encourage a healing-centered approach to community-building that recognizes the interconnectedness of spirit, creativity and citizenship. Through a video interview series with older peace and justice activists; an accompanying curriculum; workshops and training in compassionate leadership development; the Project emphasizes grassroots resources for social change from the wisdom of varied local communities

**VISIONS, INC.**, Roxboro, Mass.  
www.visions-inc.org

*VISIONS Inc.* is a nonprofit enterprise that provides training and consultation to organizations, communities and individuals seeking to achieve greater effectiveness in a multicultural setting. The unique, research-based *VISIONS* training model helps overcome barriers to communication, relationship-building and organizational development caused by cultural misunderstandings and apprehensions. *VISIONS* helps to maximize the positive aspects of cultural diversity and engage in a multicultural organizational development process that addresses personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural needs.

**WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE**, Colorado Springs, Colo.; [www.uccs.edu/~wpc](http://www.uccs.edu/~wpc)

The annual *White Privilege Conference (WPC)* serves as a yearly opportunity to examine and explore difficult issues related to white privilege, white supremacy and oppression. *WPC* provides a forum

for critical discussions about diversity, multicultural education and leadership, social justice, race/racism, sexual orientation, gender relations, religion and other systems of privilege/oppression. The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual *White Privilege Conference* will be held April 1-4, 2009 in Memphis, TN.



# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix H: Annotated Bibliography of Racial Justice Resources

**Baldwin, James. *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948 – 1985*. St. Martin's, 1985.**

A compendium of nearly 50 years of Baldwin's profound and prophetic essays that combine autobiography and social analysis to create an intellectual history of the twentieth century black American experience.

**Barndt, Joseph. *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America*. Fortress Press: 2007.**

Traces the history of racism, revealing its personal, institutional, and cultural forms and offering specific ways in which people in all walks, including churches, can work to bring racism to an end. Includes analytical charts, definitions, bibliography, and exercises for readers.

**Branding, Ronice. *Fulfilling the Dream: Confronting the Challenge of Racism*. Chalice Press: 1998.**

Weaving the theological with the practical, this book offers strategies in "chewable bites" that can be accomplished at the individual and congregational levels. Each chapter contains reflection questions, making this book a helpful study guide for congregations. The appendices offer specific suggestions for action in six areas: Church Leadership, Worship, Church Context and Communication, Stewardship, Christian Education, and Engagement With the Community.

**Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Henry Holt: 1976.**

Using council records, autobiographies, and firsthand descriptions from the Dakota, Utes, Sioux, and Cheyenne tribes, Brown documents the systematic

destruction of the American Indian during the second half of the 19th century.

**Bulkin, Elly, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith. *Yours in the Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*. Long Haul Press, 1984.**

Thought-provoking personal essays that examine the political reality of racism and anti-semitism from the perspectives of three activists from widely-differing backgrounds and identities who share mutual respect for each other's work.

**Butler, Lee H. *Black Church, Black Theology, and the Politics of Religion in America: A Reflection on the Theology-Race Controversy*. The Center for the Study of Black Faith & Life, Chicago Theological Seminary: 2008.**

Dr. Butler examines the misperceptions and misinformation that informed and influenced the controversy surrounding Dr. Jeremiah Wright and his ministry at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago during Senator Barack Obama's campaign for President. Dr. Butler invites the readers to move beyond sound bites to explore the historical and theological context of Dr. Wright's 36 years of ministry at Trinity.

**Canon, Katie and Carter Heyward. *Alienation and Anger: A Black and a White Woman's Struggle for Mutuality in an Unjust World*. The Stone Center, Wellesley College, 1992.**

In the form of letters exchanged over nine years, Katie Cannon, an African-American womanist ethicist, and Carter Heyward, a white feminist theologian, examine their ongoing effort to build a mutually empowering and authentic friendship despite the devastating effects of racism.

**Chiawei O’Hearn, Claudine, ed. *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*. Pantheon Books, 1998.**

Seventeen first-person accounts by authors with biracial or bicultural backgrounds who grew up in the U.S. or emigrated to this country.

**Chicago Metropolitan Association, Illinois Conference United Church of Christ. *The Church, Reparations, and Justice: Moving From Silence to Action – A Study and Discussion Guide*. 2003.**

During the 20th century, reparations were granted to the State of Israel by the German government for the holocaust, to the Maori people of New Zealand by the United Kingdom, and to Japanese Americans by the United States government. No reparations, however, have been made to African Americans for the centuries of slavery they endured. This study guide seeks to establish dialogue within churches regarding moral, historical, political and economic consideration pertaining to issue of American slavery and the rationale for reparations.

**Cone, James. *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968–1998*. Beacon Press, 1998.**

A collection of Dr. Cone’s most influential essays in which he critiques the ways that “White theology” has, for centuries, focused attention on the abstract “problem of evil” while never acknowledging the concrete historical evil of white racism.

**Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. Random House, 1983.**

An examination of the suffrage and women’s movement in the context of the fight for civil rights and working class issues. Davis explores the intimate connection between the anti-slavery campaign and the struggle for women’s suffrage and explores how the racist and classist bias of some in the women’s movement divided its own membership.

**Davies, Susan and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, ed. *Ending Racism in the Church*. Pilgrim Press, 1998.**

Seventeen essays call church members to recognize the sin of racism. Each of the four sections begins with a case study profiling a church or community agency that is working to end racism, followed by chapters from scholars and practitioners who describe the subtle ways in which racism undermines the gospel’s thrust. Every essay is followed by study questions, and there is an Appendix: “A Guide to Address Racism.”

***Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles*. The National Conference for**

**Community and Justice, 2002. Free download from: <http://65.214.34.18/faithbook.pdf>.**

A compilation of faith and spiritually based principles, *Denouncing Racism* addresses how the concept of being actively anti-racist is documented in the spiritual practices and policies of most faith traditions.

**Douglas, Frederick and Harriet Jacobs. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave & Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Modern Library, 2000.**

Douglas’s *Narrative*, first published in 1845, is an unparalleled account of the dehumanizing effects of slavery. Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, published in 1861 broke the silence about the exploitation of African American female slaves.

***Even the Stones Will Cry Out for Justice: An Adult Forum on Institutionalized Racism*. Augsburg Fortress, 1999.**

A powerful resource for congregations who want to embrace people of all races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. Provides biblical illustrations of how racism separates us from what God calls us to be; challenges and stimulates with questions, vignettes, and discussion topics; and encourages change as members challenge the obstacles racism presents. Contains everything leaders need to conduct a three or five session Bible study or one-day retreat.

**Gill, LaVerne McCain. *A History of the Origins of African American Sacred Music*. Available online: [www.hvcn.org/info/websterucc/GillOrigins.pdf](http://www.hvcn.org/info/websterucc/GillOrigins.pdf)**

Through the lens of African-American sacred music, Rev. Gill examines the values that emerged from the evolution of the family in the African American Christian tradition. She shows how the Christian family sustained African Americans during the centuries of shattered families caused by slavery. Gill also explores how African Americans transplanted remnants of their African spirituality into a new American soil, thereby creating a new branch of the Christian tree.

**Gill, LaVerne McCain. *Vashiti’s Victory: And Other Biblical Women Resisting Injustice*. Pilgrim Press, 2003.**

Gill uses what she terms the Justice Reading Strategy as a framework for discerning the movement of God and the will of God in the biblical narrative. Her womanist theological method explores issues of

patriarchy, gender, race and class for women in the biblical texts, as well as women in our own society and recent history.

**Goodman, Diane. *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups*. Sage Publications, 2001.**

Provides theory, perspectives, and strategies that are useful for working with adults on social justice issues and conflict situations. The first part of the book helps educators understand the reasons for resistance and ways to prevent it. The second part explains how educators motivate dominant groups to support social justice.

**Griffin, Paul. *Seeds of Racism in the Soul of America*. Source Books, 2000.**

An historical analysis of racism in America that examines the subtle, insidious discrimination practiced by those who purport to be broad-minded and enlightened. By tracing the seeds of racism from the New England Puritans to today's white liberals and feminists, Griffin examines how racism was implanted in this nation's founding and continues to bear bitter fruit to this day.

**Harding, Vincent. *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.**

Beginning with mutinies on the slave ships, Harding traces the resistance of African slaves in the New World that was fed by fierce pride and unshakeable hope. Harding writes about well-known leaders of the abolition movement such as Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman and also of the anonymous men and women whose resistance to slavery helped bring it to an end.

**Harjo, Joy. *A Map to the Next World: Poetry and Tales*. Norton, 2000.**

Joy Harjo is a Native American poet and storyteller who melds memories, dream visions, myths, and stories from America's brutal history into a poetic whole. Weaving together myth, stories, and other sources of cultural memory, Harjo explores the complexities of identity of a people still haunted by their violently disrupted past.

**Harvey, Jennifer et al, eds. *Disrupting White Supremacy From Within: White People on What We Need To Do*. Pilgrim Press, 2004.**

The contributors to this anthology are white theologians, ethicists, teachers, ministers, and activists. They examine the nature of race, racism, and white

supremacy, acknowledging its devastating effects on people of color and exploring ways to disrupt and dismantle it.

**Hitchcock, Jeff. *Lifting the White Veil: An Exploration of White American Culture in a Multiracial Context*. Crandall, Dostie & Douglass Books, 2002.**

Hitchcock seeks to help white people understand and explore what it means to be white in America. Drawing upon scholarship from a wide range of disciplines, the author shows why it is crucial to understand white culture if we hope to move to a truly multicultural society.

**Holbrook, Sheryl Kujawa. *A House of Prayer for All People*. The Alban Institute: 2003.**

Focusing on six congregations from different denominations, geographical regions, and settings, the author shows us the joys and struggles in their intentional pursuits of a more diverse and just community. The stories that frame this book will inspire leaders to examine their congregation's history, study their community's demographics, and explore ways they can strengthen the diversity in their midst.

**Hollyday, Joyce. *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005.**

This saga about our United Church of Christ forebears opens with the mutiny of captured Africans on the Amistad in 1839, follows the path of missionaries who risked their lives to establish schools among emancipated slaves in the South, and culminates with the testimonies of descendants of those who were freed.

***Immigrants Targeted: Extremist Rhetoric Moves into the Mainstream*. Online report documented and written by the ADL (Anti-Defamation League). [www.adl.org/civil\\_rights/anti\\_immigrant/default.asp](http://www.adl.org/civil_rights/anti_immigrant/default.asp)**

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) documents the virulent anti-immigrant and anti-Hispanic rhetoric employed by a handful of groups that have positioned themselves as legitimate, mainstream advocates against illegal immigration in America.

**Johnson, Allan G. *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.**

This very readable book helps readers understand the concepts of privilege and oppression, as well as their

own relationship to both, in ways that move them beyond guilt. The author has the gift of presenting complex issues in a language that is accessible to a broad range of readers.

**Kendall, Francis.** *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race.* Routledge, 2006.

Delves into the complex interplay between race, power, and privilege in both organizations and private life. The author demonstrates how ignorance can perpetuate racism and she offers practical insights into ways that people of all races can work to dismantle racism.

**Kivel, Paul.** *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice.* New Society Publishers, 2002.

A book written to help white people understand the dynamics of racism in society, institutions, and daily life. It shares stories, suggestions, advice, exercises, and approaches for working with people of color and other white allies to confront racism.

**Law, Eric C. F.** *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace.* Chalice Press: 2000.

In this resource for ministers and lay leaders, Law provides models, theories, and strategies that are both practical and theologically sound for moving faith communities toward greater inclusion.

**Law, Eric C. F.** *Sacred Acts, Holy Change: Faithful Diversity and Practical Transformation.* Chalice Press: 2002.

Eric Law offers practical guidelines for change and transformation. *Sacred Acts* applies the techniques and theories from his previous three books to spell out the processes for achieving genuine transformation.

**Lepore, Jill.** *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Formation of American Identity.* Vintage: 1999.

The author describes the tumultuous encounters between English settlers and Native Americans in New England, the wars that followed, and the theology used by European Americans to justify conquest.

**Living the Faith: A Guide for Strengthening Multicultural Relationships.** Augsburg Fortress, 2000.

A compilation of stories, advice, and reflections for individuals and congregations who seek to create and nurture multicultural relationships. Presented in five sections, it is particularly well suited for adult forums

or other groups that meet regularly. Includes exercises that sheds light on the ways our faith in Christ can be the foundation for developing and strengthening relationships across cultural differences.

**Lorde, Audre.** *Sister Outsider.* The Crossing Press, 1984.

Presenting the essential essays and speeches of the late African American poet, writer, and activist Audre Lorde. She critically examines how systems of oppression and privilege intersect and reinforce one another and she challenges the notion that there is a hierarchy of oppression.

**Marable, Manning and Leith Mullings, eds.** *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices on Resistance, Reform, and Renewal An African American Anthology.* Rowman and Littlefield: 2000.

A collection of essential social and political writings by African American leaders that spans three centuries. The editors show how the themes of reform, resistance, and renewal have sustained the black freedom struggle.

**McIntosh, Peggy.** "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," Working Paper No. 189, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA 02181.

Considered a groundbreaking essay by a white educator that brought the reality of white privilege into discussions of race, gender, and sexuality. McIntosh provides a "white privilege checklist" that gives tangible, practical examples of how white privilege is present in the day-to-day experience of white people.

**McIntosh, Peggy.** *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.* This article can be found online: <http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>

This essay is a shorter version of the essay described above.

**Olsson, joan.** *Detour Spotting for White Anti-racists.* Pamphlet available c/o cultural bridges. Email: [cbjona@kitcarson.net](mailto:cbjona@kitcarson.net). The pamphlet can also be found online: <http://www.sverigemotrasism.nu/upload/4494/DETOUR%20spotting%20Reality%20checks.pdf>

The author describes how white people internalize behaviors and attitudes from a very early age that reinforce racism. To unlearn these habitual patterns, white people must first recognize them. This essay gives practical help in doing just that.

**Reid, Katherine Goering and Steven Beck Reid.** *Uncovering Racism.* Brethren Press, 1999.

This study points out inherently racist systems, structures, and attitudes within the church and the wider society. It includes ten Bible study lessons, suggestions for sharing and prayer, and music to help congregations study the implications of racism and explore ways to take action. Each Bible study could be used on its own or an in-depth study could be undertaken utilizing all the material.

**Segrest, Mab.** *Memoir of a Race Traitor.* South End Press, 1994.

Autobiographical account of a southern white woman, born in the 1940s to a conservative and influential Alabama family, who comes to consciousness about racism and works to expose the Klan by serving on the staff of North Carolinians Against Racist and Religious Violence.

***Steps Toward Wholeness: Learning and Repentance.*** Prepared by **Caroline Henninger Oehler.** The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, 2000. Free download from [www.gccuic-umc.org/web/webpdf/studyguide.pdf](http://www.gccuic-umc.org/web/webpdf/studyguide.pdf).

Developed as preparation for the 2000 General Assembly of the United Methodist Church, this resource contains materials and guidelines for six sessions lasting from 45 minutes to 2 hours each. Each session starts with a worship sequence, explores personal and institutional racism, and ends with prayer.

**Takaki, Ronald.** *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America.* Back Bay Books, Little Brown: 1993.

Takaki begins with the “discovery” of America and proceeds through World War II, devoting chapters of each section to the different experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanos, Jews, Chinese Americans, and Japanese Americans. Each chapter discusses the divergent historical and cultural experiences as well as the shared experiences of these different groups.

**Tatum, Beverly Daniel.** *“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?”* Basic Books, 1997.

Explores why it remains so difficult for Americans to talk about race. Tatum, who is President of Spellman College, is nationally known for her groundbreaking

work in racial identity development and helping educators find ways to break the silence surrounding race and racism.

**Thandeka.** *Learning To Be White.* Continuum, 2002.

Starting from the premise that no one is born “white” in America, Thandeka describes how European Americans learn to take on this identity, often at a very early age. She explores the critical link between racist acts and shame.

**Tinker, George E.** *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide.* Fortress Press: 1993.

The author is a member of the Osage/Cherokee people and faculty at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Highlighting the lives of four missionaries, Tinker shows that as they were trying to spread the gospel message and do good works among the Native American peoples, these missionaries were participants in their wider culture’s ambitions against the indigenous peoples.

**Tinker, George E.** *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation.* Fortress Press: 2004.

Writing from a Native American perspective, theologian George Tinker probes American Indian culture, its vast religious and cultural legacy, and its ambiguous relationship to the tradition – historic Christianity – that colonized and converted it.

**Wise, Tim.** *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son.* Soft Skull Press: 2005.

An autobiographical examination of the ways in which racial privilege shapes the lives of most white Americans, overtly racist or not, to the detriment of people of color, themselves, and society. In addition to critically assessing the magnitude of racial privilege, Wise provides stories that illustrate how white people can become allies in the struggle for racial justice.





# Sacred Conversation on Race

## Appendix I: Recommended DVDs and Videos

### Introduction

As you prepare to use one of these films in your Sacred Conversation on Race, we recommend that you review the film before showing it to be certain that it is appropriate for the group you have in mind. Careful thought should also be given to selecting the facilitators who will introduce the film and lead the discussion that follows the film. Because these films can evoke deep emotions and provoke a range of responses, we recommend that facilitators work in pairs.

In selecting the appropriate facilitators, the following qualities should be paramount: 1) they are known and trusted by diverse groups within the congregation; 2) they have experience and skill as group facilitators; 3) they have a sustained commitment to understanding and addressing white privilege and racism; 4) they are willing and able to spend time together designing a format for introducing and discussing the film; 5) they are willing and able to do some additional research and reading about the topic prior to showing the film.

A number of these films have accompanying study guides. We recommend that you inquire about study guides when you order the films.

### List of Films

**AFRICANS IN AMERICA** is a four-part documentary, originally produced for PBS, that chronicles the history of racial slavery in the United States – from the start of the Atlantic slave trade in the 16th century to the end of the American Civil War in 1865. The series explores the central paradox at the heart of the American story: a democracy that declared “all men equal” but enslaved and oppressed one people to provide independence and prosperity to another. The series can be purchased at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org).

**AT THE RIVER I STAND** The Spring of 1968 in Memphis marked the dramatic climax of the Civil Rights movement. *At the River I Stand* skillfully reconstructs the two eventful months that transformed a local labor dispute into a national conflagration, and disentangles the complex historical forces that came together with the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 66 minutes. DVD and video. [www.newsreel.org](http://www.newsreel.org). 877-811-1850.

**BANISHED** vividly recovers the too-quickly forgotten history of racial cleansing in America

when thousands of African Americans were driven from their homes and communities by violent, racist mobs. The film places these events in the context of present day race relations by following three concrete cases where black and white citizens warily explore if there is common ground for reconciliation over these expulsions. 84 minutes. DVD only. [www.newsreel.org](http://www.newsreel.org). 877-811-1850.

**CIRCLES** A documentary by Shati Thakur which has as its subject aboriginal practices of restorative justice as they are being integrated into the justice system in Canada. By bringing together the perpetrator of a crime, his or her victims, peers and elders, sentencing circles focus on finding ways to heal the offender, the victim and the community, instead of simply punishment. The Aboriginal men interviewed in the film see a crucial link between violence in their communities and the legacy of residential schools mandated for Indians that removed children from their families and forbid them to practice their native spiritual and cultural traditions. 58 minutes. DVD. Color. 1-800-542-2164. [www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca).

**THE COLOR OF FEAR** is a groundbreaking film about the state of race relations in America as seen through the eyes of eight North American men of Asian, European, Latino and African descent. In a series of intelligent, emotional, and dramatic confrontations the men reveal the pain and scars that racism has caused them. What emerges is a deeper sense of understanding and trust. This is the dialogue most of us fear, but hope will happen sometime in our lifetime. 90 minutes. DVD. [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com). (510) 204-8840.

**A DREAM IN DOUBT** Four days after the 9/11 attacks, Balbir Singh Sodhi was gunned down at his Phoenix area gas station by a man named Frank Roque. To Roque, Balbir Sodhi's beard and turban – articles of his Sikh faith – symbolized the face of America's new enemy. *A Dream in Doubt* follows Rana Singh Sodhi, Balbir's brother, as he attempts to fight the hate threatening his family and community. 57 minutes. Color. DVD with Study Guide. (415) 863-0814. [distribution.asianamericanmedia.org](http://distribution.asianamericanmedia.org).

**EYES ON THE PRIZE** An award-winning 14-hour television series produced by Blackside and narrated by Julian Bond. Through contemporary interviews and historical footage, the series covers all of the major events of the civil rights movement from 1954-1985. Series topics range from the Montgomery bus boycott in 1954 to the Voting Rights Act in 1965; from community power in schools to "Black Power" in the streets; from early acts of individual courage through to the flowering of a mass movement. Can be ordered through: [teacher.shop.pbs.org](http://teacher.shop.pbs.org).

**FIRST PERSON PLURAL** Deann Borshay was among thousands of South Korean orphans sent to the U.S. in the 1960s to be adopted and raised by American families. *First Person Plural* is a personal documentary that chronicles Borshay's struggle to set right a case of mistaken identity and unravel the mysteries surrounding her adoption. 56 minutes. Study guide available. Center for Asian American Media. 415-863-7428. [distribution.asianamericanmedia.org/browse/film/?i=72](http://distribution.asianamericanmedia.org/browse/film/?i=72).

**FLAG WARS** A documentary by Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras. *Flag Wars* is a stark look inside the conflicts that surface when black working-class families are faced with an influx of white gay home buyers to their Columbus, Ohio neighborhood. Zula Pearl Films. 877-352-4927. [www.flagwarsthemovie.com](http://www.flagwarsthemovie.com).

**IN WHOSE HONOR: AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS IN SPORTS** by Jay Rosenstein, takes a critical look at the long-running practice of using American Indian names and images as mascots in sports. It follows the story of a Native American graduate student, Charlene Teters, and her transformation into the leader of a movement as she struggles to protect her cultural symbols and identity. 46 minutes. May be rented or purchased through New Day Films, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Ho-ho-kus, NJ. 201-652-6590.

**LIGHT IN THE SHADOWS** American women of Indigenous, African, Arab, European, Jewish, Asian, Latina and Mixed Race descent, use authentic dialogue to crack open a critical door of consciousness. 45 Minutes. Color. DVD or Video. Recommended for advanced use only. [www.world-trust.org/videos/light.html](http://www.world-trust.org/videos/light.html). 510-632-5156.

**MADE IN L.A.** traces the moving transformation of three Latina garment workers on the fault lines of global economic change who decide they must resist. The film provides an insider's view into both the struggles of recent immigrants and into the organizing process itself: the enthusiasm, discouragement, hard-won victories and ultimate self-empowerment. <http://www.newsreel.org>. 877-811-1850.

**MIRRORS OF PRIVILEGE: MAKING WHITENESS VISIBLE** Features the experiences of white women and men who have worked to gain insight into what it means to challenge notions of racism and white supremacy in the United States. 50 minutes. Color. DVD or Video. 510-632-5156. [www.world-trust.org/videos/visible.html](http://www.world-trust.org/videos/visible.html).

**THE SPIRIT OF CRAZY HORSE** One hundred years after the massacre at Wounded Knee, Milo Yellow Hair recounts the story of his people – from the lost battles for their land against the invading whites – to the bitter internal divisions and radicalization of the 1970s – to the present-day revival of Sioux cultural pride, which has become a unifying force as the Sioux try to define themselves and their future. 60 minutes. Available through Amazon.com.

**STOLEN GROUND** is about six Asian American men who struggle against racism and their anguish and pain at the trauma of assimilation towards themselves and their families. A must-see film for those striving to better understand the "model minority" and the pressures of blending into the American culture. 40 minutes. VHS. [www.stirfryseminars.com](http://www.stirfryseminars.com). 510-204-8840.

**TRACES OF THE TRADE** In this documentary, film maker Katrina Browne discovers that her New England ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. She and nine cousins retrace the Triangle Trade and gain a powerful new perspective on the black/white divide. *Traces of the Trade* had its national broadcast television premiere on the PBS documentary series *P.O.V.* in June 2008. [www.tracesofthetrade.org](http://www.tracesofthetrade.org).

**TRUE COLORS** ABC News documentary about two friends – John, who is White, and Glen, who is Black – who take part in a series of hidden camera experiments exploring people’s reactions to each in a variety of situations. Prime Time Live, undercover, follows John and Glen separately as they each try to rent an apartment, respond to job listings, purchase a car, and conduct everyday activities such as shopping. In every instance, John is welcomed into the community while Glen is discouraged by high prices, long waits, and unfriendly salespeople. 19 minutes. Color. DVD or VHS. Available for loan from Justice & Witness Ministries: [debardeb@ucc.org](mailto:debardeb@ucc.org).

**THE WAY HOME** Over the course of eight months, sixty-four women representing a cross-section of cultures, (Indigenous, African-American, Arab, Asian, European-American, Jewish, Latina, and Multiracial) came together to share their experience of racism in America. 92 minutes. Color. DVD or VHS. [www.world-trust.org/videos/home.html](http://www.world-trust.org/videos/home.html). 510-632-5156.

**THE VETERANS OF HOPE PROJECT** has conducted interviews – available on DVD – with more than 50 religious leaders, activists, artists, and educators who are veterans of struggles for freedom and justice in this country and in other parts of the world. In the interviews, these individuals reflect on the role of religion/spirituality in their life and work, representing a unique educational resource on religion and democratic transformation. Among those interviewed: Andrew Young, Bernice Johnson Reagon, James Lawson, and Delores Huerta. DVDs can be purchased individually or as a series. [www.veteransofhope.org](http://www.veteransofhope.org). 303-765-3194.

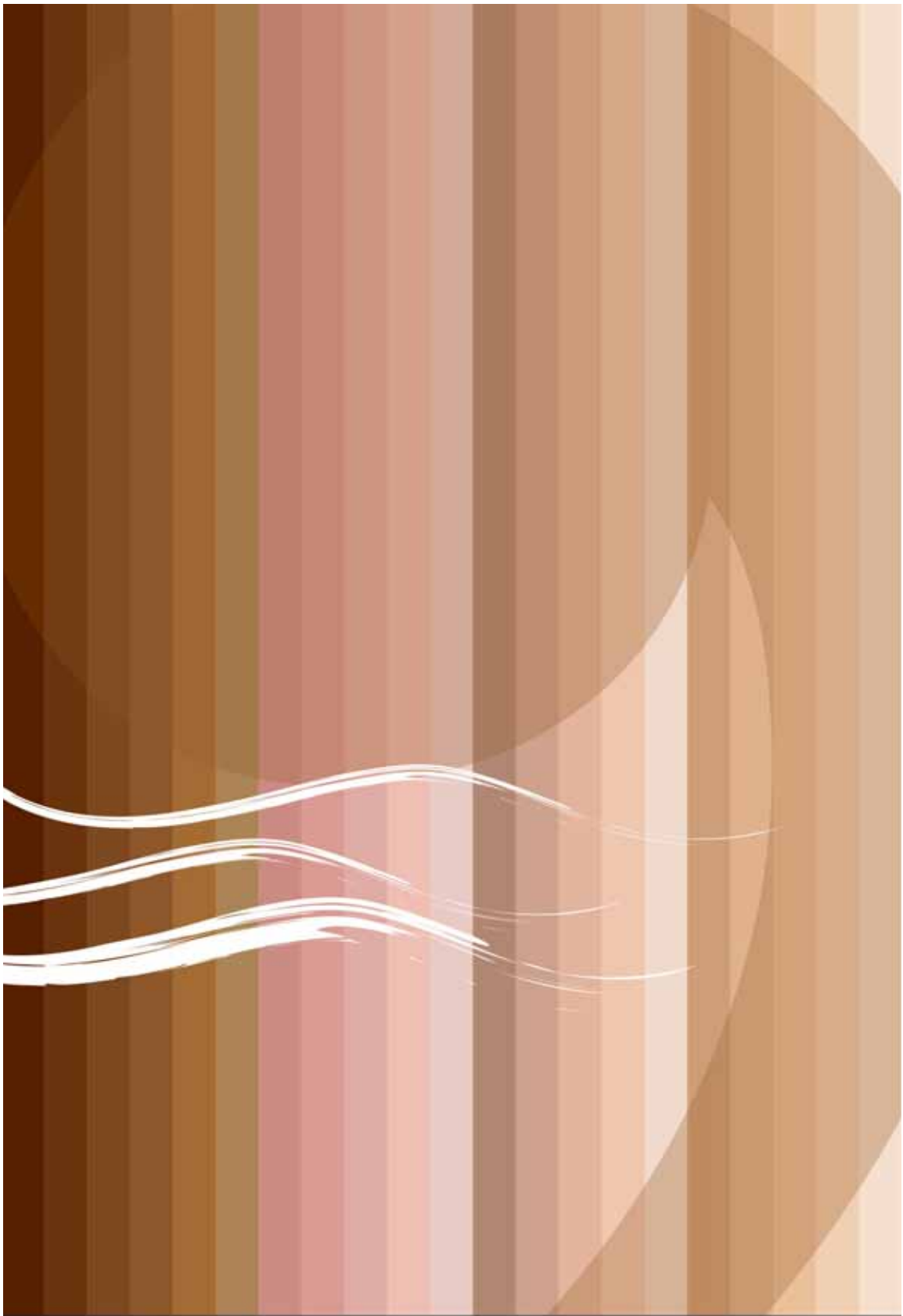
**WHAT MAKES ME WHITE?** A film by A. M. Sands about the role of race in the daily lives of White People. Starting with her own story of a childhood in the suburbs, the filmmaker weaves in stories of other White People and observations by People of Color. Together, these narratives create a portrait of whiteness as a learned social reality, one that is vividly experienced by People of Color but largely unnoticed by Whites. Color. DVD. 15 minutes. [whatmakesmewhite.com](http://whatmakesmewhite.com).

**WHEN THE LEVEES BROKE: A REQUIEM IN FOUR ACTS** Spike Lee’s documentary chronicles the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds and socio-economic conditions who endured the harrowing ordeal of living in New Orleans during and after the levees were breached. Through eyewitness accounts and expert commentary, the four-part documentary tells the saga of one of the greatest natural disasters experienced by any region of the country and the failure at all levels of government to respond adequately to the tragedy. Three-disc set is available through HBO: <http://store.hbo.com>. 253 minutes. Color. A multi-disciplinary curriculum guide, “Teaching The Levees,” published and distributed by Teachers College Press, can be downloaded at [www.teachingthelevees.com](http://www.teachingthelevees.com).

**WHITE SHAMANS AND PLASTIC MEDICINE MEN** A thoughtful critique of the appropriation of Native American culture and spirituality by white new age people who make a living and lifestyle from using and selling indigenous spiritual ritual and symbols. Throughout the video, Native Americans speak about their feelings and thoughts about the role of spiritual practice and the historical appropriation of indigenous land, resources, and now spirituality, by white people. White practitioners of Native American spirituality also share their feelings, thoughts and intentions. Available for loan from: Western States Center – [www.westernstatescenter.org](http://www.westernstatescenter.org). 503-228-8866.

## NOTES





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