
Widening the Circle



Opening to Diversity & Undoing Racism

An initiative of
The Christian Reformed Church in North America (Canada)

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Christian Reformed Church in North America
Office of Race Relations
3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070
Burlington, ON
Canada L7R 3Y8
Phone 800-730-3490 for permission to copy.

Dear Reader:

We can thank the founding members of the Classis Toronto Race Relations Committee for the production of these learning materials. They were developed as a Canadian contribution to CRCNA denominational efforts to become an anti-racist church in 2002.

The members of the design team included Shiao Chong, Esther deGroot, Faye Dundas, Steve Kabetu, Connie Kuipers, Tim Nguyen, Peter Noteboom, Chris Pulleneyagem, Rev. Fred Witteveen, and Henrietta Verbaan. The excellent reception of these training materials by participants from Classis Toronto congregations inspired the Christian Reformed Church in North America (USA) to use the same learning-centered Dialogue Education system¹ in their development of the Dance of Racial Reconciliation (DORR).

Now in 2010 - and with thanks to Jeanette Romkema for her efforts at facilitating learning for another group of anti-racism facilitators and for carefully revising and updating the training materials - this resource is now ready for use across Canada. May many more small groups, churches, classes, and church agencies find these materials useful and stimulating as they begin the journey of widening their circle.

We welcome your comments and questions regarding these learning materials and locating an anti-racism facilitator for your group. We can best be contacted through the Classis Toronto Ministry Coordinator. Please feel free to write to us at ministrycoordinator@classistoronto.org, or contact the CRCNA Canada Race Relations Coordinator, Steve Kabetu, at skabetu@crcna.org.

In Christ,

Sandra Williams
Interim Chair

On behalf of the Classis Toronto Race Relations Committee Timothy Chan, Rev. Rob Datema, Faye Dundas, Coby Jonker, Steve Kabetu (CRCNA Race Relations Coordinator Canada), John Meiboom (Classis Toronto Ministry Coordinator), Peter Noteboom, Rev. Erick Schuringa

¹ Please see “Organizing to Undo Racism in Canada: Designing for Safety in an Antiracism Program”, in *Dialogue Education at Work: A Casebook* by Jane Vella and Associates. Jossey Bass: 2004.

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The Program

Participants – Who

This learning program is prepared for members of Christian Reformed congregations across Canada. Groups of learners might be arranged through Church Council meetings, adult education programs, small groups, or young people's groups.

Ideally, the number of participants will be 10-15, with the same people attending all five sessions.

Two trained anti-racism facilitators will lead each of the sessions.

Purpose – Why we are proposing this learning program

Racism is a sin. As Christian Reformed Churches connect with their surrounding communities, they are finding that there are opportunities for outreach, and that racism poses a stumbling block to engaging those communities.

In addition, the Christian Reformed denomination has committed itself to becoming an anti-racist church. This proposed learning program has been designed to help us to become an anti-racist, multi-cultural church.

Date and Location – When & Where

This learning program requires, ideally, five sessions of 90 minutes each, completed within a period of three months. The location should be a convenient one for the participants, and can be at your church, in a home, or some other comfortable place.

It is possible to group these five modules and schedule them for one long day, or two weekend days. It is also possible to make these sessions 60 minutes in length, although this would require some activity changes.

Topics – What: The titles of the sessions

- Exploring Our Experience in Diversity and Racism
- Faith and Culture: Our true identity
- Exploring Brokenness: Canadian context of racism and resistance
- Exploring Self-awareness: What is racism?
- Steps to Wholeness: Building relationships and action steps

The Learning Objectives

Welcome and Introduction

By the end of this session, we will have

- reviewed a brief introduction to the Classis Toronto anti-racism initiative
- shared what we plan to achieve in this learning program.

Celebrating our Unity and Diversity in Christ: Exploring How We See One Another

By the end of this session, we will have

- named factors influencing our feelings about race
- reviewed the 19th century development of the “science” of race
- celebrated our unity and diversity in Christ
- agreed on some conversation guidelines.

Faith and Culture: Our True Identity

By the end of this session, we will have

- reviewed 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21
- distinguished between Christian and cultural identities
- clarified the relationship of both identities to undoing racism.

Exploring Brokenness: Canadian Context of Racism and Resistance

By the end of this session, we will have

- described the architecture of racism and resistance to racism
- contrasted and compared the commonalities and differences of racism and resistance in Dresden, Ontario using a video clip from *Journey to Justice*
- deduced reasons why we fail to see racism.

Exploring Self-Awareness and Structures: What is Racism?

By the end of this session, we will have

- diagrammed the progressive nature of racism
- arranged and defined the components of racism
- developed our own working definition of racism.

Steps to Wholeness: Building Relationships and Action Steps

By the end of this session, we will have

- identified and named racial issues on a personal and church community level
- recognized your personal journey towards a change of heart and reconciliation
- assessed current anti-racism activities
- listed ways to undo racism on a personal and church level
- discovered the benefits of practicing hospitality, building relationships, and risking friendships outside your culture
- begun to form an action plan for the church community toward undoing racism
- begun to organize to move toward a more diverse church.

The Recommended Timing & Materials

Welcome and Introduction (25 minutes total)

Welcome and Introductions (15 minutes)

Review of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Ministry Program of the Race Relations Committee of Classis Toronto (10 minutes)

Celebrating Our Unity and Diversity in Christ (65 minutes total)

Opening: Brief program review (5 minutes)

Warm-up: Feelings about race (15 minutes)

Where did the idea of race come from (30 minutes)

Diversity and unity in Christ (10 minutes)

Closing: Our covenant with one another (5 minutes)

Feedback

Materials:

- copy of session, prayer & reading for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual)
- flip chart stand
- flip chart paper
- prepared flip charts (at minimum):
 - #2B.
 - #5A.
- markers & pens
- masking tape
- post-it Notes
- bibles

Reading: *The Myth of Race* by Shiao Chong

Faith and Culture: Our True Identity (90 minutes total)

Opening: Brief program review (5 minutes)

Warm-up: The puzzle (15 minutes)

Christian Identity (10 minutes)

Cultural Identity (30 minutes)

Christian Identity and Cultural Identity (25 minutes)

Closing: Basic Tactics (5 minutes)

Feedback – optional

Materials:

- copy of session, prayer & reading for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual)
- flip chart stand
- flip chart paper
- prepared flip charts (at minimum):
 - #4C.

- puzzle pieces for #2
- markers & pens
- masking tape
- Post-it Notes
- bibles

Reading: CRCNA History of Racism PowerPoint by Rev. William Veenstra; and, A Brief History of Racism in Canada

Exploring Brokenness: Canadian Context of Racism and Resistance (90 minutes total)

Opening: Brief program review (5 minutes)

Warm-up: Images of racism (10 minutes)

Video Clip: A story of racism and resistance in Dresden, Ontario (40 minutes)

Video Replay: Why? (20 minutes)

Closing: Images of resistance to racism (15 minutes)

Feedback – optional

Materials:

- copy of session, prayer & reading for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual)
- flip chart stand
- flip chart paper
- markers & pens
- masking tape
- post-it Notes
- bibles
- DVD ‘Journey to Justice’ (you will need 23.40min–26.20min and 30.49min–34.38min)
- DVD player, etc

Reading: *Theological Starting Points for Action* by the Steering Committee, Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network

Exploring Self-awareness and Structures: What is Racism? (90 minutes total)

Opening: Brief program review (5 minutes)

Warm-up: Putting Our Stereotypes Out There (5 minutes)

Israelites and Egyptians: Thoughts, feelings and actions (30 minutes)

Elements of Racism: The fishbone (15 minutes)

Identifying the ‘Head’ of Racism (20 minutes)

Closing: My definition (15 minutes)

Feedback – optional

Materials:

- copy of session, prayer & reading for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual)
- flip chart stand
- flip chart paper
- prepared flip charts (at minimum):

- #3C.
- #4B.
- #5B.
- markers & pens
- masking tape
- post-it Notes
- bibles
- sets of cards for #4A.

Reading: *It's Time for Us White Guys to Move Over* by John Suk; and, *Do We Really Need to Repent of Racism?* by John Suk

***Steps to Wholeness: Building Relationships and Action Steps* (90 minutes total)**

Opening: Brief program review (5 minutes)

Warm-up and Review: Change of heart (5 minutes)

So God Created Man in His Own Image (30 minutes)

Current Church Activities that Create Opening for Diversity and Combat Racism (10 minutes)

Building Toward Change (20 minutes)

Action Plan: Personal commitment and organizing for change (10 minutes)

Final Feedback & Closing (10 minutes)

Materials:

- copy of session, prayer & reading for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual)
- flip chart stand
- flip chart paper
- prepared flip charts (at minimum):
 - #5B.
- markers & pens
- masking tape
- post-it Notes
- bibles
- feedback sheet for everyone (unless each person already has the complete manual – last page)

Reading: *Racism, Revelation and Recipes: Towards Christian Inter-cultural Communities* by Shiao Chong

NOTE: *It is recommended that each participant in the workshop receive a copy of this entire manual. This is not a 'facilitation manual' and can be fully shared with learners.*

Welcome & Introductions

Welcome and worship (see APPENDIX).

1. *Expectations and Introductions*

- A. Get comfortable in your seat and with the familiar and new faces in the circle with us. As you reflect on your invitation to come here, **name** for yourself what the best possible outcome of these sessions might be for you: what your hopes and expectations are.
- B. **Introduce yourself** to the large group, sharing what you see might be the best possible outcomes of your participation in this workshop series *Widening the Circle: Opening to Diversity and Undoing Racism*. We will record your hopes on the flipchart as we go.

2. *Review of the Anti-racism and Diversity Ministry Programs in Canada*

Listen to this brief presentation on the work of this committee over the past years and follow our guide through the learning program: Undoing Racism in the CRC. **Circle** new information that you didn't already know.



There is a long history of race relations in the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. Highlights of historical developments can be found in a 2003 PowerPoint prepared by then Canadian Ministries Director, Rev. William Veenstra (see APPENDIX).

The Classis Toronto Race Relations committee was established in 1999 with the following Mission Statement: Our purpose is to encourage racial and ethnic diversity within Christian Reformed Churches by providing forums for learning and sharing experiences that will intentionally foster understanding, reconciliation, and enrichment between cultures. (Ephesians 4: 12, 13).

Together with the CRCNA Canada Race Relations Office, Classis Toronto has been offering the Widening the Circle learning program to congregations and Canadian denominational and agency staff since 2002.

In addition to supporting these learning programs, members participate in the denominational Multi-Ethnic Conference, and also organize an annual All Nations Heritage Week. The 2009 All Nations Heritage Service drew over 250 participants to a Sunday evening service in Brampton/Caledon, Ontario with broad participation from many different cultural communities.

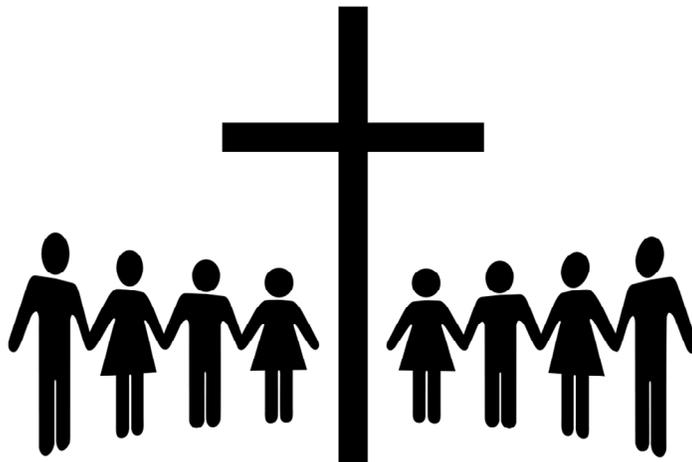
Most Christian Reformed Church congregations in Canada are ethnic, Dutch heritage congregations. More and more congregations are finding themselves in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods; some are dwindling in membership as the immigrant generation ages.

Currently, study and dialogue is underway with a view to the denomination adopting a fourth historic creed, the Belhar Confession, in 2012. The Belhar Confession arises from the global Reformed community's struggle with racism and focuses on unity, justice, and reconciliation.

In 2010, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools will begin its work to examine, among other things, the important role of Canadian churches in the official government policy of "killing the Indian in the child" through Residential Schools, recognize the need for continued healing, and contribute to establishing new relationships that will pave the way to reconciliation.

- What new information did you circle?
- What do you find exciting here?
- What more would you like to learn before we begin?

OK, Let's Begin!



Celebrating our unity and diversity in Christ: Exploring how we see one another

Welcome and worship.

1. Opening: Brief program review

Listen to this brief description of the purpose of this learning session, its place in relation to the sessions coming afterward, and the learning objectives for the next hour.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, we will have:

- named factors influencing our feelings about race
 - reviewed the 19th century development of the “science” of race
 - celebrated our unity and diversity in Christ
 - agreed on some conversation guidelines.
-
- What more would you like to know about what you will be learning?

2. Warm-up: Feelings about race

- A. **Remember** the first time that you became aware of race. With a partner, **share** your stories of these first encounters.



- What feelings did you have at that time?

- B. Then, analyze your stories. Name the factors that influenced your feelings or your response to that first encounter. What made it a positive or negative encounter? Write your factors down (one factor per card, key words only) on the cards provided. Then, call them out and post them on the flip chart.

Positive Encounter	Negative encounter

- What similarities or differences do you see in our factors?
- What arrangement or categorization could we make?

3. Where did the idea of race come from?

- A. **Listen** to this reading of an account of the “science” of race (derived from the *People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond* workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana). **Circle** what strikes you as new or helpful.

The “Scientific” lens (from an American perspective)

The 18th and 19th centuries were the height of European colonialism of Africa. By this period, Christianity’s hegemony over European values and ideology was being seriously challenged by the scientific revolution. European Intellectuals had to come up with a new world view to justify their nations’ conquest of Africa. So, ‘scientists’ created the racial categories of Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid and assigned them to a hierarchy in the human family: (1) Caucasoid (2) Mongoloid (3) Negroid. These categories are still taught in some U.S. schools today.

Mongolia was presumably the historical home of “mongoloids” or people of Asian descent. If you check the dictionary you’ll find that an “obsolete” meaning of “mongoloid” is an idiot....

The Caucasus, the steppes of Russia, was the ostensible homeland of Caucasoids or Caucasians. Conveniently, a skull was found there with a larger cranium than others discovered, indicating to the scientific racists that people of European descent had more brainpower than darker folks did! But what about

Negroids? Where is Negro land? And if “negroids” came from Africa, how come they weren’t called “africoids?” The answer, I think, lies in the ideological justification for slavery. White people had to dehumanize people of African descent in order to convince themselves that Africans could do nothing useful except perform enslaved labor.

If a people has no homeland, they have no history, no culture, no civilization. They are not really “a people”. Hence, their “racial category” is not named after their continent, but after their ‘race,’ - “Negro.” (‘Negro’ is the English term for the Spanish word “negro,” which means “black.” Spain was the first European country to institute the trans-Atlantic slave trade.)

- What did you circle?
- What would you add to this account from a Canadian perspective?

B. **Review** this additional account of the use of racial categories in Canada.

The Indian Act

How many Canadians would support a law which specifically defined their ethnic identity for them? How many communities would survive if federal officials held their entire budgets in trust? How many of us would willingly submit to laws which indicated we were not as trustworthy or “civilized” as other Canadians?

The British colonial government originally assumed responsibility for the society and welfare of the Indian population in the mid-1800’s. Prior to this time, relationships with aboriginal peoples had been expressed mostly via nation-to-nation agreements (i.e. Treaties) and specific military alliances.

The modern form of the Indian Act can be traced to the 1868 Secretary of State Act and the amending statutes of subsequent years. This act gave the new confederation power to create reserves for Indians, control over revenues from reserves, and the ability to impose a form of local band management very alien to the aboriginal nations.

In order to maintain control over Indians and their lands, it was also deemed necessary to define in very specific terms who was legally entitled to be an “Indian”. The 1868 legislation merely referred to all those who belonged to an Indian band or tribe but subsequent revisions emphasized the male line of descent, something alien to many of the aboriginal societies. Thus began the incredible contradiction of a non-Indian woman marrying an Indian man and gaining Indian status while an Indian woman could lose her status if she chose to marry a non-Indian man.

Indians could also voluntarily “cease to be Indians” so they could enjoy the rights taken for granted by other Canadian citizens, such as the right to vote

and to buy and consume liquor. Others became enfranchised against their will by serving in the Canadian military, attending university or living outside of Canada for five years. Only after 1951 could Indians move more freely into the rest of Canadian society without thereby renouncing their Indian status. The right to vote in Canadian elections wasn't extended to Indians until 1960.

- Taken from *Broken Circles: Working to Dismantle Racism – A Canadian faith-based initiative*, by Terry Sakoietta' Widrick

- What surprises or disturbs you about what we read?
- How might this have fed into racist ideas at the time or now?

4. *Diversity and Unity in Christ*

Listen to this reading of Ephesians 4:1-6. Take silent time in between the reading of each verse. **Pray, reflect, meditate.**

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
⁴ There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--
⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- What directives, guidelines, or starting points did you hear that help us learn more about this topic?

Call out the words, verses, feelings or ideas that come to mind.



5. Closing: Our covenant with one another

Our experience is that it is important to establish an agreement with one another about how we will conduct our dialogue. Here are some suggested guidelines for our conversation during this program:

Listen actively
Ask questions
Be open to changing your point of view
Be comfortable with silence
Avoid whispering
What is said in the group, stays in the group
Bear one another up.

- What guidelines would you add to this list?

6. Feedback

On your own, think of one thing that worked well for you in this session. Then, **name** one suggestion for our next session.

Let's hear your thoughts.



Cultural Diversity Enriches Us All

READING

The Myth of Race

by Shiao Chong, York University Chaplain, CRCRNA

You may find it helpful to reflect on the questions:

What rings true for you?

What questions does this article raise for you?



Faith and Culture: Our true identity

Welcome and prayer (see APPENDIX).

1. **Opening: Brief program review**

Listen to this brief description of the purpose of this learning session, its sequence in relation to previous sessions and the ones coming afterward, and the learning objectives for the next hour.

Learning Objectives

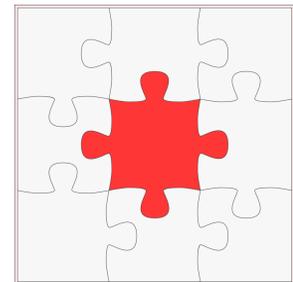
By the end of this session, we will have:

- distinguished between Christian and cultural identities
 - clarified the relationship of both identities to undoing racism.
-

- What insights would you like to share since the last time we met?

2. **Warm-up: The puzzle**

On the floor or wall are portions of 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Working together, **solve** this puzzle to re-create the scripture verse. *the // is where the puzzle pieces end and begin.



All this is from God, // who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:
Though we once regarded Christ in this way, // we do so no longer.
And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, // he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! //
We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
So from now on // we regard no one from a worldly point of view.
that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ //, not counting men's sins against them.
God made him who had no sin // to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, // as though God were making his appeal through us.

- Which of these phrases speak to you most powerfully? Why?
- What does this text require of us? Of the church?

3. **Christian Identity**

- A. On your own, **draw** on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 and your own convictions to **complete** this sentence: “To be in Christ is ...”

Here is an example:

- To be in Christ is to be changed and to work for change.

Jot down your additional answers to that question, and then **share** your responses with one other person.

We’ll hear all your responses in the large group.



- B. **Read** the following text that connects our Christian identity to undoing racism.

To be in Christ is not only to be reconciled to God but also to be reconciled to one another as a community of racially and ethnically diverse people of God.

- *God’s Diverse and Unified Family of God*, p8

Drawing from our Christian identity responses so far and the 2 Corinthians passage, what additional connections would you like to make? We’ll note down all your responses.

4. **Cultural Identity**

- A. **Listen** to this example of how culture shaped a response to a life situation of mine.
- B. Now, **think of examples** of how culture shapes who you are. Then, **share** that example with a partner, and together name the main features you see of what culture is. We’ll hear all the features you’ve identified in the large group.
- C. On your own, **draw** on the insights that have been shared to **complete** this sentence: “Culture is...”

Here is an example: Culture is... shared experiences.

Culture is...

Jot down your additional answers to that question, and then **share** your responses with one other person.

We'll hear all your responses in the large group.

- D. Building again on what we've named so far, what connections do you see between the various definitions of culture and undoing racism?
- E. **Regard** the below engraving of Dr. Johannes Capitein (the first Ghanaian student in Leiden, 1737) and **listen** to his story.

Dr. Johannes Capitein was sold into slavery at the age of eight at the Dutch controlled slave castle El Mina in present day Ghana. He was taken by a trader to Holland as an "adopted son". He attended Leyden University as a theology student and wrote a celebrated and best selling thesis in 1742 entitled, *De servitude, libertati christianae non contraria*, or how "slavery is niet strydig tegen de christelyke vrijheid" [How slavery is not in conflict with Christian liberty]. Notwithstanding that historic achievement of becoming perhaps the first "Black minister" in Holland, and perhaps the first African to write a dissertation in Europe, he returned shortly afterward to El Mina to serve as "a Black Minister" and tragically died at the young age of 30, an outcast of both Ghanaian and Dutch society.

Then **read** the poem together with a partner. How do you see Christian identity and cultural identity used here?



"Aanschouwer zie deez' Moor! zijn vel is zwart: maar wit zijn ziel, daar JEZUS zelf als Priester voor hem bidt. Hij gaat Geloof, en Hoop, en Liefde aan de Mooren leeren, Opdat zij, witgemaakt, met hem het LAM steeds eeren"

[Spectator, see this Black man! His skin is black, but his soul is white, since Jesus himself prays for him as our Priest. He will teach faith, hope and love to the Blacks so that they, having been made white, might together with him honour the Lamb.]

(free translation by Peter Noteboom)

- What came to mind for you?

5. **Christian identity and cultural identity**

At your table, **use** or **create** a diagram to distinguish, compare and contrast Christian identity and cultural identity, especially in relation to anti-racism work.

You can use a T-chart, a table, or some other visual organizer to share your findings.

We'll see all, and **celebrate** your work.

- How would you summarize the relationship between race and Christian/cultural identity?
- What contributions do a Reformed world and life view make to answering this question?

6. **Closing: Basic Tactics**

Read Paul Kivel's Basic Tactics, in *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. **Circle** which of these tactics you find most useful and that you know you can use in the next weeks.

We'll hear a sample of what you circled, and why.

Basic Tactics

1. Assume racism is everywhere, everyday
2. Notice who is the centre of attention and who is the centre of power
3. Notice how racism is denied, minimized, and justified
4. Understand and learn from the history of racism and resistance to racism
5. Understand the connections between racism, economic issues, sexism and other forms of injustice
6. Take a stand against injustice
7. Be strategic
8. Recognize that there will be gains and losses
9. Don't call names or be verbally abusive
10. Support the leadership of people of colour
11. Don't do it alone
12. Talk with your children and other young people about prejudice, discrimination, and racism.



7. Feedback - optional

In the large group, let's take a minute to hear what concerns you at this point about what we learned today or racism in general.

Let's hear from a few of you.

READING

CRCNA Anti-Racism History

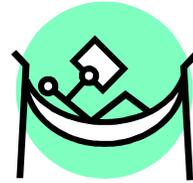
by Rev. William Veenstra, 2002-06 Canadian Ministries Director
and/or

A Brief History of Racism in Canada

You may find it helpful to reflect on the questions:

What is new for you?

What surprised you about this history?



Exploring Brokenness: Canadian context of racism and resistance

A case study of Dresden, Ontario in the 1940's

Welcome and prayer (see APPENDIX).

1. **Opening: Brief program review**

Listen to this brief description of the purpose of this learning session, its sequence in relation to previous sessions and the ones coming afterward, and the learning objectives for the next hour.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, we will have:

- described the architecture of racism and resistance to racism
 - contrasted and compared the commonalities and differences of racism and resistance in Dresden, Ontario, using a video clip from *Journey to Justice*
 - deduced reasons why we fail to see racism.
-
- What more would you like to know about what you will be learning this week and in the following sessions? What should we remember about what we've learned so far?

2. **Warm-up: Images of racism**

A. **Close** your eyes. Take silent, prayer time to prepare for this learning session. **Relax** your body.

B. **Identify** a visual image that represents racism for you. **Inspect** that picture in your imagination.

- What about that image represents racism?

C. When you are ready, **name** your image in the large group, and **listen** to the images of your fellow learners.

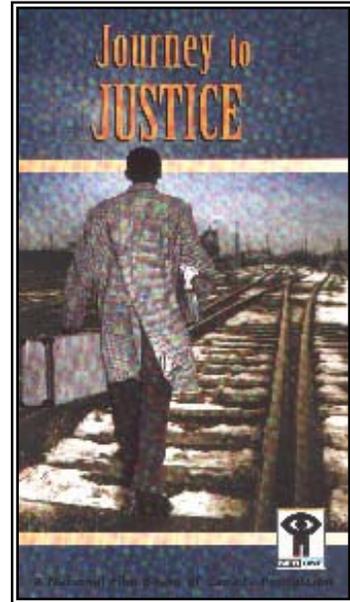
- What image was most commonly mentioned?
- What image of racism did you find unexpected?
- Which responses represent images of racism that you'd like to learn more about?



3. **Video clip: A story of racism and resistance in Dresden, Ontario**

A. **Listen** to this brief description of the details of the video: *Journey to Justice* (National Film Board, 2002).

- What do you already know about Dresden and racism in Dresden?
- What other places in Canada are known for a specific historic racist event(s)?



B. **Watch** this video clip 'The Story of Hugh Burnette, Canada's Martin Luther King' (23.40m – 26.20m and 30.49m – 34.38m) from *Journey to Justice*. As you watch, **jot down** the components you see of both racism and resistance to racism.

- How do you feel about the story you just heard?

C. In groups of three, **share** the components of racism that you've noted down, and **brainstorm** additional ones together. **Write** your components of racism down on the cards provided, one component per card. Then **call them out** and **post** them on the chart provided.

D. Then, in your same small group, **share** the components of resistance to racism that you noted down, and **brainstorm** additional ones together. **Write** your components of resistance to racism down on the cards provided, again one component per card.

Call them out and **post** them on the flip chart provided.

E. **Examine** our chart on the architecture of racism and resistance to racism in Dresden from that video clip. Together, what would you add to our two lists?

F. Now, **compare** and **contrast** the two lists: What differences do you see between the two lists? What similarities do you see? **Arrange** the cards on the chart in a way that best represents the relationship between the two lists.

- How would you summarize what we've learned so far?

4. **Video Replay: Why?**

- A. **Watch** the replay of the video clip 'The Story of Hugh Burnette, Canada's Martin Luther King' (23.40m – 26.20m and 30.49m – 34.38m) from *Journey to Justice*. This time, **ask** yourself this question as you watch the video:
- Why did the white community in Dresden fail to see racism in their community in the 1950's?
- B. **Deduce** your answer to the question in pairs. Then, **share** your deductions with the larger group. We will jot down your responses on the flip chart as we go.
- Which of these responses help illuminate our own ability to recognize racism today?



Audience members symbolise blindness to racism.

Photo: *James Boddington*

5. **Closing: Images of resistance to racism**

- A. **Recall** a (recent) situation where you recognized racism, then **share** that situation with a partner. In that situation, what means do you see to resist racism in that situation?
- B. Once again, close your eyes. On your own, **identify** a visual image that represents resistance to racism for you. **Inspect** that picture in your imagination.
- What about that image represents resistance to racism?

- C. **Stand** and **rearrange** yourselves to form a (people) circle. After a moment, call out your symbol of resistance to racism in the group.
- What images of resistance to racism represent something you'd like to learn more about?

6. Feedback - optional

- A. Take a minute on your own to think about how you feel right now. In the large group, **call out** the word or phrase that expresses how you feel about the session today or what we did.

Let's hear your thoughts.

READING

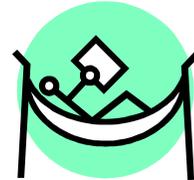
Theological Starting Points for Action

by the Steering Committee, Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network

You may find it helpful to reflect on the questions:

What did you find especially interesting or important?

What do you want to explore more?



Exploring Self-awareness and Structures: What is racism?

Welcome and prayer (see APPENDIX).

1. **Opening: Brief program review**

Listen to this brief description of the purpose of this learning session, its sequence in relation to previous sessions and the ones coming afterward, and the learning objectives for the next hour.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, we will have:

- diagrammed the progressive nature of racism
 - arranged and defined the components of racism, and
 - developed our own working definition of racism.
-

- What questions do you have for today? What answers do you need today?

2. **Warm-up: Putting Our Stereotypes Out There**

Listen to some examples of stereotypes.

Now, generate as many as you can. Use the following categories to help you. Jot down your responses on the post-it notes that are available so we can all see your work.

	Male	Female
White		
Black		
Asian		
Arab		
Jewish		

- What elements of racism can you identify? Call them out as you see them!

3. Israelites and Egyptians: Thoughts, feelings and actions

A. Listen to this reading of Exodus 1: 8-14.

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

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

B. In groups of 3 or 4, **decide** whether you would like to take on the role of the Israelites, or the Egyptians. **Describe** how you think, feel or act toward the other group. **Name** these thoughts, feelings and actions, and post them (one thought, feeling or action per card) in the appropriate categories on the chart provided.

C. In the large group, **respond** to the following questions:

- What similarities do you see in thoughts, feelings and actions toward the other group?
- What differences do you see in thoughts, feelings and actions toward the other group?
- How relevant are these similarities and differences in today's context?



Together, **complete** the following chart on the next page:

	Egyptians	Israelites	Similarities	Differences
Thoughts & Feelings				
Actions				

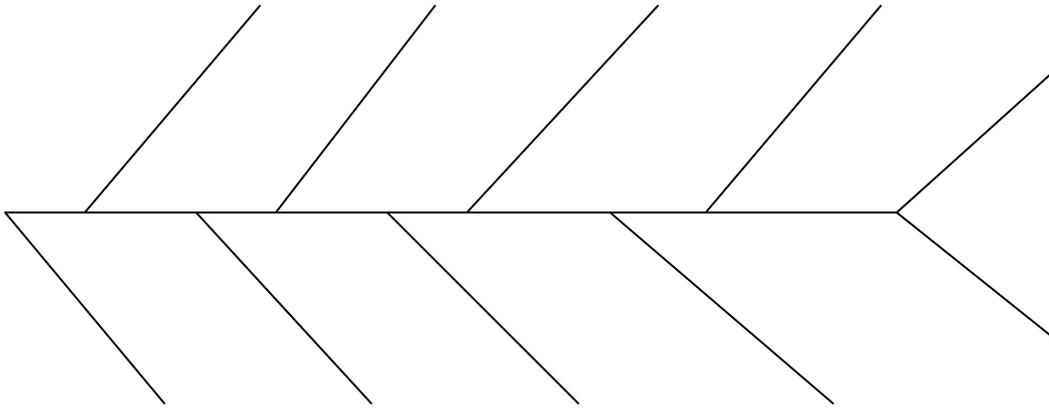
4. Elements of Racism: The fishbone

- A. On your own, **arrange** the concepts on the cards you have been given in their order of intensity, or progression towards racism.

<i>Discrimination</i>
<i>Stereotyping</i>
<i>Hate</i>
<i>Tokenism</i>
<i>Bias</i>
<i>Prejudice</i>
<i>Tolerance</i>

- What concepts related to racism would you add to this collection?

B. In groups, **compare** your sequence, and together **complete** a fishbone diagram that illustrates the growing intensity of these thoughts, feelings and actions toward racism. Then, **post** your diagram for all to see.



C. Compare your fishbone diagrams.

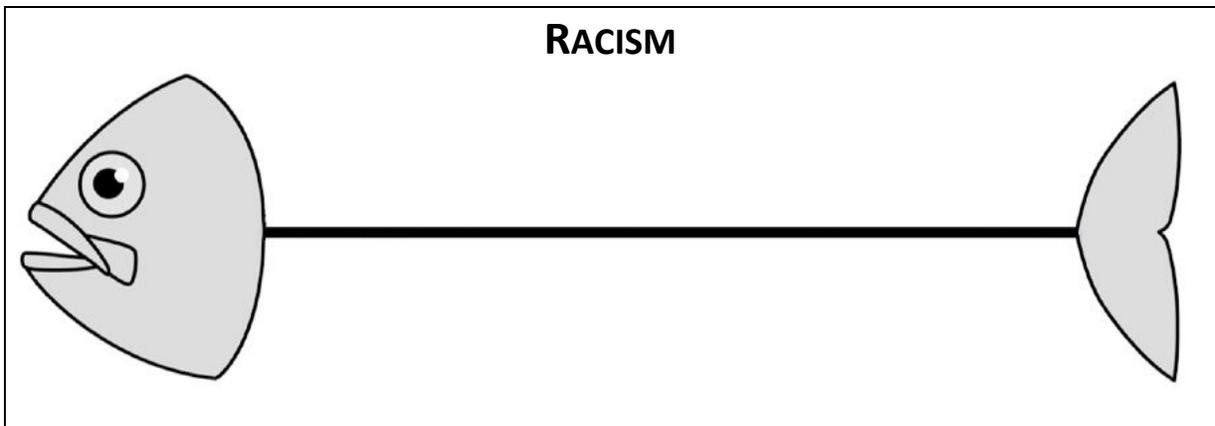
- What commonalities do you see?
- What unique additions do our diagrams illustrate?
- What would you like clarified?

5. Identifying the “Head” of Racism.

A. **Review** our two diagrams: fishbone and, similarities and differences of thoughts, feelings and actions.

- What do you see here that can help you construct a concept of racism?

B. If we were to title our fishbone, “Racism”, how would you define its head? Call out the elements you see must be included in our definition of racism. We will record them in the “head” of our fishbone.



- C. **Consider** this working definition of racism that some are using elsewhere in the Christian Reformed Church.

Racism = Prejudice + Systemic Misuse of Power

- What does this definition help us add to our own definition of racism?

6. **Closing: My definition.**

Using the insights you have gained from this session's learning tasks, and your own experience in this area, **develop** your own definition of RACISM. **Write out** your definition and share it with at least two other persons.

My definition of racism...

- How do you see that your definition can help us in our analysis?
- How will our definitions help us see racism when it is present?
- How do you see that it will help move us to action?
- What more would you like to learn about self-awareness and structures of racism?

Steps to Wholeness: Building relationships and action steps

Welcome and worship (see APPENDIX).

1. Opening: Brief program review

Listen to this brief description of the purpose of this learning session, its sequence in relation to previous sessions and the ones coming afterward, and the learning objectives for the next hour.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, we will have:

- identified and named racial issues on a personal and church community level
 - recognized your personal journey towards a change of heart and reconciliation
 - assessed current anti-racism activities
 - listed ways to combat racism on a personal and church level
 - discovered the benefits of practicing hospitality, building relationships, and risking friendships outside your culture
 - begun to form an action plan for the church community toward combating racism, and
 - begun to organize to move toward a more diverse church.
-

- What do we need to be sure to finish today?

2. Warm-up and review: Change of Heart

Review what you learned in the previous sessions and ask yourself:

- What learning has taken place, or what change of heart have you experienced in your journey of racism and racial awareness?

My Learning:

Let's hear from 1-2 of you.

3. So God created man in his own image

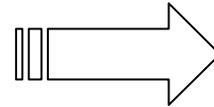
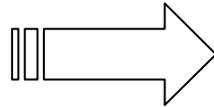
- A. **Listen** to this brief presentation on moving from being a racist to an anti-racist church (found on the next page).
- B. In small groups, **name** what you see are the characteristics of a racist church and an anti-racist church (NOTE: Tolerance was on of our components of racism in our fishbone diagrams earlier). **Write down** these characteristics on the cards provided and **post** them on our two-column wall-chart.
- What are the key differences that you see?
 - What concerns you?
 - Assess your own congregation. Which description best fits your congregation?
- C. Together, **examine** this Biblical text from Galatians 3: 27-29.

²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

- How does the message of this verse help us see people for the first time?
- D. On your own, **remember** who you are and in whose image you are created. You are a person of value and worth. **Evaluate** how we should be seeing one another. **Jot down** any changes or commitments you would like to make.

My change or commitments:

Institutional Assessment Table



Racist Institutions	Racist Institutions	Tolerant Institutions	Tolerant Institutions	Anti-Racist Institutions	Anti-Racist Multi-Cultural Institutions
Intentional exclusion.	Actual homogeneity.	Difference is tolerated.	Difference is accepted.	Difference is welcomed.	Difference is celebrated.
In-house club.	Unintentional sameness. Unwelcoming.	There is a desire not to be exclusive or unwelcoming. Desire for difference.	Desire for repentance and requesting forgiveness.	Plans, procedures and policies are in place to undo racism.	Anti-racism and multi-cultural character is no longer an object of intentional discussion and debate.
Not welcoming to outsiders, discourages outsiders participation.	Apathetic regarding others participation.	Planning for change.	Organizing for change.	Active, operating anti-racism committees or policies.	New 'normal'.

Adapted by Peter Noteboom from work seen at the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Crossroads and the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Initiative, copyright 2004.

4. Current church activities that create opening for diversity and combat racism

In small groups, **share** what you know about current action that groups within your church or churches in your area are undertaking to combat racism.

- How effective or ineffective have they been?
- What suggestions do you have for churches that wish to organize to open to diversity and undo racism?

Share your responses in the large group, and we'll record them for all to see.

5. Building toward change

A. **Listen** to these ideas on what we've learned about what helps build change:

- Hospitality
- Relationships with others
- Friendships outside your own culture
- Moving from individual commitment to group commitment,
- Organizing an anti-racism and inter-cultural ministry team for accountability to one another
- Joint initiatives
- Understand and learn from the history of racism and resistance to racism
- Understand the connection between racism, economic issues, sexism and other forms of injustice
- Take a stand against injustice

- What would you like to add to this list?



- B. **Complete** a T-chart, noting things we can do on our own and together to build toward change.

Things we can do on our own	Things we can do together

6. **Action plan: personal commitment and organizing for change**

Get specific. Who does What When? Complete the attached form on your own, and then **add** the items you will do as a group.

- What personal commitments can you make now?
- How will you organize together for long-term change?

Who	Does What	When

- What do you see will be most difficult in this commitment list?
- What are you most excited about trying?

7. *Closing*

Listen to this reading from Revelations 22.

22¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

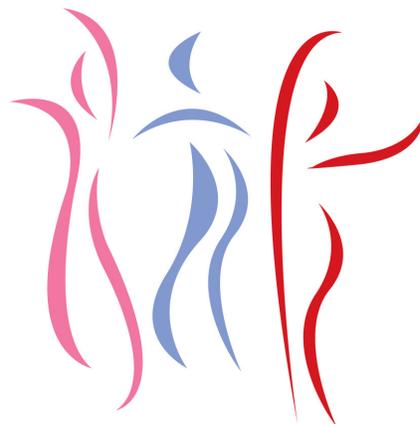
⁶ The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

⁷ "Behold, I am coming soon!

- What is revealed for you here?

6. *Feedback*

Take a minute on your own to thoughtfully **complete** the feedback form at the end of the APPENDIX. We appreciate all your comments and suggestions, and use these to improve future sessions and work.



Working together.

APPENDIX

Elements of Racism: The fishbone

For activity with cards, in session 'Exploring Self-Awareness and Structure':

Discrimination

Stereotyping

Hate

Tokenism

Bias

Prejudice

Tolerance

Prayer #1

Give Us Courage

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

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

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

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

Amen.

Prayer #2

Grant Us Courage, Grant Us Patience

Wise and loving God,
You have created -- and are still creating --
a world rich with difference and diversity.

**You have created all people in your image,
all expressing their being
and living their lives
in valid, special relationship with you.
For all this, we praise you.**

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

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

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

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

Grant us patience to endure periods without action,
persistence in resisting the evil of racial oppression,
and faithfulness in working toward racial justice
among your people, in the church, and in the world.
We beseech you, God of hope.

**And grant us humility and wisdom to discern
When it is that your Spirit must come to accomplish
that which human beings cannot.**

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

Amen

Prayer #3

The Gathering Prayer

Creator, we give you thanks for all you are
and all you bring to us for our visit within your creation.
In Jesus, you place the Gospel in the Centre of this sacred circle
through which all of creation is related.
You show us the way to live a generous and compassionate life.
Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment
as we grow in your spirit,
for you are God, now and forever. Amen.

From *Native Ministries and Gospel Based Discipleship*
Episcopal Church Center, New York
nativeministries@episcopalchurch.org

Prayer #4

Aboriginal Day Responsive Reading

Leader:

Creator God,

Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness as we seek your holy way.

Purify our minds and let them be guided by your Word.

Give sight to our eyes, so that we may see others as you have seen them.

Open our ears, so that we may listen for your voice.

Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth

and may we love you with all our strength.

People:

We belong to you, O God.

And our world belongs to you.

Hear us now as we call on you.

As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?

Leader:

Creator God, we pray for reconciliation

between those who were the first peoples of this land and those who came after.

We live with those who lost their heritage and their language and their land.

Our history is broken.

We do not know how to redeem our history, we cannot make it right.

But you are the history maker, you are the redeemer,

You long to see us reconciled.

You say that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We long to see your kingdom come.

People:

We belong to you, O God.

And our world belongs to you.

Hear us now as we call on you.

As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?

Leader:

Creator God, we celebrate what you will do.

We celebrate the power of your resurrection working in us

to offer hope and healing and refuge. We celebrate your love and,

as it is offered to us, may we offer it freely to others.

We celebrate the unity of the trinity,

and we pray for that same unity to bring us together
as we work to see your kingdom come, as in heaven so on earth.

People:

We belong to you, O God.

And our world belongs to you.

Hear us now as we call on you.

As we humble ourselves, would you heal our land?

Amen.

from the Christian Reformed Church at www.crcna.org/site

Prayer #5

Fourfold Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

Amen

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

Amen

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer
from pain, rejection, starvation and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

Amen

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe
that you can make a difference in this world;
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen

Reading #1

This article was published in The Banner, March 2003, pp. 38-40. Used with permission from the author.

The Myth of Race

by Shiao Chong

Christian Reformed Campus Minister at York University, Toronto

Christians are not immune from racism. For example, during his ordination ceremony, a Black pastor of a white Toronto congregation was mistaken for the janitor! A visiting elder assumed that the only black man in a white church must be the janitor. This is a subtle and even unconscious form of racism.

Even the most intelligent people fall prey to racism. The noted theologian and politician Abraham Kuyper believed that “the highest form of religion, i.e., Calvinist Christianity, and the highest kind of human being on the creaturely scale, i.e., the white race [and not the blacks] belonged naturally together” (*Infected Christianity*, p. 93). Kuyper actually called the “life of the colored races [in] Africa [as] a far lower form of existence” (*Calvinism: Six Stone Lectures*, New York: Revell, 1899, p. 34).

Racism is a sin that needs to be rooted out of the church. But so far there has been very little theological analysis of racism. Most Christians rely on sociological and psychological studies. Though helpful, such studies do not sufficiently address racism as a spiritual sin. If racism is a sin, what exactly is the source of this sin? Why does it have such a strong grip on people? Is the cure simply a matter of ‘sensitivity training’? Are affirmative-action policies adequate? Or, to ask a question directly affecting us Reformed Christians, how did Abraham Kuyper’s philosophy contribute to South Africa’s apartheid?

I suggest that racism’s roots are twofold: (1) the myth of race and its structural embodiment, and (2) the three idolatries of distorted identities, duality and security. Given those roots, I’d like to propose some ways the church can resist racism.

The Myth of Race

Race is a term used to describe people who share biologically transmitted traits that are defined as socially significant (*God’s Diverse and Unified Family*, p.9). It may surprise you to know that race is a myth. Race is a myth as in a lie, a fiction, but it is also myth as in a story that explains something in the world, an ideology.

Although race is commonly believed to be a scientific fact, there is actually no scientific evidence to support the categorization of humanity into biological races. Scientists have calculated that the average genetic difference between two randomly chosen individuals is 0.2 percent of all the genes (quoted in *No Partiality*, p. 121). But the physical traits we use to distinguish one race from another, like skin color, eye color, and nose width, are determined by about 0.01 percent of our genes and they adapt rapidly to various environmental factors. Dr. J. Craig Venter, head of the Celera Genomics Corporation in Rockville, Maryland, concluded that there is only one race – the human race (quoted in *Check All That Apply*, p.167-168).

The physical racial traits only have social significance because we give them significance. We have been accustomed to think that these physical differences amount to some moral and

social difference – such as intelligence, goodness, beauty, or honesty. How did this myth become a public, common-sense ‘truth’?

Before the 17th century, ethnicity, rather than race, was the term used to describe different groups of people. An ethnic group is a group of people who share a common history, geography, language, religious tradition and way of life that are transmitted from generation to generation (No Partiality, p.162). Ethnicity comes from the Greek word, *ethnos*, translated as nations in the Bible (Acts 17:26). Ethnicity, therefore, is a cultural phenomenon and not a biological one like race.

It is possible for people to change their ethnicity. A Dutch family whose ancient ancestors originated from Germany would identify itself as ethnically Dutch, not German. But the concept of race does not allow for such change. Anyone born of white and black parents is still regarded as racially black. Your race is biologically fixed, and so are the divisions between the races.

With race and its biologically fixed differences, it is easy for Christians to start thinking that God ordained these differences in creation. And thus we conclude that God also ordained the social and moral differences that we link to these physical traits. Therefore, the fixed, biological basis of race lends itself to prejudice and racism in a way that ethnicity does not.

Today we tend to merge together race and ethnicity. Of course, ethnocentrism – the tendency to assume that one’s own ethnic values are everyone’s or to believe that they should be – is also a social evil. But ethnocentrism is not based on skin color or physical traits.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, European scientists and anthropologists began to classify human beings according to races. In classifying, they were also creating a hierarchy among humanity – with the white European on top. The increase in European imperialism partly motivated this drive for finding a scientific justification for European superiority. It was in the 19th century, however, with the rise of Darwinian evolutionism and Romantic philosophy’s emphasis on the *volk* (the people or nation), that the concept of race became a full-blown ideology or mythology. And this ideology still has our culture in its grip, as evidenced by the public acceptance of race as fact.

Structural Racism

Why does this ideology have such a strong grip on us? Because it is not merely an individual’s belief or behavior passed on to families and friends. It is structural, affecting whole societies. In structural racism, a racist ideology is embodied in the policies, practices and norms of social institutions and organizations. And the racist mythology embodied in the educational, political, legal, economic, cultural and religious institutions shapes a whole community of people. Racism is not taught; rather, we are caught in the myth of race.

What is this racist mythology? It is influenced by 19th-century Romanticism, which believed that each nation or people (*volk*) have a distinctive “folk-spirit” and that it is the divine duty of each people to develop their civilization and culture in accordance to that spirit. The German thinker Johann-Gottlieb Fichte, especially, taught this. When merged with the concept of race, this idea gave rise to racism. Each race has its own unique ‘folk-spirit’ and thus, along with their biological differences, the races have inherent spiritual and moral differences. It is only a small step to then think that some races are spiritually and morally superior because of their “folk-spirit.”

Structural racism, therefore, embodies this belief that humanity is divided into biologically fixed races that also spiritually and/or morally differ from each other. South Africa’s apartheid, of course, was an extreme example of structural racism. But we see structural racism in North America too. Why, for instance, do we often fill out forms that ask us to identify our

race? Why has that become important in identifying ourselves? Why are our authoritative leaders in any field still predominantly white (and male)? Why do the media identify black criminals and Asian criminals while calling a criminal who is white as simply “a criminal”? For that matter, why do we call all-black churches “black churches” and all-Korean churches “Korean churches” but all-white churches simply “churches”? Why are predominantly black or Asian or Hispanic neighborhoods often called ghettos or ethnic enclaves while all-white neighborhoods are not? Why is a group of black kids or Asian kids a “gang” while a group of white kids is just “hanging out”? We live in a socio-cultural world of race in which “white” is normative. We are held captive by structural racism.

The Idols of Racism

Some Christian scholars identify racism as idolatry. I believe there are three idols working closely together in the sin of racism.

1. The idol of race: distorted identity. Race has become a primary means of finding our identities. I am white. I am black. I am Asian. It helps us answer the question, Who am I? Ethnicity serves the same function. There’s nothing wrong with that except when it takes over our true source of identity. Our ultimate identity is in Christ; we are God’s children, made in God’s image. When race takes over that central identity, it becomes an idol. Our racial differences become more important than our Christian unity.

2. The idol of dualism: distorted duality. The biblical duality, or antithesis, is the conflict between good and evil. But often we identify good and evil with opposing categories. For instance, good = rational, male, white, Christian, and church; while evil = irrational, female, Arab, non-Christian, and society. The biblical duality, however, draws the line through every individual category. There are good and evil men and women. There are good and evil whites and Arabs. Both good and evil are within us, within the church, within society, and within rationality.

When we start seeing the world through the glasses of dualism, we unconsciously divide humanity into two camps: us and them. Since we will always identify ourselves as good, those who differ from us, those who are not part of our community, we cast as evil or (spiritually) inferior. This superiority complex reinforces our worship of race. It makes us feel good about ourselves, but it also reinforces either a fear of the other races or a patronizing pity of them.

3. The idol of power: distorted security. Let’s face it, we like to be in control. We hate being vulnerable. Being vulnerable makes us insecure; we are at risk. So we exercise power, authority and control to provide ourselves with a sense of security. Our culture, therefore, loves science and technology because they help us control nature, giving us a sense of mastery and security. We exercise power in our relationships too. We hate being vulnerable to others. But security that comes from power is a false security because power as an idol will ultimately turn against us. Too much control of nature has led us to an environmental crisis. Too much control in a relationship will destroy it.

Therefore, once we identify ourselves primarily by our race, and once we start to fear another race, then we will try to regain a sense of safety by using power to attack the other race, by “putting them in their place”. For instance, racial stereotypes provide an intellectual and emotional way of gaining control over someone from another race whose difference threatens us. Or, on the other extreme, we pity other races as less capable, needing our help, and we patronize them in ways that really only maintain our superiority. The Afrikaner’s apartheid system exemplifies this.

Our true security and assurance, however, do not come from exercising power to attack or patronize others, but from surrendering ourselves to God’s love. By trusting God, by

submitting to God, we find our security and assurance. Our security does not lie in our own hands, but in God's. Instead of exercising power, we need to exercise love –turning power into a servant of love.

Resisting Racism

If we fail to recognize that race is a myth we have created, if we fail to see the reality of structural racism, and if we overlook the idolatries in racism, our resistance to racism will be inadequate. To resist racism merely through education and politics is not enough. We need to have spiritual weapons as well. Here are some suggestions.

1. Prayer. How often have we prayed for this, privately or publicly?
2. Recognize that our true identity is in Christ, not in race. All other identities complement, not usurp, our Christian identity.
3. Be clear about the biblical duality or antithesis and deny dualism.
4. Resist the temptation of power and embrace the vulnerability of love, which is ultimately more powerful.
5. Preach against racism from Scripture. Scripture has more to say about racism, or more properly, ethnocentrism, than we may realize. Old Testament scholar Steven L. McKenzie's book *All God's Children* is a good resource that deals with practically every biblical passage related to racism.
6. Say 'No' to 'Race'. We must renounce the myth of race. Perhaps, we should try to stop using the word 'race' and use 'ethnicity' instead, unless in the context of anti-racism.
7. As the Christian Reformed Church, let's look at ourselves honestly – our attitudes, our pride in the Dutch culture, our present church structures, our church history, our theology, our biblical interpretations. How have we been influenced by structural racism? What are we to make of Abraham Kuyper's racist remarks in his lectures on Calvinism and of Romanticism's influence, especially the concept of *volk*, on Kuyper (see *Infected Christianity*, pages 92-95)?

Obviously, more needs to be done. I hope that this article will fuel a discussion and promote a process whereby racism will be erased from God's church, a church that began as a multi-cultural and multi-lingual community (see Acts 2).

Reading to Root out Racism

All God's Children: A Biblical Critique of Racism by Steven L. McKenzie (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) – an excellent readable survey of the Bible on race and ethnic relations.

Check All That Apply: Finding Wholeness as a Multiracial Person by Sundee Tucker Frazier (InterVarsity Press, 2002) – so far the only Christian book for biracial and multiracial persons, who often face racism from both sides.

God's Diverse and Unified Family; a study committee report to Synod 1996 (Christian Reformed Church in North America, 1996) – this booklet is an excellent starting point for a biblical framework on racism.

Infected Christianity: A Study of Modern Racism by Alan Davies (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) – a scholarly analysis of racism in Christianity, including a chapter on the Afrikaners.

No Partiality: The Idolatry of Race and the New Humanity by Douglas R. Sharp (InterVarsity Press, 2002) – the most comprehensive scholarly Christian work on racism.

Reading #2a

A Brief History of Anti-Racism Efforts in the CRCNA Canada

Originally a PowerPoint presentation by Rev. William Veenstra
2002-2006 Canadian Ministries Director
September 2003

Background

Many native North Americans were present before Europeans arrived.

- the Vikings: first documented contact about 1000 AD
- John Cabot: June 24, 1497
- Jacques Cartier: 1534, Labrador
- brought along common fears of 16th century France
- James Cook: 1778, West coast

Settlement

- People groups
 - Amerindians, French, British, others
- Settlement issues
 - Access to water, food, land and natural resources guided the settlers
- Methodology
 - treaty vs. conquest
 - eradication
- Indian Act
 - introduced shortly after confederation
 - meant to control administration of bands or to 'civilize' and assimilate Aboriginals into the rest of Canadian culture
 - constitutional work of 1970's and 80's led to inclusion of Section 35 "the existing Aboriginal land treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed"
 - currently First Nations Governance Act is before parliament, creating great concern among Aboriginals due to lack of consultation

The Christian Reformed Church

- Established in isolation - 1857
- Concerned for Missions
 - sent "foreign" missionaries to the Navajo/Zuni in New Mexico, 1903
 - "Home" missionaries focused on those persons of 'Dutch' descent - telephone book methodology
- Striving for Inclusion
 - ministry carried out in a variety of urban settings, organized in 'chapels'
 - In 1958 Synod finally advised that an all Navajo church be upgraded from 'associate church' to 'full church' status

1957:

Classis Hackensack asked Synod to address the issue of segregation. Synod refers to the church a statement that declares:

The Scriptures teach the solidarity of the human race:

- as seen in divine judgement upon sin
- as seen in man's redemption
- as seen in man's creation

Synod gave guidance by stating:

- segregation ... contrary to ... scripture
- neither official nor nonofficial segregation has a place of right or respect within the church
- congregations are urged to embrace all members regardless of race or colour
- churches are urged to teach about these issues, and to embrace all within the complete membership of the church

1959:

Reformed Ecumenical Synod presented a 12 point declaration on race that was adopted (summarized here).

- 1) Unity of human race is as important as race/colour.
- 2) All have sin, therefore none are superior.
- 3) Believers are called "to love our neighbours as ourselves".
- 4) Jesus died for the sins of "the whole world" therefore all are included in the plan of salvation.
- 5) Within the family of God we are brothers and sisters, all other distinctions are secondary.
- 6) In the multiplicity of nations the equality of all races, peoples and manifestations of the true church must be acknowledged.
- 7) It is the duty of the church to avoid any attitude which can engender estrangement and to make an effort to improve strained relations.
- 8) Church has 3 areas of responsibilities:
 - a. it's own attitude, use preaching & teaching to correct attitudes, scrutinize government policies in light of God's Word
- 9) At the local level be enfolding.
- 10) Within ecclesiastical structure be enfolding and promoting.
- 11) Concerning inter-racial marriage, pastoral responsibility demands awareness of legal, social and cultural factors.
- 12) Critically examine function, speech, etc. to purge any concepts of ulterior motives which may be lurking.

Mid 1960's

- Significant changes were underway.
- Assassination of JFK - November 1963
- Passage of Civil Right Legislation - 1964
- Civil Rights Movement – through the 60's and beyond
- Assassination of MLK - 1968
- Assassination of RFK - 1968
- Cities were burning because of race riots
- North America and other areas of the world were in upheaval

1964:

- Synod issued a statement of Clarification of Issues.
- cautioned about the use of 'principle'
- cannot assume that every form of racial development or racial integration is either biblical or anti-biblical
- if 2 or more nations/ethnic groups in the same country wish to maintain their respective identities, territorial separation cannot be disapproved on the basis of principle
- it is the duty of God's people to challenge government when they are in violation of God's Word.
- churches of different ethnic/racial make up may maintain separate assemblies, with joint meetings held to display unity
- appointed a committee to advise RES

1968:

- Synod requests of Home Missions...
"... to design, organize and implement programs through which the denomination, individual churches and members can effectively use all available resources to eliminate racism, both causes and effects, within the body of believers and throughout the world in which we live."
- set aside July 14 as a day for repentance and for private and public prayer for renewal of society

1965:

- members of Lawndale CRC sought to enrol black children with the Timothy Christian School Society (TCS).
- The request was denied, *"because racist sentiments in the community make the risks of violence too great."*

1967:

- 19 black children enrolled in Des Plaines Christian School and 3 young people were admitted to Timothy Christian High in Elmhurst. The TCS Board did not change its position.
- Classis Chicago North was asked to intervene.

1969:

- Lawndale communicated with Synod Synod '69 urged that the situation be addressed, but awaited a special meeting of Chicago N. in July '69.

1970:

- Lawndale protested the decision of classis
- Matter came to Synod 1970
- The first steps are taken to form the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada.
- Initial discussion on beginning ministry among Aborigines
 - work recommitted for more study

- consistories urged to explore the possibility of providing funds for scholarships that Indians might receive training in Christian leadership

1971:

- Synodical Committee on Race Relations is formed
- Chicago N. made a 12 point response to Synod 1970.
- Synod declared that Chicago N.:
 - had refused to comply fully with decisions of Synods '68, '69, '70
 - should continue to insist on a change of policy at TCS
 - was compelled by confessional standard (Belgic Confession 36) to abide by the law of the land.
 - report to Synod 1972 about its actions.

1972:

- Chicago N. appeals decisions of Synods 68-71
- struggling with the dilemma of admitting black covenant children and ensuring the safety of all children in it's facilities
- Cicero - school building sold
- New school being built in Elmhurst
- Synodical Interim Committee grants \$7,224 in emergency funding to help with busing deficits.
- CCRCC establishes Committee for Ministry among Natives.

1973:

- SCORR begins providing scholarships to students of colour.
- SCORR advocates and provides anti-racism training
- CCRCC adopts Purpose statement for Indian Ministries

1974:

- SCORR mandate extended
- CRHM develops an operational/provisional definition for racism
- SCORR expanded its work to survey the denominational relationship to the aboriginal peoples in North America.
- CCRCC appoints Rev. H. deBruyn as Director of Indian Ministry in Winnipeg.

1976:

- SCORR work is summarized as follows:
“SCORR’s central thrust has come to be this: to work with the denomination’s agencies, boards and committees in order to encourage and assist them in building policies and programs that ameliorate prejudicial and discriminating results and promote racial justice and reconciliation.”

1977:

- SCORR mandate is extended again.
- Opening of Roseland Christian Ministry Centre, some funding provided via SCORR

- Support provided to Chicago West Side Christian School Society to begin a Christian school.
- Support is provided for development of multi racial congregations in LA and GR.
- CCRCC explores expanding Indian Ministry to include Regina. Rev. Harry Kuperus is appointed.

1978:

- While always in the background the situation of South Africa emerged to new prominence because of:
 - increasing in bannings
 - death of Steven Biko
 - publication of “Koinonia Declaration” criticizing government policies. Synod ‘unanimously adopted’ this declaration.

1979:

- CCRCC engages in discussion to expand Indian ministry to a third city.

1980:

- SCORR mandate extended again and expanded.
- A second staff person is added to work at developing minority leadership in the CRC.
- Support continues for various inter-racial Christian schools, ministry centres and congregations.

1981:

- SCORR granted status as a standing committee.
- made note of possible constitutional revisions in Canada that ‘threaten the treaty rights of natives’
- Calvin Seminary begins to review curriculum, experience and environment “which will reinforce recruitment and retention of ministry students.”
- A 25 year goal was adopted, with 5 year goals as a guide
- CCRCC sent a telegram to Federal government and all premiers regarding the repatriation of Constitution
- also went on record urging that an educational program dealing with aboriginal issues be developed for the churches

1982:

- The issue of South Africa surfaces again via the Interchurch Relations Committee.
- SCORR notes, celebratively, that growing diversity is becoming a pattern
- Scholarship support is made available to students who are in schools not related to the CRC.

1983:

- All Nations Heritage Sunday is established
- Offerings were to become and remain a major source of funding for scholarships and programs.

1984:

- Apartheid is declared to be a heresy
- First multi-racial/multi-ethnic conference held
- Chart of progress:

Category	1981	1982	1983	1986 (5 yr. goal)
# multi-racial ordained pastors	22	31	41	26
# multiracial non-ordained church staff & churches	24	26	32	33
# multiracial Christian School teachers		17	25	27
# multiracial CRC agency staff	41	55	50	515
# multimember of denomination Boards & committees		5	10	15
# churches with 100+ multiracial adult worshippers	7	10	11	9
# churches with 10% multiracial worshippers		50	62	52
# classes dealing with multiracial issues	1	5	7	3

1985:

- Karl Westerhof steps aside as director of SCORR.
- CCRCC: Racial discrimination comes into greater focus.

1986:

- Bing Goei is appointed as new director of SCORR
- a tentative new five year plan is presented via the following chart:

Category	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1991
# multi-racial ordained pastors	22	31	41	47	55	26	100
# multiracial non-ordained church staff & churches	24	26	32	30	37	33	42
# multiracial Christian School teachers		17	25	25	30	27	50
# multiracial CRC agency staff	41	55	50	45	41	515	85
# multimember of denomination Boards & committees		5	10	10	10	15	30
# churches with 100+ multiracial adult worshippers	7	10	11	11	17	9	30
# churches with 10% multiracial worshippers		50	62	77	81	52	116
# classes dealing with multiracial issues	1	5	7	21	30	3	45

1987:

- A new 5 year plan is adopted.
- Proposal made to set up regional offices, perhaps including Toronto.
- CCRCC authorizes opening of Edmonton based ministry to Natives. John Stellingwerff is appointed as director.

1988:

- SCORR reports on growth in goal achievement

- also reports on difficulty encountered in reorganizing, in setting up regional ministry centres. This led to heavy criticism because the Chicago office was closed.

1989:

- SCORR’s plan to regionalize is implemented beginning in Chicago, with the following goals:
 - 1) Develop better communication with local churches.
 - 2) Organize volunteer groups to help meet the needs of the ministry.
 - 3) Maintain contact with scholarship students and grant recipients to encourage them.
 - 4) Find/recruit potential multi-ethnic leaders for positions in the CRC.
 - 5) Be a resource for churches facing the challenge of a multi-ethnic ministry.
 - 6) Maintain contact with present donors and work at broadening the above quota support base.

1989, cont’d.

- Suspends relationships with the Potchestroom Synod of the Reformed Churches in SA
- CCRCC held a workshop on racism prior to a council meeting and was challenged to meet the spiritual needs of aboriginal peoples.
- CCRCC encourages dialogue with SCORR with a view to possible joint work
 - includes possible creation of an advisory council

1990:

- Goal chart – targets to be reached by 1991

Category	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991
Multi-racial pastors & evangelists	41	55	82	97	100
Multiracial non-ordained church staff	32	37	87	77	42
Multiracial Christian School staff	25	30	48	55	50
Multiracial agency staff	50	41	66	55	85
Multimember of Boards committees	10	10	15	26	30
Churches with 100+ multiracial adult worshippers	11	17	14	20	30
Churches with 10% multiracial worshippers	62	81	90	94	116
<i>* These figures do not include totals from The Back to God Hour.</i>					

1991:

- Regional office established in California, Norberto Wolf being appointed as staff.
- Investigation takes place re: a regional SCORR office in Toronto.
- SCORR marked 20 years of existence.
- CCRCC reports on Sept. 2000 Assembly of First Nations

1992:

- Goal chart – targets to be reached by 1996

Category	1983	1990	1996
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Ethnic Minority pastors & evangelists	41	87	127
Ethnic-minority non-ordained church staff	32	88	100
Ethnic-minority Christian school staff	25	44	72
Ethnic-minority CRC agency staff	50	55	72
Ethnic-minority members of Boards & committees	10	30	34
Churches with 100+ ethnic-minority adult worshippers	11	16	26
Churches with 10% ethnic-minority worshippers	62	57	122

- SCORR develops a paper “A Strategy for Effective Ethnic – Ministry Leadership Development”

1993:

- no goal growth chart included in SCORR’s report
- The report expresses concern re: “denomination’s tendency to serve only those who have financial resources”
- It identifies as a challenge: “something must be done so that SCORR receives the financial support necessary to carry out its mandate fully”
- CCRCC establishes a committee on “racial reconciliation in Canada”
- also to work more closely with SCORR “to combat the causes and sad effects of racism in Canadian Christian churches and in broader Canadian society.”

1994:

- Canadian conference: “Breaking Down the Barriers”.
- Restructuring: SCORR accepts its placement in a ‘Pastoral Services’ division
- Bing Goei steps down as Executive Director

1995:

- Evidence of stress due to amalgamation into the Pastoral Services division and the absence of an Executive Director.
- CCRCC receives a report from Committee for Racial Reconciliation in Canada (CRRC)
 - acknowledges that the hope to set up a SCORR office in Toronto proved to be too ambitious
 - developed a Vision statement:

“The Committee for Racial Reconciliation in Canada represents the desire of the Christian Reformed community to give practical expression to its belief that no matter what our race, colour or ethnic origin, we are called to overcome racism in our churches and in society, and to reconcile people from every tongue, tribe and nation into the unity of the body of Christ.”
- developed a Mandate
- developed an action plan that dealt with nine items to be attained by the end of the 90’s:
 1. Bibliography
 2. Youth educational materials
 3. Conferences
 4. History of racism in Canada from Christian perspective.
 5. CRC Hiring practices

6. Minority Participation
7. Experiential Learning Materials
8. Church Twinning
9. Communication with other denominational bodies and congregations

1996:

- Publication of Synodical Report “God’s Diverse and Unified family”
- *“Race Relations implores members to move along the continuum from uninformed to informed, from informed to concerned, and from concerned to active”*
- Synod decides, again, to work at promoting ethnic diversity at all levels.

1997:

- Race Relations reiterates it’s four strategies
- CCRCC, Executive director report states: *“The committee (CRRC) is constrained by a limited budget to do most of its work by telephone.”*
- Synod approves Canadian restructuring

1998:

- Canadian Ministries Board established - absorbs the mandate and work of CCRCC

1999:

- Concern expressed that the 1996 report is not being read and implemented on a broad scale.
- As a result of denominational workshops the Ministries Coordinating Council joins with Crossroads Ministry in setting up a long range plan against racism.
- Beth Swagman resigns as ED of Pastoral Ministries on July 1, 1999.
- Rev. Alfred Luke departs as Director of Race Relations early in 1999.
- Synod declines to adopt restructuring proposal for U.S.

2000:

- Norberto Wolf is appointed as director of Race Relations
- Peter Szto becomes regional director of Michigan and East coast
- Noted again that *“classes and congregations find it difficult to consider seriously the issues of prejudice and racism. Some of us are reluctant to look the issue in the face for fear of what we might see and others have a mistaken notion that the problem of race has been solved.”*
- Synod *“urges all agencies and educational institutions to participate in institutional anti racism training.”*
- “Hearts Exchanged” paper produced as a result of the Cross Cultural Ministry Forum

2001:

- Classis Toronto’s anti racism team works on developing anti-racism curriculum, with some funding from Canadian Ministries
- Race relations Canada budget absorbed in CRCNA Race Relations
- ‘Widening the Circle’ is produced

2002:

- an anti racism program became a collaborative effort of the agencies and institutions under the leadership of Race Relations.
- is now a concerted effort to contextualize a CRC anti racism program through work with fifteen interested congregations.

2003:

It is noted: *“The ministry of Race Relations has nearly completed its change in focus from multiculturalism to anti racism.”*

- Sept.03 – Norberto Wolf and Peter Szto resign
- Anti racism training scheduled for Canadian office, fall 2003
- efforts under way to provide anti racism training in a number of churches in Canada
- a Reflection group is formed to help in *“developing a comprehensive portrait of racism and the efforts to combat racism in the CRC in Canada.”*

Reading #2b

A Brief History of Racism in Canada

1493: *Doctrine of Discovery*: Non-Christian nations can no longer hold land in the face of claims by Christian sovereigns. This doctrine lays the foundation (and justification) for the imperialist phase of foreign discovery, colonialism, and exploitation.

1620: First missionary-operated (French) school established for Aboriginal youth.

1680: New France experiment of educating Aboriginal children is terminated.

1698: *Code Noir* – allowed for the full use of slaves in the French Colonies.

1709: Black slaves could be bought and sold in New France (Quebec).

1749: Black slaves brought to help build the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

1763: The ***Royal Proclamation of 1763*** establishes that Aboriginal nations have title to their lands, and that consensual treaty-making with the crown is the only way that land can be ceded from Aboriginal peoples.

1792: Anti-slavery Law of Lower Canada (Quebec) to limit slavery is defeated

1793: *The Abolition Movement in Canada, from 1793 to 1863.* In 1793, the John Graves Simcoe Act - Legislation passes, banning the importation of slaves into (Upper) Canada. This was the very first law in the British Empire to limit the enslavement of human beings. With this act, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe began to position the colonies of British North America at the head of the emerging abolition movement.

1831: Mohawk Indian Residential School opens in Brantford, Ontario (closes in 1969).

1833: Slavery abolished in British Empire.

1857: Assimilation of Aboriginal peoples through education becomes official government policy (***Gradual Civilization Act of 1857***).

1860: Management of “Indian Affairs” transferred from Imperial Government to Province of Canada.

- 1861:** First church-run residential school opened by the Presbyterian Church.
- 1867: *British North America Act:*** Aboriginal peoples and all their territories now come under the direct control of the Canadian federal government.
- 1871:** Aboriginal and Chinese peoples expressly denied the vote.
- 1876:** Creation of the *Indian Act* by the Federal Government: Aboriginal peoples will now be placed on *reserves*, and their affairs managed by the *Department of Indian Affairs*. Aboriginal people may not leave their reserves without a permit; they may not vote; may not practice their traditional spirituality, or traditional forms of government, and may not gather to discuss their rights. To engage in any of these would now mean prosecution, or imprisonment.
- 1884:** The Potlatch and other Aboriginal cultural ceremonies are banned or abolished by the Federal Government.
- 1885: *Chinese Immigration Act*** imposed a \$50 Head Tax on all Chinese immigrants, and restricted the number of Chinese male laborers entering Canada. This would be just the beginning of 62 years of legislated racism against the Chinese community.
- 1892:** Federal *Government and Churches enter into formal partnership in the operation of Indian Residential schools*, via amends to the Indian Act, and supervised by the Department of Indian Affairs.
- 1895:** Persons of "*Asiatic Heritage*" were prohibited from voting in BC. (Prohibited groups included Japanese, Chinese, and Hindus).
- 1903: *Chinese Immigration Act:*** Head tax on Chinese immigrants *raised to \$500*, the equivalent of 2 years wages for the time.
- 1908:** Canada Immigration establishes a "continuous journey stipulation", which is aimed at restricting people from India from entering Canada, unless they could arrive by direct journey, without stopping enroute.
- 1914:** About 376 people from India were detained on the Indian ship (*Komogata*) for two months, and then denied entry into Canada.

- 1920:** Government establishes universal voting rights for all “British subjects”. The Act allowed for discrimination “*on the basis of race*” if a province already had the exclusion.
- 1920:** Residential school attendance is made compulsory for all Aboriginal children.
- 1920:** The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church adopts a recommendation not to send missionaries to *the Sudan*, based on criteria that expose systemic racism.
- 1923: *Chinese Immigration (Exclusion) Act*:** Prohibits all immigration of Chinese people to Canada, and requires those already in Canada to register as residents or face a \$500 fine, or 1 year imprisonment.
- 1942:** Government implements the uprooting of all *Japanese Canadians* during *World War 2*. All Japanese Canadians are sent to *internment camps*; their homes, businesses, and property are confiscated. The Japanese Canadians are not released from the internment camps until 2 years after the war, and are not compensated by the Government for their losses, *until 1988*.
- 1947:** Canadians without adequate knowledge of either French or English were disqualified from voting.
- 1947:** The United Church of Canada requests that residential schools be shut down. Harm of separation from families is cited.
- 1947:** The *Chinese Immigration Exclusion Act* is repealed. During the 24 year period of the exclusion Act the Chinese population declines by thousands, as fewer than 50 Chinese people are allowed into Canada.
- 1948:** South Asian Canadians attain the right to vote federally and provincially.
- 1951:** Indian Act amendment that awards Aboriginal peoples the right to leave reserves without seeking permission from the Indian agents. Residential schools begin to close.
- 1958:** Indian Affairs Regional Inspectors recommend abolition of residential schools.
- 1967: *Changes to racist Immigration policies*:** Finally one set of consistent immigration rules for applicants from all countries. The move to less overtly racist policies is still criticized for adopting a *points system* that still appears biased against immigration from less developed countries. This new system also favors those with a higher education, desirable job skills, and those able to speak an official language.

- 1969:** Formal partnership on residential schools between government and churches ends.
- 1969:** Government takes over residential school system, and begins to transfer control to Indian bands.
- 1969:** Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) adopts a justice agenda in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples, after report “*Beyond Traplines*” is presented at the General Synod.
- 1971:** The Christian Reformed Church in North America forms its first agency to eliminate racism, the Synodical Committee on Race Relations (S.C.O.R.R).
- 1975:** *Project North:* An ecumenical coalition launched to support Aboriginal struggles.
- 1986:** The *United Church of Canada* (UCC) apologizes to Aboriginal peoples for their role in residential schools.
- 1987:** New Covenant: National Churches affirm Aboriginal Nations as distinct peoples.
- 1988:** Aboriginal Rights Coalition is formed: Churches partner with Aboriginal organizations and regional network groups.
- 1989:** Disclosures of abuse at Mount Cashel Orphanage.
- 1991:** The Catholic Church – *Oblates of Mary Immaculate* issues apology for their role in residential schools.
- 1993:** The *Anglican Church of Canada* (ACC) apologizes to Aboriginal peoples for their role in residential schools.
- 1994:** The *Presbyterian Church of Canada* (PCC) apologizes to Aboriginal peoples for their role in residential schools.
- 1996:** The last government-run residential school closes.
- 1996:** The *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) releases its report. The report names religious institutions as having the greatest potential to foster understanding between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples.

- 1998:** Government's Statement of Reconciliation "***Gathering Strength- Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan***" includes a \$350 million healing fund. The ***Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF)*** is established to manage the fund.
- 2000:** Jubilee petition on land rights: Churches call on government to establish independent land rights commission.
- 2001:** Blanket Train: Church and civil society demonstration on Supreme Court lawn.
- 2001:** ***KAIROS*** formed: Aboriginal rights work continues in the churches' new ecumenical social justice coalition.
- 2002:** Government announces an Alternative Dispute Resolution Framework to provide ***compensation*** for residential school abuse.
- 2004:** Sisters in Spirit Campaign launched: Formed by Native Women's Association jointly with United Church of Canada (UCC), and Anglican Church of Canada (ACC).
- 2006:** ***Government apology to the Chinese Canadian community*** by the Prime Minister of Canada for legislated institutional racism between the years of 1885 to 1947. Government offers ***reparations of \$20,000*** per person to Head tax survivors or their living spouses..
- 2006:** Government signs the ***Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*** with legal representatives for Survivors, Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit representatives, and church entities.
- 2007:** The newly elected conservative government of Canada votes against the ***Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples***, at the U.N., citing concerns about the rights of non-Aboriginal people, and the individual rights of Aboriginal people. Nonetheless, the Declaration receives enough votes, and is adopted by the U.N.
- 2008:** Government of Canada launches the ***Indian Residential Schools -Truth and Reconciliation Commission***. The Prime Minister of Canada offers the first official government apology to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada for the racism and abuses suffered particularly in the residential schools.
- 2009:** The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church overwhelmingly adopts a proposal to study the ***Belhar Confession***, which arose in 1982 as a strong response by Reformed churches against ***Apartheid*** in South Africa. The Belhar Confession could be adopted as a fourth confession, if it receives the required votes at the 2012 Synod.

Reading #3

Theological Starting Points for Action

by the Steering Committee, Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network
September 2006

...and the leaves on the tree (of life) were for the healing of the nations...

(Revelations 22:2)

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

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

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. . .

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1)

Introduction

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

Principles

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

Creation

God created diversity and unity all through the story of creation, and declared it good.

Every person is unique, different from all others. Each person is breathed with the breath of God, created in God’s own image, a person of infinite and singular dignity

and worth. At the same time, we are all related. Every person is a member of one human race, uniquely related to every other human being.

Sin

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

History

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

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

Christian Identity

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

"Behold I am Making All Things New"³

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

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

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

- Start with the concrete experience of racism, with the people affected (victims and beneficiaries).
- Always aim at consulting with the group who a training is for: do a learning needs and resources assessment.
- Historical timelines are helpful in seeing and feeling how racism has been done.

² Ibid.

³ Revelations 21:5

- Dialogue works better than monologue.
- Avoid anti-racism pedagogies that promote trauma, crisis or conversions, avoid the mentality of a quick fix.
- Story-telling must be mutual, should lead to a structural naming of the truth, not used to “prove” that racism exists, never lead to a kind of “voyeurism” of the victim.
- Caucus groups can be helpful from time to time.
- A circle of chairs is a good practice.
- Be prepared to listen.
- Use differences to get things done – a diversity of voices, also in Bible study, helps to come to a fuller understanding.
- Honour non-European voices in theology.
- Leadership is best shared.
- Link concrete experiences to social structures... analyze and name the specific relationships or power and influence.
- Be prepared to unlearn, and for the fear, sense of guilt, blame and woundedness that goes with it... it is a kind of exorcism.
- Anti-racism sessions often provoke anger and rage. Be ready to receive and carry the other’s rage, and be ready to stand your ground in the face of denial.
- Anti-racism policies can be helpful in building new practices.
- It is unhelpful to work with people, then leave them. There always needs to be a follow-up process.

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

- Accountability must be to those who are oppressed, not to structures and systems that perpetuate racism.
- Anti-racism work must address privilege.
- Beneficiaries of racism will avoid addressing it whenever possible.
- The primary obligation of white people is to work with white people... this doesn’t mean we should do it separately. It should be genuinely shared.
- Expect discomfort, always be prepared for emotion and pain.
- Personal relationships, friendships, and hospitality are critical to anti-racism efforts.
- We need both the work of undoing racism, and living into a multi-cultural life, we can’t have one without the other.
- Racism cannot be trained or educated away.
- In fact, formal education is often a stumbling block, wisdom on undoing racism is rarely dispensed from an expert.
- Racism cannot be organized away, although anti-racism policies can be helpful in building new practices.

Reading #4a

It's Time For Us White Guys to Move Over

by John Suk

First published in The Banner May 20, 1996.

The report of Synod 1996 has a title only a bureaucrat could love: "Committee to Articulate Biblical and Theological Principles for the Development of a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Family of God." Once I got past the title, though, the report turned out to be a beautifully written, biblically wise pastoral letter to everyone in the church.

The report describes how, in the beginning, God created a marvelously varied world that had unity in one God, who created all through Jesus Christ. It explains how Adam and Eve's fall into sin alienated them from this diversity and led to broken community and enmity between the races. Finally, the report describes how, in the new world order created by Jesus' death and resurrection, God is reuniting all things (Eph. 1:9-10). However, this report says, this new unity doesn't obscure God's plan for a variety of races. Isaiah, for example, saw a new day coming when God's house "will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7). The report explains that the true basis for unity in diversity is "with and in the service of Christ."

The Lesson of the Widows

The report concludes with suggestions about how the church can implement the biblical mandate for racial diversity. It says for example, that we can study Scripture's message about race, publicly witness against racism, and better

reflect God's diversity in our congregations. One key recommendation is that we commit ourselves to "ensure the equitable representation and meaningful participation of ethnic minority persons in leadership and other roles of influence at all levels of denominational life."

That recommendation is solidly rooted in Scripture. It speaks against our natural tendency to seat at the foot of a table the very people God would seat at the head. The early church knew that command and tried to live it. For example, consider how the church appointed its first deacons. Acts 6:1-6 describes how the Pentecost church in Jerusalem was growing like wildfire. Following the example of Jesus, Christians were surrendering all they had to minister to the poor. Unfortunately, the generosity of these early Christians did not extend to the needs of Hellenist widows.

Technically those widows were Jews, but culturally they were more like Greeks. They were mostly foreign born and spoke Greek rather than Hebrew. They enjoyed Greek culture too. They worked out at the Grecian gymnasium outside of town, went to plays, didn't keep kosher homes, and generally sneered at traditional Jewish values. During Pentecost some of those foreign Jews caught the Spirit and joined the church. But traditional Jewish converts

in the church discriminated against the Hellenist widows by ignoring their needs.

The Hellenist widows complained, and the apostles responded as Christ would have. They confronted prejudice by surrendering control of the church finances to Hellenist Jew. All seven of the first deacons in the church had Greek names. One of them, Nicolas, appears to have been a Gentile from Antioch.

It's hard for us to understand how radical that action was. It would be like the Canadian government saying to its native people today, "Since you doubt our motives, you decide on a just settlement of your land claims. Whatever you decide is fine with us." Or, it would be like the Exxon Corporations telling Alaskans after the Valdez oil spill, "We don't have to go to court to decide what to pay you for environmental damage. Let some of your citizens determine the amount, and we'll pay."

That's what God expects of the church. He often blesses surrender of control by the powerful to the

powerless. He himself chose the insignificant little nation of Israel to be the conduit through which he'd pour out his blessings to the world in Christ. What's more, Jesus' surrender of his "equality with God" to make himself nothing (Phil. 2:6-7) demonstrates how divine grace is far more powerful than human power or strength.

The lesson is clear. Those of us who have power today must surrender it to others so that God's grace has room to work. We must obey the words of the apostle Paul: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.... Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:3-5).

That many not be the way things are done in the world. But it's exactly right for a denomination striving for racial reconciliation. We white guys must move over, for Christ's sake, to make room in leadership for brothers and sisters of color. In the pulpit, on Boards, in councils, or in classrooms, we must work for a racially diverse family of God.

Reading #4b

Do We Really Need to Repent of Racism?

by John Suk

First published in The Banner May 11, 1998.

A few weeks ago I attended a workshop titled “Analyzing and Understanding Systemic Racism.” During the workshop one of the facilitators said that many of the ships that carried Africans from their homes to slavery in America were captained and crewed by Dutchmen. She said it partly as an accusation. She wanted her audience, which had more than a few people of Dutch extraction in it, to face up to their entire heritage – not just the good and the bad, but the ugly too.

Her accusation bugged me. As a Canadian I take pride in my country’s history as the sanctuary destination for the Underground Railroad. The United States, on the other hand, was the bad guy I learned about in my grade school history classes. In any case, North American slavery was something that happened long before my parents immigrated here. So I’ve looked upon American’s slave history as something alien to me. In hindsight, I find it interesting that I was willing to take credit for Canada’s ancient moral victories while rejecting responsibility for the moral failings of those old Dutch sailors.

An Apt Accusation

As it turned out, the workshop leader’s remarks were more apt than I first realized. For some time now I’ve been carrying on an Internet discussion with some distant Dutch cousins whom I

discovered as a result of my genealogical research. The week of the racism workshop, we discovered that we shared the same distant relative who had died at sea in 1802 off the coast of France. Suddenly the facilitator’s remarks about Dutch sailors didn’t seem so improbable. Coming from a seafaring Dutch family, it is very possible that my ancestors were involved in the slave trade.

And that’s not the end of it. A generation or two later, many of our grandparents and parents looked on the civil rights movement with suspicion and fear, joined the white flight to the suburbs, and suffered deep anguish as they tried to figure out whether minorities should be welcomed in their Christian schools. It turns out that racist attitudes were common among our ancestors not just 200 years ago but within recent memory.

But here’s the crux: we aren’t racist anymore, are we? Bigotry is pretty much a four-letter word to most of us. Most *Banner* readers know people who belong to other races, and we try to treat them with dignity and respect. We’re proud of the fact that our church has been striving for years, through the Synodical Committee of Race Relations (now Race Relations), to build bridges between races. We’re proud of our Korean, African American, Hispanic, and Native American churches. Many of us

have come home from Promise Keepers conventions fully committed to racial reconciliation. Things are different now. So why bring up all that stuff from the past?

Or, to put it slightly differently, why should we pay any attention to Rev. Adrian Jacob's call for us to engage in corporate repentance (see "Jubilee for First Nations," p14)? How can we repent for what our ancestors did?

Reasons to Repent

There are at least three good reasons for believing that we should repent, all together, as a church – perhaps even in conjunction with this year's upcoming synod and the denominational multi-ethnic conference that will run parallel to synod.

The first has to do with the nature of sin. As Calvinists we understand that guilt is passed down from generation to generation. WE believe, after all, that because of the sin of Adam and Eve we also are infected by sin, even before our birth. What's more, the guilt of this original sin is enough to condemn us. That we possess such guilt doesn't seem fair to us, and theologians therefore some times call it alien guilt. For all our speculation, we still don't fully understand how exactly Adam and Eve's guilt is transferred to us. But the fact that our confessions call original sin a hereditary disease (Belgic Confession Art. 15) ought to help us understand that the sin of racism, and the guilt that goes with it, is also hereditary.

That such blood guilt can be passed from generation to generation isn't evident just from the doctrine of original sin. God explains it clearly in the warning attached to the second

commandment. "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children from the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" (Ex.20:5). We can see that accountability at work in the story of the Gibeonites. Israel had made a peace treaty with the people of Gibeon during the time of Joshua's leadership, but when Saul became king, he put the Gibeonites to death. It wasn't until King David's reign that God called Israel to account for that sin (see Josh. 9 and 2 Sam. 21).

The doctrine of original sin, the warning from the second commandment, and the Gibeonite story challenge our modern secular, Western views on justice and individual responsibility. Yet they suggest that somehow, in the very structure of God's creation, blood guilt can be passed from generation to generation. And one of the consequences if that we cannot escape communal responsibility for our ancestors' racist actions.

The second reason for believing that we should repent for the sins of our ancestors has to do with the nature of the church. The church, like God, somehow transcends time even as it acts within time. The church, according to our catechism, has been gathered and protected by God from the beginning of the world to the end. We believe that "of this community I am and always will be a living member." The living members of the holy, catholic church that we speak of today in the Apostles' Creed include those who have passed through the door of death and are in heaven with Jesus, as well as those of us who have not yet passed through that terrible door. The same

church that persecuted Jews in Spain, that sanctioned and engaged in the slave trade, that endorsed and promoted slavery in the South and Jim Crow laws all across the land, that approved apartheid in South Africa and residential schools for Native North Americans that took countless children out of their home settings – this is the very same church that we belong to today. As members of that single, indivisible catholic church we bear responsibility for its corporate sins, whether recent or in the distant past.

The third reason why communal repentance of the sort recommended by Jacobs is essential has to do with repentance itself. Repentance involves much more than just being honest about sin and guilt. It involves not just the dying away of the old self but the coming to life of the new. Not only must we be genuinely sorry for the sin of racism past and present, we must also “delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to” (see Lords’ Day 33, Heidelberg Catechism). Corporate repentance is the necessary condition for our church community to both publicly turn aside from our racist past and to become a people known for our love to every neighbor regardless of his or her color, land of origin, language, customs, or dress.

Read Jacob’s article with care. You may find some matters of biblical exegesis or perspective to disagree with, but don’t let that get in the way of wrestling with his central message and

with each of the suggestions at the end of his article. At the same time, let’s learn more about Christian Reformed ministries among the First Nations people of Edmonton, Regina, and Winnipeg. Let’s sit at the feet of our brothers and sisters in Classis Red Mesa and ask them about the reservation system and about what life in the residential schools was like. Let’s learn some North American history – including church history – from them. Above all, let’s consider confession because “if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives” (1 John 1:9-10).

As I write this, I hear that there is good news in Northern Ireland. Two peoples who have hated each other for centuries and killed each other for nearly as long are attempting to make a new beginning. It’s something I’ve often prayed for in congregational prayers. Even as our time speeds to a conclusion, God signals his desire for peace among the nations and works it through his providential grace. He is after all, a God of justice and righteousness. But that news seems to be a signal from God for us too. It isn’t too late for us to set to right some long-festered, ancient wrongs of our own. We have plenty of reconciliation to work in our own backyard. Let’s get to it!

Reading #5

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Racism, Revelation and Recipes: Towards Christian Inter-cultural Communities

by Shiao Chong,

Christian Reformed Campus Minister serving at York University, Toronto, Ontario

Introduction: Racism is never far from schools

In 1960 New Orleans, Louisiana, Ruby Nell Bridges, a 6 year-old African-American girl, was the first person of color in the United States to attend, by federal law, an all-white school. Writing as an adult, Bridges recalled how federal US marshals had to escort her and her mother to school in order to protect them from a white mob protesting in front of the school (*Guideposts* magazine, March 2000). The mob was screaming at them. One of the protesters even had a black doll in a coffin. And for most of that school year, Ruby was a class of one as none of the parents wanted their children in the same class as her. Only one lady among the all-white teaching faculty was willing to defy racism and be Ruby's teacher. Mrs. Henry, as Ruby calls her, became a life long friend till this day. Thanks to their courage, racially integrated schools in the US are the norm today.

Fast forward to 2008 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Toronto Public School Board debated about the proposal of introducing Afro-centric schools as an alternative program within the public school system. Afro-centric schools are schools with Afro-centric curriculum and ethos rather than Euro-centric ones. Proponents argue that such schools will have a positive effect on African-American children who suffer from the regular public school atmosphere due to systemic racism in society. Critics of the plan argue it will, ironically, encourage segregation and racism, good intentions notwithstanding. Regardless of which side you fall in this debate, the point is: *issues of race and racism are never far from schools and education*. 48 years since Ruby Bridges walked through the doors of William Frantz elementary school, we are still debating and dealing with the effects of racism and how to best dismantle it.

Racism, alas, is not far from Christian schools either. In 1965, the Board of Timothy Christian Elementary School in Cicero, Illinois ruled that black children would not be allowed to attend the school. The Board's rationale was to protect these children from the criticism and violence of the conservative, all-white Cicero community. Despite protests from many in the community, including the Cicero Town Council, the Timothy school board stood by its decision. Three black families filed a lawsuit in US District Court and won. The board's actions were judged to be discriminatory. However, the board did not budge. Ultimately, in the early 1970s, the school sold its Cicero facilities and moved to Elmhurst.

Such stories remind us that it is easy for Christians, and Christian schools, to conform to society's patterns. In the spirit of trying to help us be transformed by renewing our minds through God's revealed Word, I will propose a biblical-theological perspective on racism and diversity before proposing a "recipe" for creating an inter-culturally inclusive community. Hence, my title: racism, revelation and recipes.

I prefer using the term “inter-cultural” lately in order to differentiate from the politically-laden and, somewhat controversial, “multi-cultural(ism)”. Furthermore, I wish to stress the intermingling, interaction and unity among the different cultures rather than simply the co-existence of multiple cultures. “Inter-cultural” also has the added benefit of including inter-racial or inter-cultural persons – people born of inter-racial and inter-cultural marriages, who are often neglected in discussions on diversity and racism, yet who are increasing in numbers.

A Biblical-Theological Perspective on Diversity & Racism

1. Diversity, in and of itself, is a God-created good that reflects the unity (oneness) and diversity (three-ness) of the Triune God.

Christian theologians have argued that the doctrine of the Trinity – God as one in being and three in person – can serve as a model for human society and community. God’s oneness calls us to unity while His three-ness affirms our diversity and uniqueness. God’s handiwork, his creation, also reflects this unity in diversity. The incredibly rich diversity of uniquely individual creatures – of plants, animals, rocks and trees – are all created, united and held together in Christ (Colossians 1:15-17). Even humanity was created with the diversity of male and female.

It must be stressed, then, that creational diversity is never a diversity of division – it is not differences that divide – but rather a diversity of unity – differences that are united in relationship to each other in love and obedience to God the creator. Thus, difference and diversity, in and of itself, is a created gift from God that reflects part of God’s own nature. And the unity that Christ brings through his redemptive work is not a new unity but restoring and renewing a unity that was already there at the beginning of creation, a unity that was disrupted by sin.

2. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, in and of themselves, are not evil or sinful but fulfill a purpose in God’s plan for humanity.

Among all of creation’s diversity, human cultural diversity – ethnic and linguistic differences – is also part of God’s good creation. Sometimes, Christians view cultural diversity as part of the fallen world, as a curse. The biblical narrative of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) is often used to justify such a negative view.

A closer reading, however, suggests that God’s confusion of “tongues” or languages at Babel was not a curse but more a tool of God’s grace. The central sin of Babel is not simply pride in trying to unify the world, even though that is implicated. Rather, the Babel builders’ sin is trying to define their corporate identity apart from God. To “make a name” (v. 4) for oneself means more than just becoming famous. Names in the Old Testament, and in the Bible in general, are supposed to capture the object’s essence or character; you are what your name is, so to speak. So, making a name here also means they are trying to define who they are apart from God.

This ‘self-naming project’ is linked to both their unification project and their building project – “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (v. 4 NIV). There’s evidence to suggest that this story was composed with a glance towards the Babylonian empire. The land of Shinar (v. 2) is connected to Babylon. And the word “babel” in the Babylonian language means “gate of god”. Thus, the name or identity that the Babel builders seek for themselves is to be “the gate of god,” a heaven on earth. They desired to make their own perfect society, by means of technology (verse 3) and architecture (verse 4) and by implication through political and religious means, similar to Babylon’s empire building (an

allusion that would not be lost on ancient Israelites) symbolized by Babylon's ziggurat towers that purports to be gateways to the gods. But "babel" in Hebrew is "confusion" or even, "folly". So, Genesis mocks the Babylonians: they think they are building heaven on earth, but in reality, they are confused and foolish.

Therefore, God's confusion of them is a means to prevent them from such foolish idolatrous identity making projects that reject God's naming and identity giving. God's intervention and creation of diverse languages actually forced them to fulfill God's original command in Gen. 1:28 to "fill the earth and subdue it," something which these Babel builders were afraid to do – they were afraid of being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," a phrase repeated three times (verses 4, 8 and 9).

Human cultural and linguistic diversity, then, fulfills a redemptive purpose in God's plan, and is not a curse.

3. Diversity is distorted by the fall into sin, turning into a systemic ideological idolatry that breaks down community. Racism, therefore, is a sin.

But why, then, is human cultural and ethnic diversity often a source of division and even violence to each other? Human sin and rebellion has distorted the good creational diversity that God created. In Reformed philosophy, there is a concept of *structure* and *direction*. (See Albert Wolters' *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, Eerdmans, 1985, 49-52, 72-73.) Structure is the order of creation, what makes it the thing that it is. Anything in creation, however, can be directed in obedience to God or misdirected in disobedience to God. Therefore, we can speak of *structural diversity* and *directional diversity*. Structural diversity is the diversity in creation – hence, human diversity (gender, ethnicity) is structural, is part of God's good creation. Directional diversity is the diversity of sin or redemption – hence, fallen human cultural diversity is often misdirected toward serving an idol that takes the place of God in the center of that culture. Such idolatries are always embodied in ideologies or worldviews that become systemic in a culture or community.

Thus, the fall has brought about directional diversity. Because of the fall, humanity tend to put asunder what God has joined together – God's diversified unity is constantly being torn apart by fallen humans into either division, fragmentation or disintegration (individualism, pluralism, relativism) or uniformity, fusion or homogeneity (collectivism, fascism, absolutism). Racism partakes of this brokenness in the polarization of uniformity (only those like us) and division (those not like us). This, therefore, breaks down human community.

Race is an artificial pseudo-scientific category used to describe people who share biologically transmitted traits that are defined as socially significant. Although it is commonly believed to be a scientific 'fact', there is actually no scientific evidence to support the categorization of humanity into biological 'races'. Scientists have calculated that the average genetic difference between two randomly chosen individuals is 0.2% of all the genes. But the physical traits we use to distinguish one race from another, like skin, eye color and nose width, are determined by about only 0.01% of our genes and they adapt rapidly to various environmental factors (quoted in *No Partiality: The Idolatry of Race and the New Humanity* by Douglas R. Sharp, footnote 31, p. 121). Hence, it is pseudo-scientific.

But what is even more important is that these rather insignificant physical traits are given social significance by the ideology. The physical 'racial' traits only have social significance because we give them significance – they are artificial. We have been accustomed to think that these physical differences amount to some moral and social difference – such as intelligence, goodness, beauty, honesty, etc. Such thinking is rooted in a distorted ideology, not in creation. Because this idolatrous ideology is systemic in our culture, it has affected all of us.

In systemic racism, a racist ideology is embodied in the policies, practices, norms and symbols of social institutions, organizations, communities and cultures. A racist ideology embodied in the educational, political, legal, economic, cultural and religious institutions shapes a whole community of people. Racism is not explicitly taught; rather we are caught in its web. There are systemic racist images via popular movies, TV and advertising that capture our imaginations. There are systemic racist practices that shape our behaviors, e.g. hiring practices. There are still ideological arguments that perpetuate racism albeit in different new incarnations, e.g. anti-immigration laws.

I don't have space here to argue or document all the various aspects and manifestations of systemic racism. The point here is that racism is not simply an individual behavior and attitude problem. It is bigger, wider and deeper than that: it is a systemic sin.

4. God's mission of reconciliation inseparably includes reconciliation of people to each other, including racial reconciliation.

Distorted diversity is being restored in Christ Jesus. Even in the Old Testament already, God's redemption plan includes blessing "all the nations" through Abraham (Gen. 18:18, 26:4), and making his house "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7). Ethnic identity is always subordinate to spiritual identity.

This is why Jesus quoted from Isaiah 56 in the cleansing of the temple (Mark 11:15-19). The tables of the moneychangers and animal sellers were actually located in the part of the temple that is called, "The Court of the Gentiles". This is the only place in the temple that Gentiles were allowed into. Non-Jews, even Gentile god-fearers – those who converted to Judaism but did not get circumcised to take on Jewish identity – cannot go any further than this section. They were not allowed to enter the "Court of Women" and the "Court of Israel". Thus, turning the court of Gentiles from a worship space into a religious commercial zone is an instance of institutional racism that enraged Jesus to the point of violent action.

God's heart for racial reconciliation is also seen in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). At Pentecost, God equipped a mono-cultural group of disciples to do cross-cultural outreach in order to establish a multi-cultural church. Jewish pilgrims who came from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem for Pentecost know either Aramaic (the language of the Synagogues) or Greek (the commercial language of the Roman empire) or both. There is, therefore, no logistical need for the "tongues" – the speaking of different languages. But there is great symbolic need due to the fact that the regional native tongues were never used in the religious services of their local synagogues. God uses those different native tongues – hitherto never been used in religious worship – to affirm and bless these languages and cultures as vehicles of His revelation and praise. Thus, the first Christian outreach event after Jesus' ascension was an inter-cultural, cross-cultural outreach. Or, if you wish, the first post-resurrection Christian mega-worship service was a multi-lingual one! One can even argue from this that God's default church is an inter-cultural church, NOT a mono-cultural one.

5. The church, or the Christian community, is God's strategic vehicle for embodying, proclaiming and promoting God's reconciliation of all things, including racial reconciliation.

Being united in Christ through faith does not mean that ethnic and cultural differences will be erased. Rather, ethnic and other categories (economic, gender, etc.) are no longer definitive of our identities. Galatians 3:28 — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NIV) — is not a call to erase ethnic, class and gender diversity in an ontological or absolute sense. Rather, it is a call to break down any existing barriers and inequalities between them. Bible scholars have shown that Galatians is not

primarily about soteriology – how are we saved? – but about ecclesiology – how are we to be church? (See Gordon D. Fee, “Male and Female in the New Creation” in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, IVP 2002, pp. 172-185) The issue of salvation by faith, not by works, helps equate all the different people groups, and makes them one new community in Christ Jesus.

And this new Christian community, the Church, is not a place for any kind of social barriers. Particularly because the church – and Christian communities, including Christian schools – are God’s primary vehicle for his reconciliation mission, which as we have seen, includes reconciling people to each other. We need to embody this one-ness in Christ Jesus.

6. Reconciliation of all things will only be fulfilled at Christ’s second coming with the new heaven and new earth. Christians, individually and corporately, work towards that reality as God’s agents of transformation, with hope and humility.

Only God can bring about the full restoration and reconciliation of diversity in unity. This keeps us Christians humble as we go about being faithful and obedient in being agents of reconciliation for God, knowing that our efforts will not bring heaven on earth.

But God also promises that full restoration will happen. This frees us and encourages us to be bold, creative and even take risks, knowing that the new creation does not depend on our successes/failures. We are called to be faithful agents, not agents who sit on our hands. William Wilberforce, the 18th – 19th century politician and social reformer who abolished the slave trade in the British Empire, once wrote, “Let [a Christian] remember that his chief business while on earth is not to meditate, but to act” (from his *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians*, 1797; reprint SCM Press 1958, p. 103).

A Biblical Recipe for Creating Christian Inter-Cultural Communities

So, how do we work towards becoming a community that helps rather than hinders God’s reconciliation project? Is there a recipe that we can follow to create an inter-cultural Christian community in our churches or our schools? I propose a recipe drawn from two biblical sources.

The early church in Acts 15 faced cultural tensions as its cultural diversity grew. The Antioch church was an inter-cultural church with Jewish and Gentile members. Pressure came from Judean Christians towards the Gentiles to adopt Jewish ways, Jewish culture and Jewish rituals, namely circumcision. In other words, unless Gentile Christians become Jewish, they cannot be saved. The Jerusalem Council, convened to resolve the matter, came to a most remarkable conclusion. Instead of choosing to either assimilate Gentile Christians into Jewish culture (then the dominant culture among Christians) or segregate between Gentile and Jewish Christians (have separate local churches), the Jerusalem Council chose the inter-cultural way – the Gentiles can be Christians while remaining in their Gentile culture, even as Jewish Christians remained Jewish, and both fellowship in the same churches. But the inter-cultural way does not mean, “everything goes” in terms of cultural expressions. All human cultures are simultaneously good and broken. The apostles laid down three guidelines for cultural expressions, which I summarize, for our purposes, as follows:

1. Avoid idolatry and destroying gospel witness; (abstain from food offered to idols – v. 20, 29) – any cultural practice that is idolatrous or connected to idolatry, should be either rejected or reformed. For example, Chinese Christians have to be careful with Chinese New Year celebratory traditions that are often tied to a materialistic worldview. Similarly, North American Christians have to discern how our consumerist culture has distorted our celebrations of Christmas. Since racism is part of our culture’s systemic idolatries, Christians need to recognize, repent and reject racism.

2. Avoid breaking God's (moral) laws; (abstain from sexual immorality – v. 20, 29) – obviously, Christians must reject any cultural practice that is explicitly sinful, breaking God's laws.
3. Avoid overly offensive behavior to other cultures; (abstain from eating strangled animals and blood – v. 20, 29) – Christians who love each other should respect each other's boundaries, while at the same time, be as gracious and forgiving as possible. Different cultures may have different practices that are deemed as overly offensive. For instance, one should never point with one's feet nor pat someone on the head when relating to a Thai. These are incredibly offensive and insulting in the Thai culture. Pointing with your feet or patting the head is neither sinful nor idolatrous. But, out of love and respect to a Thai brother or sister, we should abstain from it in their presence. Conversely, if the Thai is a Christian, he or she should learn to be gracious and forgiving of such cultural faux pas, particularly when it is done innocently.

Obviously, it takes time as well as trial and error in cross-cultural relationships to build such inter-cultural bonds that fulfill this "recipe". But these three guidelines can serve as starting points. This is one half of the recipe I am recommending. The other half of the recipe is derived from the Old Testament prophet Micah.

In Micah 6:8, the prophet lays out the basic spirituality that God requires of us: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (NRSV). These can act as three good guidelines in engaging cross-cultural relationships.

1. *Humility*. Each of us needs to be humble enough to learn from another culture, to receive the gift of the stranger. Often, members of cultural minorities assume a posture of humility and learning. But this posture should be normative for all Christians to each other. Specifically, our spiritual walk with God should grow our humility: the nearer we draw to God, the better we see ourselves – our sins, our faults, our gifts and our limitations. Such God-grown humility will serve us well when interacting with people from different cultures.
2. *Love*. An unconditional love that places the interests of others above one's own interest is a necessary requirement in creating a community that welcomes diversity. If all parties show loving kindness to each other, they should not be any racist or discriminatory practices or behaviors to each other.
3. *Justice*. But sometimes, discrimination exists in structures or systems, beyond individual behaviors and attitudes. This is where justice comes into play. Justice works towards building God's shalom – flourishing relationships – in structures and institutions. A Christian inter-cultural community must intentionally do justice to reform or maintain structures that are just for all its members, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or class.

Conclusion

In summary then, here is my biblical recipe for creating an inter-cultural community:

1. Recognize, Repent and Reject the systemic sin of Racism.
2. Combine the following three ingredients:
 - Idolatry avoidance,
 - Sin avoidance, and
 - Overly Offense avoidance.
3. Mix into a community.
4. Then add healthy doses of humility, love and justice into the mixture.
5. Mix well.
6. Oh, and don't forget to pour in a huge amount of PRAYER.

7. Of course, start making friends with strangers from different cultures.
8. Wait on God and see.

Resources:

Racism & Building a Multi-Ethnic Church

Carter, Anthony. (2003) *On Being Black and Reformed*. P & R Publishing.

Christian Reformed Church in North America. (1996) *God's Diverse and Unified Family*.

Cooper, Afula. (2006) *The Hanging of Angelique*. HarperCollins Canada.

Engelstad, Diane & Bird, John. (1998) *Nation to Nation*. House of Anansi Press.

Kelderman, Duane. (2007) *God's Deepest Purposes for the Human Family* in the Winter FORUM.

Law, Eric H. F. (1993) *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis: Chalice Press.

Mulder, Alfred E. (2006) *Learning to Count to One: The Joy and Pain of Becoming a Multiracial Church*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive.

Sheffield, Dan. (2005) *The Multicultural Leader*. Clements Publishing.

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

ALSO:

Justice Spotlight: Aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation

http://www.crcna.org/pages/ccg_spotlights_aboriginal.cfm

The Christian Reformed Church in North America's Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) is studying issues relating to land rights, self-government, and economic development for First Nations Peoples. The CCG is seeking ways to engage with First Nations Peoples, to develop friendships and to better understand their struggles. We are walking with them on the path of healing, justice and reconciliation. And we are advocating for justice where injustices reign.



Name (*optional*) _____

Church _____

Date of the course _____