

# What's in a Name?

by Victor Kitagawa

What's in a name? Leslee, Cheryl, Ron, David, Karl, Francis... these are all good names, belonging to good Christian people. If we go one step further, and add their last names, they turn out like this: Leslee Alfano, Cheryl Curtis, Ron Ewart, David Jung, Karl Shu Sang Lam, Francis Nyark.

“The United Church seems to be turning a corner, doing what we do best with the resources at hand...” So writes Stu Lyster for United Church Online. One example of our church “turning the corner” was clearly demonstrated at Toronto Conference’s 19th annual Ethnic Ministries Rally held at Onnuri Korean United Church, where all of the individuals named above had served on the planning committee. (And it was a very successful rally!) But it has not been always thus ...

It was my first time at Conference annual meeting. The chair had just called a halt in the proceedings for lunch break. Spotting several friends and associates of Japanese heritage seated at one of the lunch tables, I steered myself over and sat down among them. We were into some catch-up conversation when a woman of Caucasian background came up and said, “Come and join us over here—don’t be bashful.”

Her invitation was friendly and obviously well-intentioned. Yet, I felt uncomfortable. Why?

That same morning, in assigned table groups, we had spent the whole time listening to and sharing our personal faith journeys with total strangers. When it came my turn to speak, the facilitator asked whether I could relate some of my memories of the evacuation of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. I hesitated. In typical Japanese fashion, I felt I had to *enryo*—that is, to be more reserved—and not speak of something directly.

“Come on, don’t be bashful,” the facilitator encouraged.

Reluctantly, I began to gather my thoughts and tell how my father reacted to the order to evacuate.

Suddenly, a man at our table cut in impatiently. “It was wartime. The government had a right to do what they did to protect the country against the enemy.” The whole table fell into shocked silence at his outburst.

That was why, when we broke for lunch that day, I had gone looking for a friendly face, someone who would understand the confusion I was experiencing. That was why I cringed when a Caucasian fellow Conference delegate urged, “Don’t be bashful.” At that space in time, I had needed to talk to someone about what had happened, to someone who had also experienced the “evacuation/internment.” Obviously, the woman who had invited us to join her was unaware of what had happened. I was sure she was also well-meaning, but I thought to myself, “Were she in a similar situation, would she not rather be with compatible friends, at least during breaks?” That was all I was seeking. No wonder I felt uncomfortable when she thought that the only reason we were “segregated” was because we were “bashful.”

For many years afterwards, I found it very difficult to forget what had happened that day. According to Gary Redcliffe of Emmanuel College, “When we differ, it is because we are together trying to discern the truth.” I felt that the person at my table group who had interrupted me was not trying to work together to “discern the truth.” Instead, he was expressing a very opinionated and (I now realize) racist view. For me, the truth was trying to find Jesus in the internment experience, not the political aspects of the war. That person deprived me of the opportunity to speak about the Oliver family, members of the United Church and Christians truly “born of the Spirit,” who had been instrumental in guiding me along my faith journey. Business took over, and we were never able to pick up the thread of my narrative or to discuss the matter further. I had left that meeting feeling very disappointed.

The same feeling of “one-sidedness” reoccurred when I began attending meetings as a presbyter from our congregation. No one spoke to me unless I spoke to them first. In the beginning, I thought it was because I was a new member. As the years passed, however, the indifference and unfriendliness continued. “Is it because they think I do not speak English well enough?” I asked myself. “Is it because I do not participate in some of the heated discussions around issues such as sexual orientation and residential schools?” “Is it because our cultures are different?” “Is it because they don’t know what to say to me?” A simple “Hello” would have been good!

I am not sure if I have been over-reacting in my quest for simple human decency in human interaction and for spiritual understanding among members of United Church courts. I do feel, however, that we must respect one another’s needs, be it a need for privacy, our self-esteem, or our good intentions. As the fox says in *The Little Prince*, “It is only with the heart that you can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

“The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” (Galatians 5:22-23) Let us not forget these as we travel on our faith journey together. The United Church may have turned the corner from the “bad old days,” but only as we continue to address problems in creative, imaginative, and gospel ways can we hope to make real the possibility of “we can differ, yet still be united in discerning the truth.”

*Victor Kitagawa is an active member of Centennial United Church in Toronto, and a past Co-chair of Toronto Conference’s Ethnic Ministries Committee. His story has been reproduced with Victor’s permission.*

## **For Reflection, Discussion, and /or Action**

- a) For people of colour, as individuals or as participants of a group:
  - To what extent does your experience at racially mixed gatherings resonate with Victor’s?
  - How would you find support to handle what happens in such situations?
  - Refer to “Revelations from the Power Flower,” page 53, to understand some of the power dynamics involved.
  
- b) For mainstream/Caucasian people, either as individuals or participants of groups:
  - What insights does Victor’s experience in church courts give you regarding more appropriate behaviour toward members of ethno-cultural minority communities, in church and outside church?
  - Refer to the “Power Flower” exercise (page 53) to understand some of the sensitive power dynamics involved.
  
- c) Action suggestions for members of presbytery or Conference:
  - If you are a mainstream, white Caucasian member, resolve to take the initiative to exchange greetings and ideas with visible minority members present. Do so without assuming that they do not speak English well, or that they are all recent immigrants to Canada.
  - If you are a member of a visible minority, persist in greeting other members and taking part in discussion. Watch for their response. What would you do if your experience turns out to be similar to Victor’s presbytery experience? With whom would you strategize to bring about change?

# Different Accents, Same Commission

*by Alex Kasirye-Musoke*

I was ordained at 20 years of age at All Saints' Cathedral, Nairobi, Kenya, and ministered for three years at St. Mark's Church, Westlands, in the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi before coming to Canada. At my ordination, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18b-20) was the central scripture lesson; there and then, it came alive for me in a very new way. As I left that service I felt empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out Christ's command to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. I was young and enthusiastic. I felt pumped-up like a lion, strong and ready to champion good over evil. The powerful word of Christ would see to that. I felt confident, too, because I could preach in many languages—not only African languages like Luganda and Kiswahili, but also English, with a working knowledge of both German and French. Surely that must count for something in an officially bilingual country like Canada?

Besides, my pedigree as a Christian and as an Anglican was impeccable. I was born and raised in the Nvuma clan, which had accepted the gospel from the Rev. Canon Apollo Kivebululaaya, acknowledged to be the greatest Anglican missionary figure in East and Central Africa. My country, Uganda, was one of the first African countries to accept and spread Christianity in and around the Great Lakes Region. All my life I had gone to English-speaking, Anglican mission schools, in both Africa and England. I had trained for the Christian ministry at St. John's College, Nottingham, under the great Anglican liturgist, Colin Buchanan, and obtained my certification before leaving England. In short, I had no doubt that I would be welcomed with open arms by the Anglican Church of Canada as an one of its very own, an Anglican of the Anglicans.

Alas, how wrong I was! In spite of my theological training, views, outlooks, and faith in Christ, I ran into roadblock after roadblock in locating a church in which to minister. The most puzzling thing was that the main reason given for my difficulty in being unemployed was not because I was not qualified, or lacked experience, or even the excuse that I did not understand English well, but because my accent was different! The irony of the situation overwhelmed me. Here we all stood, under the grace of God and the one Great Commission, and yet this insistence on a "pure English accent" turned out to be the decisive determinant in who could or could not participate in that same commission.

After a rather frustrating time, the Bishop and his cabinet identified me as a "partner-in-mission" and assigned me the job (unpaid except for expenses) of going around churches to tell them about the work of the Anglican church in Africa and to raise funds for that mission field. After writing to and meeting with the bishop several times, I was told that, "some people might not be quite used to a minister from elsewhere." My protest and reminder to him that "I am from the Anglican communion, not just 'elsewhere,'" did not get me very far. Instead, he told me that I should consider myself lucky because of the [Canadian] experience I would be getting as a partner-in-mission. Eventually, he gave me permission to become an assistant to a rector. An "assistant to the rector," not an "assistant priest": there is a huge difference. As an unpaid assistant my job was to help the rector with communion, Bible study, and visitation, preaching only when he was away from the parish. On such occasions, I received an honorarium.

One day, while comparing our resumes, the rector was amazed to find that I was academically better qualified than he was. Not only that, he knew that several churches in the area had gone vacant within the past year, and yet here I was, with my superior qualifications and experience, still without a proper assignment. He was particularly incensed because he knew that the rector next door, a recent graduate from the same college as mine, had been assigned a church before I was. "I am very disappointed that this church I love and serve," he confessed, "has an unwritten policy that seems to favour some people over others. In the past, I have heard of racism in our church, how it has failed persons of colour, but I have not paid much attention. It's really hit me hard now."

Through all this, my zeal for the Great Commission had not diminished. I grew more and more convinced that it was not my colour, accent, or place of origin that should determine my role in this commission, but my faith. Looking beyond the Anglican Church, I decided to try my luck with The United Church of Canada. There I have found a home wherein to grow in faith and in wisdom. There I have participated in all facets of ministry. There I have participated in the struggle to combat racism, being one of those who drew up the anti-racism policy statement that challenges us to be more inclusive of people of different racial background, colours, and accents.

The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The Bible identifies two ways human beings can conduct themselves: being wise or being foolish. Being wise is not being clever or having special knowledge to handle things well; it is being able to understand that life is a gift from God, to cherish what life offers, and to conduct ourselves thankfully before the giver of that life. Being foolish, on the other hand, means not just an occasional lapse into silliness or failure, but a total messing up of one's life, worldview, and going against the world God ordained. Foolishness obliterates our vision of the world as it could be. To me, being wise is to recognize that the ministry of all believers, regardless of their language or origin, is centred on the Great Commission. If we are to show that we fear God and that we are not foolish, let us open our eyes to the fact that God's gifts, ability to minister, and to participate in this same commission can come packaged in different colours and accents.

My prayer is that we may overcome our blindness and foolishness, and exude and display wisdom instead.

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## **For Reflection, Discussion, and /or Action**

a) In your opinion:

- Was it simply a non-British accent that posed difficulties in the writer's being assigned a church in a diocese in Canada? If not, what are some other reasons you suspect?
- Has this form of racism been widespread in all churches in Canada?

b) The Great Commission has been central in this minister's call and ministry.

- On the other hand, can you think of some of the dangers this piece of scripture (Matthew 28:19-20) may pose to persons and cultures on "the other side" of the command?
- Is it possible to carry out such a command today in a non-imperialist, non-racist way?

# Moments from Canberra: A Challenge to the Church

by *Laverne Jacobs*

My trip in 1990 to Canberra, Australia, to attend the Seventh General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), revealed some disturbing realities.

The gospel reading for the fourth Sunday in Lent (Year B) includes the well-known 16th verse from the third chapter of John: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” For me, the use of the word “world” means that God’s gift of life is for all people.

My experiences at the WCC assembly and in Australia made me aware of just how difficult a challenge this verse presents for the church. As a church, we have great difficulty in being truly inclusive. Three very powerful reminders of our shortcomings occurred during the assembly.

## 1

A peace march had been planned in which the participants in the WCC assembly were to march from the Convention Centre through the downtown area of Canberra to the University. The Aboriginal people were given the impression that, since they were the original peoples of the territory in which the assembly was gathered, they would lead the procession.

As they began to take their expected place at the head of the procession, one of the organizers quickly and curtly asked them to step aside and march behind the children. She explained that the children had been preparing for some time for this march and were looking forward to leading. The Aboriginal people dutifully stepped aside and were immediately left standing on the sidelines—completely divided by the pressing crowd of church people who did not make room for them.

It is difficult to describe the hurt and pain felt by the Aboriginal people and the Indigenous people from Canada and the United States who stood with them. It was such a visible and powerful symbol of the whole history of the Aboriginal people and of all Indigenous peoples of the world. The WCC daily news coverage did not help the situation. It reported that the Aboriginal people had refused to march behind the children, but that was not the case. They and the other Indigenous peoples would gladly have marched behind the children had provision been made for them to do so.

## 2

On another occasion during the assembly, a brilliant female Korean theologian delivered a marvellous presentation beginning with dance and drums. She spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in history, the place of creation theology, and the value of the Indigenous theologies of Third World peoples. As I listened to this theologian, my heart and soul beat in rhythm to the truth I was hearing. Yet her presentation created much controversy and brought accusations of syncretism against her.

## 3

Throughout the assembly, I became increasingly aware of the growing anxiety, frustration, and anger of the Aboriginal people. They had collaborated diligently with other Indigenous peoples on a Statement of Indigenous Peoples to be presented to the assembly. Yet there was much resistance and lobbying against the statement, particularly against the call for the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Debate on the report was deferred several times in favour of other issues, and the Aboriginal people felt they were losing ground. The morning of the final day of the assembly had arrived, and their issues still had not

been put forward for debate. Finally, in the afternoon during the last hour of the assembly, a motion was presented to refer the Indigenous Statement to the Central Committee.

Surprisingly, at this point, one of the bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia reminded the gathering that the assembly was meeting on Aboriginal land, and that it would be unconscionable to close it without having addressed the Aboriginal issues. The Indigenous Statement was put to a vote and passed unanimously in its entirety without any debate.

I watched these proceedings in disbelief and anger. What a statement—Aboriginal issues did not warrant a debate. I felt as though people were saying: “Let’s pass the damned thing and get on to something else.” For me, the passage of the Indigenous Statement was a hollow victory. Mere tokenism. I left Australia emotionally exhausted and with a sense of disillusionment. However, I also felt a greater determination to work toward making “For God so loved the world” a greater reality.

The church in the world and in our society must include all peoples and their cultural gifts.

*Laverne Jacobs, formerly Coordinator of Native Ministries in the Anglican Church of Canada, is currently Minister for Aboriginal Ministries in The United Church of Canada. The original text of this article appeared under the title “A Challenge to the Church” in Anglican Magazine, September 15, 1991. It is reproduced here with permission.*

## **For Reflection, Discussion, and /or Action**

- a) Discuss the role racism played in each of the three situations described by Laverne.
  - If you were a delegate to the WCC assembly in Canberra, how might you have thought and behaved in each of the three situations?
  - Why?
  
- b) In your experience:
  - Has anything similar to the incidents described in this article occurred in a United Church court (General Council, presbytery, pastoral charge/congregation)? Recall the incident and identify the oppression or injustice, as well as the players involved. With whom did you stand? What action were you able, or unable, to take?
  
- c) Turn to “Barriers Among Us and Within Us: Ethical Issues of Life in a Multicultural Society” (page 45) and “Revelations from the Power Flower” (page 53) to help you in your analysis of the dynamics involved in the three incidents.
  - To what extent is “inclusion” an issue in the three incidents, or was there something beyond that?

# PART III: Struggling Against Racism

## Raising Awareness and Deepening Analysis

We now move into heightening our awareness and deepening our analysis of racism issues. Because racism is experienced differently by white people and people of colour, there are separate resources for Aboriginals and people of colour and their groups, and separate resources for white people and participants of all-white groups. Consciousness-raising for white people primarily involves uncovering the ways in which they are implicated in systemic or institutionalized racism by their unrecognized racial privilege (compounded or lessened by gender, class, or educational privilege). Consciousness-raising for Aboriginal people and people of colour primarily involves uncovering the ways in which racism has been internalized by them and the way it is sabotaging their relationships with other minority persons or groups, as well as how intersecting oppressions render some sectors among their own number more vulnerable than others. A popular education tool called the “Power Flower” (page 53) will help all readers/participants to a better understanding of these intersecting dynamics.

## Raising Awareness for White People

### The Cost of Racism to White People

*by Paul Kivel*

We tend to think of racism as a problem for people of colour and something we should be concerned about for their sake. It is true...that racism has produced many benefits for white people, but there have been costs. Granted, they are not the same costs as the day-to-day violence, discrimination, and harassment that First Nations and racially different people have to deal with. Nevertheless, they are significant costs that we have been trained to ignore, deny, or rationalize—including the costs that other white people, particularly those with wealth, make us pay in our daily lives. It is sobering for us as white people to talk together about what it really costs to maintain such a system of division and exploitation in our society. We may even find it difficult to recognize some of the core costs of being white in our society.

For example, one of the costs of assimilating into white, mainstream culture is the loss of the languages, foods, music, and rituals of our grandparents. Losing our own “white” cultures and histories can lead to our either ridiculing the superstitions or romanticizing the richness of other cultures. We also lose when our history is whitewashed—the racist truths excluded, the contribution of other peoples and cultures left out, and the role of white people cleaned up and modified. Fed a false sense of our own superiority, domestically and globally, we develop attitudes that cost us friends and contribute to a global apartheid. Because we are subtly encouraged to keep to ourselves, limit inter-racial contacts, and demean other worldviews, it becomes easy to blame and fear the “other.” Our experiences are distorted, limited, and less rich the more they are exclusively or predominantly white....

Racism distorts our sense of danger and safety. We are taught to live in fear of people of colour. We are exploited economically by the upper class and unable to fight or even see this exploitation because we are taught to scapegoat people of colour. On a more personal level, many of us are brutalized by family violence

and sexual assault, unable to resist it effectively because we have been taught that people of colour are the real danger, never the white men we live with.

There are also spiritual costs. Many of us have lost a connection to our own spiritual traditions, and consequently have come to romanticize those of other cultures, such as Buddhism or Native American beliefs. Our moral integrity is damaged as we witness situations of discrimination and harassment and do not intervene.

Our feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, or inadequacy about racism and about our responses to it lower our self-esteem. Because racism makes a mockery of our ideals of democracy, justice, and equality, it leads us to be cynical and pessimistic about human integrity and about our future, producing apathy, blame, despair, self-destructive behaviour, and acts of violence, especially among our young people.

### ***Costs of Racism to White People Checklist***

It can be hard for us to be honest with ourselves about the costs of racism in our own lives. The following is a checklist you can use to evaluate the costs of racism to white people. Check each item that applies to you.

- I don't know exactly what my European American heritage is, what my great-grandparents' names were, or what regions or cities my ancestors are from.
- I grew up, lived, or live in a neighbourhood, or went to school or a camp, which, as far as I knew, was exclusively white.
- I grew up with people of colour who were servants, maids, gardeners, or babysitters in my house.
- I did not meet people of colour in person, or socially, before I was well into my teens.
- I grew up in a household where I heard derogatory racial terms or racial jokes.
- I grew up in a household where I heard as a child that people of colour were to blame for violence, lack of jobs, or other problems.
- I have seen or heard images in magazines, on TV or radio, on cassettes and CDs, or in movies of (check all that apply):
  - Mexicans depicted as drunk, lazy, or illiterate
  - Asians depicted as exotic, cruel, or mysterious
  - Asian Indians depicted as excitable or "silly"
  - Arabs depicted as swarthy, ravishing, or "crazed"
  - African Americans depicted as violent or criminal
  - Pacific Islanders depicted as fun-loving or lazy
  - American Indians depicted as drunk, savage, or "noble"
  - Any character roles from non-white cultures portrayed by white actors
- I was told not to play with children of particular other ethnicities when I was a child.
- I have sometimes felt that white culture was "wonderbread" culture—empty and boring—



that another racial group had more rhythm, more athletic ability, was better at math and technology, or had more musical or artistic ability than mine.

- \_\_\_ I have felt that people of another racial group were more spiritual than white people.
- \_\_\_ I have been nervous and fearful or found myself stiffening up when encountering people of colour in a neutral public situation (for example, in an elevator, on the street).
- \_\_\_ I have been sexually attracted to a person from another racial group because it seemed exotic, exciting, or a challenge.
- \_\_\_ I was in a close friendship or relationship with a person of colour where the relationship was affected, stressed, or endangered by racism between us or from others.
- \_\_\_ I have been in a close friendship or relationship with another white person where that relationship was damaged or lost because of a disagreement about racism.
- \_\_\_ I have felt embarrassed by, separate from, superior to, or more tolerant than other white people.
- \_\_\_ I have worked in a job where people of colour held more menial jobs, were paid less, or were otherwise harassed or discriminated against, and I did nothing about it.
- \_\_\_ I have participated in an organization, work group, meeting, or event which people of colour protested as racist or which I knew to be racist and did nothing about.
- \_\_\_ I have heard degrading jokes, comments, or put-downs about people of colour in my presence and did not protest or challenge them.
- \_\_\_ I have seen a person of colour being attacked verbally or physically and did not intervene.
- \_\_\_ I am concerned that there is not enough attention paid to family violence and sexual assault in my community because of the focus of police and criminal justice resources on communities of colour.
- \_\_\_ I am concerned that drug abuse in my white community is not taken seriously enough because disproportionate attention is on drug use in communities of colour.
- \_\_\_ I experience a heightened and intrusive state of surveillance and security in my neighbourhood, where I shop, in my school, when I cross borders, or when I use airports because of social fears of the dangers of people of colour.
- \_\_\_ I have had to accept unnecessary limits on my basic civil liberties because of social fears that people of colour are dangerous.
- \_\_\_ I have felt angry, frustrated, tired, or weary about dealing with racism and hearing about racial affairs.
- \_\_\_ I live in a community where, for whatever reason, no people of colour are present, so that some of these questions don't apply.

When I use this list in an exercise with a group of white people, and every person answers “yes” to a substantial number of the questions, I can see clearly that we have all paid some of the costs of racism. Realizing what those costs are can make us angry. If we are not careful, we can turn that anger toward people of colour, blaming them for the problems of white racism. Sometimes we say think things like, “If they weren’t here, we would not have these problems.” But racism is caused by white people, by our attitudes, behaviours, practices, and institutions. How is it that white people in general can justify retaining the benefits of being white without taking responsibility for perpetuating racism? How do you justify it for yourself?

*Reprinted with permission from Paul Kivel’s **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice, Revised Edition** (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 2002).*

# Raising Awareness for Aboriginals and People of Colour

## Privilege and Disentitlement Exercise

*based on an adaptation by Martin Cano of Paul Kivel's "The Cost of Racism to White People," from Uprooting Racism (see page 38)*

### **Instruction**

Check each statement as it applies to you, then add up your privileges (Ps) and disentanglements (Ds). Notice where intersecting of privilege or marginalizations occur and where they overlap and thus cancel out each other. Reflect on what this means for your functioning in a particular context and with a particular group of people.

1. You feel that your primary identity is "Canadian." (P)
2. You have been ridiculed or called names because of your race, ethnicity, or class background. (D)
3. You grew up with people of colour or working class people (e.g. servants, maids, gardeners, babysitters). (D)
4. You have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or other professionals. (P)
5. You started school speaking a language other than English or French. (D)
6. You received less encouragement in academics from your teachers because of your race or ethnicity. (D)
7. You once tried to change your physical appearance, mannerisms, or behaviour to avoid being judged or ridiculed. (D)
8. Women in your family, including yourself, have been physically or sexually abused in some way. (D)
9. You studied the history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in elementary and secondary school. (P)
10. You or one of your parents has been laid off, unemployed, or underemployed—not by choice. (D)
11. You have attended a private school or a summer camp. (P)
12. As a girl, you were given less support than the boys in your family for going to university or pursuing work goals. (D)
13. You grew up in a single-parent household. (D)
14. Prior to your 18th birthday, you took a vacation outside of your home province/town or village (if not born in Canada). (P)
15. Your parents owned their own home. (P)
16. You commonly see people of your own race or ethnicity on TV or in the movies in roles you consider degrading. (D)
17. You once got a good paying job or a promotion because of a friend or family member. (P)
18. You were once denied a job because of your race or ethnicity. (D)
19. You were once denied a job, paid less for comparable work, or had less qualified men promoted over you because you were a woman. (D)
20. You have inherited money or property. (P)
21. You have worked in a job where people of colour held more menial jobs, were paid less, or were otherwise harassed or discriminated against. (P)
22. You use primarily public transportation to get to where you want to go. (D)

# A Tool for Everyone

## Revelations from the “Power Flower”

by Wenh-In Ng based on Doris Marshall Institute

### **What It Is**

The “Power Flower” is a tool developed by Canadian social change educators when working with groups to “identify who we are (and who we aren’t) as individuals and as a group in relation to those who wield power in our society.” (*Educating for a Change*, p. 87) The centre of a daisy-type flower is divided into 16 segments, each representing one facet or category of our social identity (see diagram on page 54). This centre is surrounded by a double set of petals, one outer, one inner. The outer petals describe the dominant or powerful identities in society. The inner petals are filled in by participants and describe the social identity of each individual. The object of the exercise is to discover how close, or how distant, each person is to the dominant identity of their current society. The more inner petals match the outer (dominant) ones, the more social power that person possesses.

Often one or more centre segments are left blank for the group to identify aspects or categories of social identity that carry special power significance peculiar to their context. For instance, in a church, the category “lay” or “order of ministry” would be weighted with significance, with power implications. In anti-racism work, whether a person is born in Canada or outside Canada would likely make a difference.

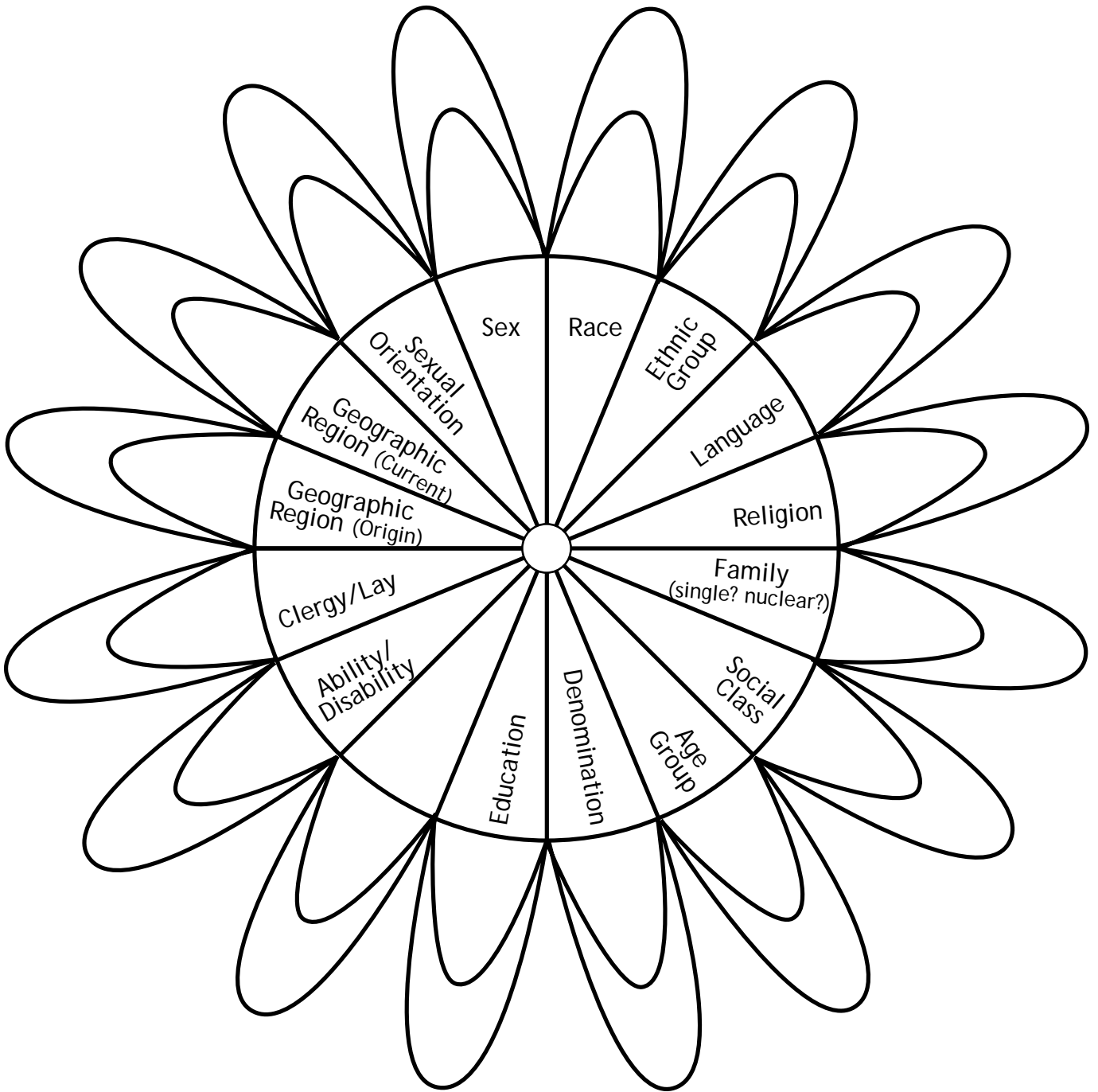
### **How the Exercise Works**

When planning to do this exercise, you need to duplicate enough copies of the flower (with the segments named - but see below) for the whole group, leaving the petals blank. Make a large replica of the diagram on a sheet of newsprint and tape it on the wall or flipchart. Then follow these steps:

- Step 1** Introduce the purpose and rationale of the power flower, referring to the flower on newsprint.
- Step 2** Working as a group, fill in the outer petals together. For instance, when completing the social dominance category, it would not be too difficult to agree that “white” should go in the outer petal. The same might go for “English” in the language category language, and “heterosexual” in the sexual orientation category. Distribute one blank individual diagram and have everyone transfer these outer petal descriptions onto their individual sheets.
- Step 3** Working individually or in pairs, have participants locate themselves in each inner petal on their own sheet. Count up the number of matching petals, noticing which match. Let each pair compare their results with that of their neighbours, making observations as they go along.
- Step 4** In the large group, ask people to come forward and transfer their inner petal locations onto the inner petals of the large flower. This makes up the composite, communal social identity of your group.

### **Reflecting on the Results**

# The Power Flower



Adapted with permission from *Educating for a Change* by Rick Arnold, Bev Burke, Carl James, D'Arcy Martin, and Barb Thomas (Toronto: Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action and Between the Lines Press, 1991).

**Personal social identity:** Count how many of your petals are different from the dominant outer petals, which means you do not share those areas of power conferred by society. What light does this throw on the way you have been treated as a person of privilege or as a marginalized person? Which of these cannot be changed (for example, where you were born, your sex), and which ones could be changed (e.g. level of education)?

**Group social identity:** What does the composite picture tell you about who you are as a group? Are you fairly privileged? In what ways are you not privileged? How might this affect, for example, the way you might go about anti-racism work? If your church is located in a neighbourhood that has changed quite substantially in recent years, what kind of power flower pattern might your “neighbours” present, and how much would it differ from your group flower? What implications would this pose to your church’s outreach ministry?

**Interpersonal relations within your group:** Notice who has fewer matching petals and thus less social power, and who has more. How can you turn this knowledge to advantage as the group works together? As you make decisions? For instance, you might as a group decide to take measures to make sure members with less power do get a chance to be heard. How do you as leader/facilitator compare with your group members? What does this reveal about possible tensions?

Reflect on the unequal weight given some of the categories, for example, race or social-economic class, and thus the need to adjust the “power quotient” wielded by some petals over others.

### **What to Expect**

As this exercise reveals aspects of our social identity that we are often not aware of, sometimes the unveiling can cause pain, anger, or even denial. A person who feels personally powerless is confronted by the fact that regardless of how she might feel, she is seen as wielding quite a bit of power by society in general. On the other hand, someone who feels personally responsible for not having succeeded may be freed from self-blame when they see that there are structural reasons holding them back. Helping one another untangle the personal from the structural can help us move forward with anti-racism work and with our struggle to seek justice against other oppressions.

For further explanations, refer to pp. 13 to 15 and pp. 87 to 88 in *Educating for a Change*.

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# Faith Basis for Racial Justice

## Biblical Reflection

The Bible is central to the church's life—its worship, Christian formation, Christian ethics, and both pastoral and social ministry. What we believe and how we act are often both consciously and subconsciously based on what we have learned from the Bible. Yet our understanding of what the Bible “means” and what it requires of us has traditionally been influenced and confined by the perspectives of those who have had the power and opportunity to study and interpret the biblical text—Western (usually male) scholars and clergy or other church leaders. Their version of the “Good News” is then proclaimed to the rest of us. But how do matters stand when someone who has a different perspective from that of the white, male Westerner comes face to face with Bible stories? What would strike them as most important? What facets of truth can they share with us that we have missed so far? As a member of the First Nations in Canada and a member of the Canadian church, Stan McKay shares fresh and challenging insights from his reading of two well-known Bible stories. These are followed by a brief invitation to read the scriptures from a “postcolonial” perspective, that is, the perspectives of people and groups who have been “colonized” by white Europeans not only in Canada, but around the world. The exercise will have implications for the way in which we approach our Bible study.

## Insights on Racism from Two Bible Stories

*by Stan McKay*

### **Moses**

Reading the part of Moses' story in Exodus 2:1-14 has been helpful to me as a way of using the Bible to gain insights into racism. The story is well known, but that often means that its use has been limited to reaffirming old learnings. Furthermore, this story can be an example of how we learn not only about God in scripture, but also about ourselves.

The classic setting for a racist environment is where some people have power and others are marginalized. The people with power see their power as a sign of superiority, including racial superiority. They feel threatened by the marginalized people because they are concerned about maintaining the security of their privileged position. Thus, we find the Egyptians destroying all the male infants of the Israelites. It is a program of genocide. The people called “the children of Israel,” on the other hand, seem to be leaderless. There is no record of rebellion by them, even at the time of the slaughter of their children, in spite of the earlier act of resistance from the midwives Shiprah and Puah. (Exodus 1: 15-22) They see themselves as powerless. Likely, they also see themselves as inferior. They have learned dependence.

The unique aspect of Moses' story is that, while he is destined for privilege, he is fed and learns love from his “real” (birth) mother and from his “own” family. Thus his formative years are as an Israelite, something his adoptive mother, the daughter of Pharaoh, does not appreciate when she later brings him into the palace and he is raised as a prince with access to riches and power. This attempt to transplant him into the ruling class never succeeds. Moses will never be an Egyptian because he has been nurtured by family who are not Egyptian. The day of Moses' identity crisis arrives when he recognizes the pain of “his people.” They are being cruelly ill-treated as slaves. He reacts with anger and violently declares, by his action, that he is not an

Egyptian. Similarly, this has been the experience of people both before and after Moses. It certainly is an experience that has been described to me by children who were removed from Native families and placed with “wealthy,” non-Aboriginal families. Like Moses, they may have lived as “adopted” persons for 10 to 15 years, with all of their physical needs met. They may have been separated from their roots for most of their lives and living, it would seem, as persons of privilege. Yet, suddenly, they cry out: “I am not an Egyptian! I am not an oppressor! I am rooted in the history of the oppressed!”

This happens to many Native people in Canada, even to those who have not been taken from their homes. There is an angry recognition of the racism being practised on them, and often violence ensues because of their frustration. It is my theory that the deep sense of powerlessness of Native people in the face of racism leads to self-destruction. At times, this may include abuse of alcohol and drugs. Canadian jails and prisons are filled with people like Moses. But, unlike Moses, we, in our present context, cannot disappear into the wilderness as a place of retreat where we might heal ourselves and strategize about our eventual liberation.

### ***The Good Samaritan***

The relationship between the Judeans and the Samaritans is an interesting study as an example of “refined” racism. In the story of The Good Samaritan, the racial difference between Israel and Samaria is not obvious, yet the degree of racism is still genocidal. These two groups are cousins with a shared ancestral history. The much-told tale, found in Luke 10:30-37, is usually related in a general way to teach children and adults to be kind. I have never heard it used in a service of worship as a story about racism. It deserves a more careful study, for here Jesus uses the parable to teach that it is not helpful to hold ideas about people as being racially inferior. Yet, for me, the key line in the story is not uttered by Jesus, but by the lawyer. To Jesus’ question, “Which of these three is neighbour?” he responds, “The one who shows mercy on him.” The racist lawyer cannot bring himself to say, “The Samaritan is a neighbour.” What a significantly tell-tale response!

In another story, Jesus visits and talks with the Samaritan woman at the well as a sign of his willingness to heal racial divisions. There are other references to Samaritans and Samaria in the scriptures. Each reference points to their being discriminated against, even in the early church. As the result of this racism, the Samaritans have experienced the destruction of their community. My research indicates that only two small colonies of these people remain; they are still experiencing oppression. Intermarriage amongst them has led to many physical disabilities, and today they are a dying people.

## **For Reflection, Discussion, and /or Action**

### ***Moses***

- a) Recall whether you have ever had an “aha” experience like that of Moses or like that of many First Nations people, making you see your situation as being with the marginalized rather than with the privileged and powerful.
  - Do you remember how you felt? With whom did you share this discovery?
  - What difference did it make in your life?
  
- b) If you have retained an “Egyptian” identity, discuss the strategies you might employ so that you could stand with “the children of Israel” in solidarity in the struggle against racism today.
  - What might you, your group, or your church have to give up or let go?
  - What might you gain?



## ***The Good Samaritan***

- a) Think of a group(s) of non-mainstream people whose relationship(s) with the mainstream/dominant group in society remind(s) you of the Samaritans of Jesus' day.
  - What has your relationship with them been like?
  - Are there any changes you would like to make?
- b) Do some research with others to find out whether these groups are present (in however small numbers) in your local area, or are only found in other regions.
- c) For those in mainstream/majority congregations or groups, name one or more things about you that in today's world would qualify you as "the good Israelite."
  - What help would you need to stay faithful in this ideal?

## Reading the Bible “As If We Were on the Other Side”: An Invitation to Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation

by Wenb-In Ng

Traditionally, Christians have grown up identifying themselves with the Israelites in the biblical story. Such an attitude is reinforced by experience in Sunday school, Bible study, and the sermons heard in church. As Paul puts it, Christians are “the new Israel” and therefore the new “chosen ones.” This identification puts them on the side of those who win and from whose perspective most of the biblical stories were passed down, edited, and written. Let us see how this operates in two well-known stories, that of the entry of the “chosen people” into Canaan in Israel’s foundational early history, and the story of the “great commission” Jesus is said to have given his disciples just before his ascension.

In the books of Exodus and Joshua, the story is told of how Yahweh (“I Am”) promised a land “overflowing with milk and honey” to the former slaves whom Moses had led out of Egypt. The way the expedition is named, “the conquest of Canaan,” betrays the bias: it is slanted in favour of the conquerors. We were taught to hear God saying, through Joshua, “Prepare your provisions...to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.” (Joshua 1:11) Such unconscious—even conscious—identification with the “chosen victors” could easily lead to a mentality that sees conquest as a right. We might transfer this concept to later conquerors. For example, one might imagine 15th and 16th century Spanish conquistadors sailing off to the Americas with a very similar mindset.

However, if we were the people of the land soon to be occupied, these newcomers would be seen as invaders, and their conquest as veritable armed aggression. After all, the Canaanites were the people who produced the milk and honey! While Rehab, the prostitute, is lauded in the biblical record for siding with the spies and their God, as Canaanites we would have condemned her for betraying her country and her people. It was surely genocide if Joshua 6:21 was carried out literally: “Then they devoted to destruction by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys.” But, of course, our side of the story, our feelings, our sufferings did not make it into the records.

Indeed, this story parallels what happened to many Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples around the world. (For a well-known interpretation from a Canaanite perspective, see “A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians” by Robert Allen Warrior in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third*

*World*. See Resources, page 104.) In this way, the Bible has been used as an “imperialist” text, one that justifies the racist treatment of “others” by the more powerful.

Another passage that has been frequently misused to imperialist effect is Matthew 28:18b-20, where Jesus is recorded as “commissioning” his disciples to “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” It is a text that inspired not only the early church, but subsequent generations of Christians from the Crusades on. It was interpreted to justify their travelling to foreign lands and for them to “win souls” for Christ. It culminated in the “great century” of missionary expansion (the 19th and early 20th centuries), which was accompanied, incidentally, by the European colonization of huge sections of Africa and Asia.

Such spiritual conquests also meant the displacement of indigenous religious practices. In the case of Asia, the movements to displace some of the world’s oldest and most established religious traditions, though not numerically successful, were deliberate attempts to establish Western religious-cultural ideals as the norm. Thus, such time-honoured texts as Matthew 28:18b-20 could be suspect when experienced by those who had been subjugated. Postcolonial biblical interpretation recognizes this abuse and makes a point of exploring such “colonial presence” in the biblical text.

### The Bible has been used as an “imperialist” text, one that justifies the racist treatment of “others” by the more powerful.

Another way that scripture has been used to condition us to adopt racist attitudes is in the use of darkness and light to symbolize evil and good. African American scholar, Randall Bailey, has pointed out how, in the biblical text, that which is referred to as dark or black has negative connotations—even cursed; that which is white is positive—even blessed. The use of such imagery is very prevalent and is the result of the bias of European translators who used such imaging even when the original meaning is quite the opposite.

Bailey cites as examples: (i) Miriam’s leprosy as “white as snow” (for challenging her brother Moses’ status because of his marriage to a Cushite and therefore a Black woman), definitely a curse, and (ii) the rendering of a line from the Song of Songs as “I am Black but comely” (*King James* version) rather than the alternative, “I am Black and comely” (*New Revised Standard Version*). Elevating the desirable and superior qualities of whiteness can be found in the famous image in Isaiah 1:18, where a Hebrew term which should have been translated “if” is rendered “though.” Now we have, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow.” By so doing, whiteness as a curse is again turned into blessing. Such imagery used regularly has had a cumulative effect on both white, European readers and readers of colour, giving an apparent biblical sanction to the superiority of whiteness and lighter skin and instilling a sense of inferiority in those of a darker hue.

Postcolonial biblical scholars, such as Musa W. Dube and R.S. Sugirtharajah (see Resources, page 103 and 104), point to the ambivalent state of our scripture, challenge us to detect such “elements of bondage” (Sugirtharajah 2002, pp. 101–103), and urge us to make them visible so that both the reader and the text can be liberated from the restraints and biases of the older translations. It is an invitation to read and interpret the Bible as a far more complex text, and Christians committed to racial justice will need to be confronted by the way our scripture has been used to justify the subjugation of others. Having to take such a step may not be comfortable, and some of us may be less ready than others. However, we do not need to do this alone. We might work together in a Bible study group. You will find the design for such a study group in Part V, “Resources To Support Educating Toward Racial Justice” (page 97).

*Wenh-In Ng is editor of this resource (see page vii).*

# Taking Action as Church for Pastoral Charges, Congregations, and other Church Courts

by Wenb-In Ng

## A Clarion Call from the World Council of Churches

As churches, we must

- **ACCEPT** our accountability for the perpetuation of racism
- **EXPOSE** the covert forms of racism in ourselves, our institutions, structures, practices, and policies
- **TRANSLATE** our indignation into credible action implemented by credible persons within credible institutions:
  - credible persons deliberately turn away from racism and combat it as a central part of their lives, not as something taken up only in special programs
  - credible churches and institutions are racially inclusive; they recognize and attempt to overcome racism wherever it exists
  - credible actions are realizable and relevant undertakings that go beyond anti-racist declarations

(Adapted from proposals for courses of action for the churches in *Understanding Racism Today: A Dossier*, World Council of Churches, 1999.)

## “Credible Actions”

### *Mission Statement*

Examine your congregation’s current mission. Is there an articulation of intent to recognize and fight racism? If not, initiate discussion within the official board, involving the church’s various groups and using some of the stories and data from this resource and others listed in “Resources,” page 103.

### *Audit*

Audit your congregation for “anti-racism credibility” by asking some of the following questions about areas of your life together:

- How racially inclusive are we? (In locations where racial-ethnic diversity is not obvious, you may have to make a deliberate effort to seek out “invisible” residents and businesses: begin with the local school.)
- Does our worship deliberately seek to break the unconscious assumption that God (and Jesus) is white (and European)?
- Do our educational programs for all ages and leadership training for them include an anti-racism dimension?

- In our proclamation of the Good News, are issues of racial injustice and discrimination adequately addressed?
- In our involvement in and service to the wider community, do we challenge racist structures and practices (such as we might see in hiring practices, and police action) wherever they occur?

## Monitoring Progress in Specific Areas

### ***Worship***

**Hymns** - Other than on World Communion Sunday, how often do we sing hymns that have originated in non-Euro-Anglo-American parts of the global church? Some examples are: “Many and Great, O God Are your Works” from the Dakota people (*Voices United* 308), “We Are Marching in the Light of God” from South Africa (VU 646), “May the God of Hope Go with Us” from Argentina (VU 424), “Dear Lord, Lead me Day by Day” from the Philippines (VU 568), “Sheep Fast Asleep” a Christmas carol from Japan (VU 52), “Come now O God of Peace” from Korea (VU 34), “God Be Praised at early Morn” a contemporary hymn from the church in China (VU 414).

**Prayers** - Is the issue of racial injustice included, occasionally at least, in prayers of confession, especially when a racist incident has occurred either locally or nationally? Are the perspectives of the racially sinned-against taken into account? Is racial justice part of the prayers of petition and intercession?

**Symbols and visual images** - Do some of the banners, wall decorations, and bulletin covers depict the racial and cultural multiplicity of God’s creation?

Are there other areas of worship where you might raise consciousness levels concerning racial issues?

### ***Educational Programs and Resources***

(Note: Christian Education Committee members, church school teachers, and youth group leaders will need to be exposed to anti-racism training in workshops within or outside the congregation in order to be able to address the following questions and issues.)

**Bible Study** - Is sufficient attention paid to the ambiguities in the Bible regarding ethno-cultural oppression? For example, how often do questions of cultural and racial genocide come up in “conquest/invasion” and “purity” stories? Refer to Stan McKay’s biblical reflections (on page 56) and to Wen-In Ng’s “Invitation to Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation” (page 58).

**Church school curriculum resources** - To what extent do the stories include and honour a variety of peoples and realities, and to what extent do they assume white realities are norm or reinforce white privilege? In their graphics/visuals, is there a variety of peoples represented without always depicting non-whites in subordinate or negative ways? In mission-oriented actions, is care given to avoid paternalism? Even if the congregation is not Aboriginal, it is important to expose learners to resources such as *The Dancing Sun* and *Children of The Dancing Sun* (see “Resources,” page 105).

**Youth group activities** - Are leaders encouraged and supported in addressing incidents with racist (and sexist) overtones and helping youth to analyze and oppose them? To what extent are the lyrics of songs monitored to detect racism and sexism? Are the decorations of the meeting room free of racist and sexist innuendoes? Are acts of anti-racism in the youths’ own environment of school, community, or part-time work celebrated and held up as examples to emulate?

**The church library** - Work with the committee or persons responsible for maintaining and expanding library holdings to ensure that (i) materials that are racist (degrading or paternalistic to Aboriginal people(s) or non-white minorities) are excluded; (ii) children's stories come from contemporary multicultural contexts (rather than "old," stereotypical contexts); and (iii) writing or art by Aboriginal and ethno-cultural minority writers and artists are given priority.

## **Actions for The Official Board and Committees**

Invite/challenge these bodies to:

- Examine the composition of their bodies: how racial-ethnically inclusive are they? How inclusive age-wise? Gender-wise? Class-wise? Ability-wise? Discuss the inadequacy of simply "including" minority members without involving them in decision-making or visible leadership in the congregation's ministries.
- Monitor members' behaviour and comments at meetings for perpetuating racial injustice or sexism/classism/heterosexism (refer to David Kai's skit on page 17, if you have not yet done so, using the questions on page 22 for reflection and action).
- Put anti-racism on their agendas, such as raising awareness about racism in their retreats and devotional practices. (For workshop outlines, including workshops as a component for an official board or committee meeting, see page 83.)
- Integrate an anti-racist dimension (e.g. ask "So what does this say about fighting for racial justice?") in all documents that the board and committee members receive for study and feedback.
- Link up with other congregations or pastoral charges and their groups in joint action.
- Invite Aboriginal and non-Euro individuals as speakers, resource people, and guest preachers.

### ***Presbyteries and Conferences***

Church courts beyond the pastoral charge can also come together either to offer anti-racism workshops, or to form networks for other strategizing. As we have seen from the United Church's historical timeline (page 35), Saskatchewan Conference engaged in anti-racism awareness raising and strategizing through its task force on racism in the 70s and 80s, involving presbyteries and congregations in workshops. Since the 90s, British Columbia Conference has focussed on addressing racism in partnership with its Prince Rupert [Native] Presbytery and is taking a lead in addressing the residential schools issue. Still others, such as Hamilton Conference, have established anti-racist networks for educational and action purposes, as well as formulating petitions to General Council. Its neighbour, Toronto Conference, recently (2002) formed an Anti-Racism Task Group, which plans to engage in both educational work with ministry personnel and other church leaders and in some form of direct action. Trinity-St. Paul's United congregation in Toronto is currently working on an anti-racist policy. And we share and celebrate the fact that Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference's anti-racism group is currently (2003) working on producing a Lenten resource with an anti-racist emphasis for 2004. It includes workshops for youth and children. Presbyteries and Conferences are encouraged to get in touch with these bodies so that mutual support and strategies can be shared.

The suggestions for possible action for official boards and committees may be applied to presbytery and Conference committees, and presbytery and Conference executives.

# Part V: Resources To Support Educating Toward Racial Justice

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Aboriginal** - Original inhabitants and Indigenous peoples of Canada—Indian (status and non-status), Inuit, Metis.

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

**Assimilation** - A process by which an individual or group adopts or is absorbed by the culture, values, and patterns of another social, religious, linguistic, or national group; may be practised as a deliberate government policy in an effort to “fold” newcomers or minority members of a community into the mainstream.

**Colonial** - Belonging to the period of expansion of European (including British) rule in the “new world” (the Americas) after 1492 and in large parts of Africa and Asia from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century especially. Colonialism is characterized by “power over” of rulers over the ruled, not only politically and economically, but also socially and religio-culturally. One example is the way Aboriginal peoples and their cultures—including First Nations communities—have been subjugated by white, Western nations/groups/people, the effects of which continue today. Another example is the subjugation of Korean people and their culture by Japanese imperial ambitions over neighbouring territories during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Cross-racial hostility** - Hostile attitude and oppressive behaviour exercised by people of colour against one another based on “prejudice plus trying to feel powerful.” More accurately describes such behaviour rather than a term like “horizontal racism” since people of colour do not have the power to determine the quality of life over other groups of people, power that is backed by law and institutions.

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

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

**Ethno-cultural** - Particular heritage or background sharing similar language, culture, history, values, and so on, applicable to all distinct groups, including dominant groups.

**Ethnic minority** [in Canada and in the UCC] - Non-Anglo non-French communities, groups or persons in Canada apart from Aboriginals.

**First Nations** [in Canada] - Aboriginal peoples or nations who negotiated and signed treaties with the British Crown’s representatives as nation to nation.

**Inclusive** - This term is problematic in that it assumes that one individual or group is in a position to decide whether to “include” or “exclude”; marginalization and tokenism often still result. Thus the concept is not used in this resource in spite of its use by other anti-racism texts. Instead, we envision a church where people are not “excluded” or merely “included,” but where structure, policy, and practice are rooted in diversity.

**Integration** - A process that allows groups and individuals to become full participants in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of a society without requiring the loss of their own identity. It is a process by which groups or individuals interact on a more or less equal basis in the same community/institution/organization.

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

**Intersecting oppressions or “isms”** - The multiple oppressions—racism, classism, sexism, and so on—experienced simultaneously by persons or groups who are marginalized by reason of racial discrimination, economic status, gender, and so forth.

**Multicultural** - Consisting of a diverse group of cultures.

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

**People of colour** - People other than white people living in Canada and the United States (where it originated as a term referring to African Americans) regardless of their place of birth or immigration status; could be a self-chosen term.

**Post-colonial** - The period after former colonies in Africa and Asia had gained political independence from their white, European rulers. The term gained significance after Edward Said published his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), and is used by scholars of literature for studying cultures impacted by colonialism as recorded in novels and other literary productions. It is used by biblical scholars as a ‘lens’ to read and interpret biblical texts with an awareness of how colonial tendencies have been used by dominant groups to ‘marginalize’ less powerful groups, often with an ‘oppositional’ intent.

**Prejudice** - Literally, “pre-judgment.” An attitude or state of mind casting another person or group negatively or positively based on stereotyping or misinformation.

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

**Race** - A contested term referring to a socially defined group seen by others (or seeing itself) as being distinct by sharing external features such as skin colour, facial or bodily characteristics, hair texture, and/or a common descent. There is no proven scientific basis for such categorization. Historically, race is an arbitrary socio-biological category created by European [male] colonists in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and used to assign human worth and social status with themselves at the top.

**Racial discrimination** - Discrimination based on “race,” denying equal treatment, civil liberties, and equal opportunity to targeted groups and individuals.

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

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



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

**Racism** - A system of advantage and privilege based on “race,” in which one group of people exercise abusive power over others on the basis of skin colour and racial heritage. A set of implicit or explicit beliefs, erroneous assumptions and actions based upon an ideology which accords inherent superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another or others.

- Racism is measured not by intent, but by its effect on those oppressed.
- Racism can be overt or covert, individual or systemic, intentional or unintentional.
- Racism confers privilege on and sustains the dominant/powerful group.
- Racism exists everywhere in our society, all institutions, and in our church.

**Reverse racism** - A term used mistakenly to refer to hostile behaviour by people of colour toward white people, or to refer to affirmative action policies which allegedly give “preferential treatment” to people of colour over whites.

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

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

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

**White privilege** - Unearned power enjoyed by whites and giving them economic, political, social, and cultural advantages.