

A New Church/A New World

Preface

We welcome you to this deliberation about A New Church/A New World and hope that this will be a beginning step for your local church in examining the forces of racism at work in your church and community. Your participation in this project is important so together we can confront the sin of racism and join in a commitment to work actively to build A New Church in A New World.

This project is part of the ongoing work of the United Church of Christ in fulfilling its commitment to be a multiracial and multicultural church, and is to be seen in a larger context of continuing study and action. It can serve as a springboard for your local church's journey in confronting racism.

It is expected that the leadership of the local church will have made a commitment to address multicultural/diversity issues and that using this resource will be one step in that process. A pastor may begin the process by talking with two or three persons who are concerned about issues of racism and together they may approach an appropriate committee for the necessary support and commitment. The local church can, first, make a commitment to a process of study and action; second, select leaders for additional training; third, implement the use of this resource first with committee members and leaders within the local church who can then help to recruit other participants. The study can be offered repeatedly for additional participants so that the circle of persons within the local church who are committed to counteracting racism continues to grow and expand.

Since no resource can address all possible audiences, the primary target audience for this resource is the dominant European American membership of the United Church of Christ. In order to become the multiracial/multicultural church that the UCC has committed itself to become, the historic ethnocentrism of the church needs to be recognized. This resource is written not to assign guilt or blame for the current makeup of the church, but to provide awareness and understanding in order to move forward as a church as the whole people of God.

It is the commitment of the Justice and Witness Ministries Racial Justice Team that *A New Church/A New World* serve as a resource to mobilize individuals, congregations, and communities in the pursuit of racial justice.

In a spirit of peace and justice,

Rev. Dr. Bentley de Bardelaben
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Overview

Context

This resource is part of a long-term process of transformation in becoming a multiracial/multicultural church. Every UCC local church needs to be involved in study and action in order to eradicate racism and build for diversity. The purpose of this resource is to help the local church be exposed to that task and to be enabled to make a decision to take on that task.

In keeping with that purpose, this resource is to serve as a beginning step for the local church to set its goals and course for involvement in a continuing process of study and action. It will only introduce complex and difficult questions and will need follow-up involvement within the local church. In order to be effective in addressing racism this study process must be seen as only a very small beginning.

The denial of racism and denial of denial are inherent to the nature of racism. To achieve its purpose, this process will help people get beyond denial in order to make a commitment to become effective agents for change. The study requires personal involvement and a commitment to deal not only with cognitive understandings but also with emotional responses.

Objectives

As a result of participating in this study, participants will be able to:

- 1) Identify examples that expose the systemic and subtle nature of contemporary racism in U.S. society and the church;
- 2) Describe the importance of power in defining racism and how it works within U.S. society and its institutions; and
- 3) State their own commitment to continue the learning process and to work actively against racism.

Leadership

A New Church/A New World is to be led by trained persons who have participated in at least one more extensive anti-racism training event, or by one or more persons trained to implement this project specifically. Local churches will select persons to be trained who are willing and committed to lead the study and to work actively against racism. The leader should have good interpersonal skills, small group process skills, and be aware of and comfortable with his or her own cultural self-awareness and ethnic group identity. The leader should be able to serve as a model of a person who has struggled with understanding prejudices, oppression, and racism.

Audience

This resource recognizes that in most settings within the UCC the audience will be European American, and therefore it is written to that audience. In those settings where persons of color are members of the local church and participating in the group, it is expected that a person of color will be a part of the leadership team and will adapt the materials as needed to reflect the experiences and understandings of those who are participating. Whenever possible, it is preferred that the group be led by a joint team of a

European American and a person of color; the study will be enhanced and enlarged by those perspectives.

Group Size

The ideal size of the group is twelve to eighteen persons. A minimum group size is ten participants. If the number of participants is greater than twenty, two leaders should be present. The maximum size for this process with a leadership team is thirty-five.

Time Frame

The study is designed for flexibility of use in varying schedules and formats. The ideal format is a retreat setting of a day and a half or two days, with each session scheduled as a separate module. The minimum time to be allotted is six hours, with two hours per session.

Each session is structured with an introduction and closing, so that sessions may be scheduled separately over a three week period. If you have separate sessions, it is important to receive a commitment from participants to attend the entire series.

Space Requirements

The setting for this study should be a comfortable environment in a room with adequate space for the number of participants. The room should be set up for each session with chairs arranged in a circle for all participants and leaders. Tables tend to block interaction and should not be used.

Materials/Equipment Needed

Specific materials needed for each session are noted at the beginning of that session. The leader will need to review all materials prior to each session and make certain that all needed copies are made and that all other materials and equipment are on hand. Newsprint and markers will be needed for each session. A VCR and monitor will be needed for session 1.

Participant Materials

The following materials will be needed for participants during the three sessions:
Nametags – for session 1 and following sessions as needed
Handouts – Definitions of Racism, Suggested Reading list, Evaluation Form

Evaluation

A sample evaluation form is included in the resource guide. This evaluation will be helpful for your own feedback within the local church, and for the further development of materials through the Racial Justice Program.

Continuing Study and Action

At the end of this study, participants will be asked to make their own personal commitments to resisting racism, and also to work toward a commitment as a local church. *A New Church/A New World* will be most effective if it leads towards the development of a long-term plan in the local setting.

That long-term plan may include a strategy for bringing others into this same process, a system for data collection on evidences of racism within the local church, a

commitment to send a number of local church members to receive additional training, etc.

We are hopeful that this resource will provide the beginning step for your local church to see racism in a new way and to be the springboard into a journey of building *A New Church/A New World*.

Part 1

Charting Racism

Purpose

During this session, participants will reflect on their own awareness of racism's realities in the 1990s, and be introduced to racism as a systemic problem. The emphasis should be on understanding how racism continues to work in subtle but powerful ways in the 1990s. This process is a crucial first step in building a commitment to work against racism.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to

1. Identify attitudes and instances of both overt and covert racism;
2. Understand the breadth and subtleties of contemporary racism;
3. Recognize and name examples of racism within their own community;
4. Recount evidences of racism within their own congregation; and
5. Acknowledge the brokenness within God's human family because of the sin of racism.

Bible References

Genesis 1:27. *God's creation is one of unity and harmony, with all of humanity created equally in the image of God.*

John 17:21. *Jesus Christ revealed the importance of Christian unity and diversity, praying, "That all may be one. . . ."*

Genesis 4:8-11. *The unity and harmony of God's creation is broken by sin.*

Session Outline

Minutes*	Activity	Materials Needed
20	Introductions of participants	Nametags (optional)
10	Introduction to the study and group agreement	Chalkboard or newsprint
5	Set the Biblical context	Bible
15	Beginning the Process: Assessment of racism in the 1990s	
15	Updating Knowledge: Video on the realities of racism	Prime Time video
40	Deepening Understanding: Discussion of the video	Chalkboard or newsprint
15	Closing reflection and prayer	Bible

*These suggested times will allow the group to move through this section in two hours. If the session is in a retreat setting, it is helpful to use the time for closing as a check-in point before taking a break and moving on to the next section.

I. Welcome and Introduction

A. Introductions of participants [20 minutes]

Name tags are optional depending on the familiarity of the group with one another. Introductions, however, are an important beginning to establish identity as a group.

Ask participants to introduce themselves by 1) giving their name, and 2) sharing something about themselves a) by telling the history or meaning of their name that is special to them or b) by describing their ethnic or racial heritage.

The leaders can introduce themselves in the same way and then explain a little more about themselves and why they have decided to become involved in this process.

B. Introduction to the Study and Group Agreement [10 minutes]

1. Review the time frame for this study and give any other logistical information that is needed.

2. Give an introduction to the study, sharing the background and purpose for these sessions. Use ideas from the following sample introduction:

In the *Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism and The Role of The Church*, issued in January, 1991, the United Church of Christ challenged the leaders and members of the church to:

examine fully and critically the racist attitudes which permeate most of our institutions, including the church. That is, it calls upon us as church members to recognize the systemic nature of racial discrimination in American society. Many people have emotions and opinions about racism, be they conscious or unconscious, articulated or unarticulated, vehement or passive. Many do not understand where these emotions and opinions come from. Nor do many understand why racial and ethnic peoples insist upon using particular methods to discuss and deal with racism. There is ample reason for such confusion; racism is a complex phenomenon.¹

Racism is indeed an extremely complex phenomenon, and addressing racism is difficult and painful. We have been carefully taught in many different ways in our society to overlook and to be blind to the realities of racism. The existence of racism is deeply imbedded in our society, and institutions, including the church, have been instrumental in perpetuating and undergirding the continuation of racism. Every single person in our society has been touched by racism, and all of us have been damaged and diminished by its pervasive presence.

As we begin, it is important not to assign blame or to take on a heavy burden of guilt for the existence of racism. Guilt and blame do not empower us to act. Rather, we begin with a commitment to be willing to feel, and to learn and grow in understanding so that we can act with new clarity and new conviction.

There are times when we have failed to act, and times when we did not achieve as much as we wanted to in the struggle against racism. Eliminating racism also involves

¹ *United Church of Christ, Pastoral Letter On Contemporary Racism And The Role Of The Church: Background*, p. 11.

understanding the difficulties we have had and learning to overcome them, without blaming ourselves for having had those difficulties.

The *Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism and The Role of The Church* called every member and local church of the United Church of Christ to be working actively against racism in ourselves and in society. This course is only one step in a long-term process of transformation within ourselves, the church, and our society. We need every UCC local church, along with every local church of all religious backgrounds and every other institution within our society, to address racism and build for diversity on an ongoing basis. This resource has been prepared to help expose local churches to that long-term task and make a decision to take it on.

3. Share the following three outcomes of this study: a) participants will be able to identify examples of racism in U.S. society and the church, b) they will be able to describe the importance of power in defining racism, and c) they will state their own commitment to continue the learning process and to actively work against racism.

4. State that the goal of this first session is to increase awareness of the continuing realities of racism and racial injustice in the 1990s within United States society and within the local church and the community.

5. Explain that some common ground rules are important to listen respectfully to each other and care for one another. Remind participants that racism has touched each of our lives and has hurt us all in different ways. It is, therefore, not only an issue of society but also a deeply personal issue which can elicit a wide range of feelings. Because this subject is filled with many emotions, extra care is needed within the group.

Share the following list of basic ground rules with the group. Add any other guidelines that you feel are important. As you explain each rule, list the key words on a chalkboard or newsprint.

- a. Treat each person within the group with respect. We are all on a journey in our understanding of racism and in our actions in working against racism. We are responsible for our own place on that journey and for our continued commitment to that journey, and we are to be respectful of each other's journey where it may differ from our own.
- b. Respect the confidentiality of what is shared within the group. We may share with others what we have learned or how we have grown, but we need to trust that what is shared here within the group is held with respect and confidentiality.
- c. Speak only for yourself and not for others. We need to speak out of our own experiences, and not try to speak for the feelings or experiences of others.
- d. Be open to sharing and growing. We need to trust one another and risk being vulnerable in order to grow. We need to share our thoughts and feelings and uncertainties and trust that this is a safe place to do so.

Ask whether anyone has anything that they need to add to this basic list of ground rules in order to feel comfortable in beginning this process. After any additions have been made to this list, ask for a show of hands or a verbal word of consensus that everyone is willing to agree to these basic guidelines.

C. Biblical context [5 minutes]

Ideas to share:

As people of faith, we begin to address racism by recalling God's intention for creation. In Genesis 1:27, we read, "So God created humankind in the divine image; in

the image of God humankind was created; male and female God created them” (*Lectionary for the Christian People*). It is clear in the words of Genesis that God created all of humanity equally in the divine image, without limitation or discrimination of any kind. The entire story of creation is one of celebration of the wonder and magnitude of the diversity of God’s creation, and yet of the unity and wholeness of all that God created. God’s gift of humanity is full of the richness of the unity and diversity of the entire creation, and of the wonder of being called into loving relationship with God and with all of God’s children.

God’s intention for the oneness and harmony of humankind is retold in the prayer of Christ according to John 17:21: “That they may all be one; as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (NRSV). The good news of the Gospel cannot be limited to only some people, but is to be a source of unity bringing all people together. The church, then, is to be a witness and an example to society of the unity and diversity that can be found within the family of God’s creation.

This vision of unity and of God’s intention for a diverse creation is a powerful vision that brings us together in this study and that informs all of our lives. That vision is the theological and biblical base of the United Church of Christ in accepting the call of God to be a multiracial and multicultural church. It is a vision that guides our thinking and directs our actions. It is a vision by which we can mark our journey:

God’s intention for us, as members of the human family, is that our lives and actions reflect a sense of community with all people. For Christians, the church is our smaller home within the larger human community. As we gather in the church to study and act on contemporary racism, it is increasingly important to focus on the entire world, with its many and various peoples, as God’s household.²

II. Beginning the Process (15 Minutes)

The *Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism and The Role of The Church* begins by naming racism, in all its overt and covert forms, to be an affront to the very foundations of our faith. It names racism as a sin. This session will involve participants in recognizing and naming the sin of racism that leads to human brokenness in church and community.

Begin with a group assessment of the current state of racism by asking for a show of hands on the following questions:

1. In looking at the effects of racism on people’s lives in the United States, do you think things are better now than in 1960? If so, raise your hand.
2. If you think things are worse now than in 1960, raise your hand.
3. How many of you think things are both better and worse than in 1960 and really wanted to raise your hand for both?

Ask participants to turn to a person next to them and together name one way in which the racial situation has gotten better since 1960 and one way in which it has gotten worse.

² United Church of Christ, *Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism And The Role Of The Church: Study and Action Guide*, p. 23.

Put up two sheets of newsprint, one titled “Better” and one titled “Worse.” Without discussing the responses, list the examples on the two sheets as participants name those examples. Ask the group to summarize what they have heard.

III. Updating Knowledge (15 minutes)

Be prepared to show the video “True Colors,” produced by Prime Time.

Introduce the video by telling participants that this video was filmed in the fall of 1991, and is, therefore, a very current view of the present realities of racism. Ask participants to take note as they watch it of how this picture matches reality as they know it and understand it. Explain to participants that this video was filmed in St. Louis, but it could have been anywhere in the United States. It is a reflection of the different realities for an African American and European American, but the discrimination experienced by the African American young man would in some ways also be experienced by Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latin Americans.

View the video.

IV. Deepening Understanding (40 minutes)

Discuss the realities of racism as reflected in the video and move toward a sharing of participants’ own experiences of racism within the church, community, and larger society.

[Note: You may receive some resistance from participants during this discussion. Some may wish to give examples of “reverse discrimination” and try to argue that racism no longer exists. Keep the discussion focused on the realities as reflected in the video and in persons’ experiences. Acknowledge that while individual cases may stand out in which an individual person of color receives advantage, the video reflects the overall reality for persons of color.]

Questions for discussion: (Record responses on chalkboard or newsprint)

1. What evidences of racism did you see in the video?
2. How did you feel as you watched the video?
3. In the video, the woman uses the phrase “Have a nice day racism.” What did she mean by that?
4. Talk about overt and covert racism. What else goes on that couldn’t be seen outwardly on film? How does racism go on with a smiling face?
5. If you brought a video camera into this church, what evidences of racism or exclusion would the camera see? (Remember to look at pictures on the walls, music used in worship, the curriculum used with young people, the atmosphere of welcoming, etc.)
6. How does the community reflect that racism is alive and well? Reflect briefly on how racism shows itself in the community in housing, jobs, education, poverty levels, etc.

Conclude the discussion by sharing brief statistics or stories on the ongoing realities of racism. Watch your newspapers for examples of statistics or articles that reflect the strength of racism in determining people’s experiences. If you are not able to find any current local information, use the following statistics.

Statistics to share

- One out of every four children under the age of six in the United States lives beneath the poverty level. Sixty percent of these children in poverty are children of color (Children's Defense Fund statistics, 1993).
- African American children are 3.4 times more likely than European American children to be poor; Latino children are 3 times more likely to be poor (CDF, 1993).
- Poverty among the Asian Pacific American population is 1.5 times higher than that of non-Hispanic whites; in metropolitan areas with high concentrations of Asian Pacific Americans, the poverty rate is roughly twice as high as that of non-Hispanic whites (*Economic Diversity, Issues and Policies*, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP 1994).
- More than 38 percent of the Native American population has an income below the poverty level. Though many reservations have gaming plans and successful casinos as a way to resolve poverty and unemployment, there is still public, state, and federal opposition to this direction of economic growth; this opposition threatens self-determination of tribal governments.
- In 1994, African Americans were 2.3 times more likely to be unemployed than European Americans; 41 percent of African American men nationally are without employment (US Department of Labor, 1994).
- The average full-time employed African American person makes 77 cents for every dollar the European American makes. The Hispanic worker makes even less (USDOL, 1994).
- The unemployment level for Native American young people on some reservations is 80 to 90 percent.
- Latin American women are twice as likely as non-Latin women to be employed in service occupations.
- Nationally, 25 percent of Asian Pacific Americans, age 25 and over, have less than a high school degree and/or possess limited English language skills. Therefore, disadvantaged Asian Pacific Americans have a low labor force participation rate (63 percent), and only 32 percent work full-time, usually in low-skilled occupations. Approximately 90 percent of this disadvantaged population are immigrants, two-thirds of whom entered this country as adults, and one-third having been here five years or less (LEAP, 1994).
- Native American health status is twenty to twenty-five years behind the national average, and life expectancy is about one-third less, even though the Federal government's Indian Health Services was created to provide health care to residents of Indian Reservations. Most Native Americans living in urban communities have no health insurance; nor do they qualify for Indian Health Service care.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that in 40 metropolitan areas, 70 percent of all rental applicants and 90 percent of potential home buyers were steered into separate African American and European American neighborhoods. Continued residential segregation is also the result of organized purposeful exclusion on the part of European American residents, exclusion which can also include harassment, assault, vandalism, and arson.
- In the criminal system, studies have shown consistently high populations of African American and Hispanic and Native American people. Studies have also shown these population groups receive harsher sentencing than European American. In California, which has been using the “three strikes and you’re out” law, 57.3 percent of African American convicted have been sentenced under the law (44 per 100,000 in the general population), compared with only 12.6 percent of European Americans (2.6 per 100,000).
- The Center for Democratic Renewal documented nearly 3,000 cases of racially-motivated or hate-related violence between 1980 and 1986. That is a rate of one and a half racially motivated crimes per day, reported and documented.

Remind participants that while some progress has been made in correcting injustices caused by racism and that in some areas persons of color are more visible in significant positions, the reality, as evidenced by the statistics and stories, is that the effects of racism are as strong and damaging as ever. While laws no longer allow clearly overt racism, subtle and covert racism is stronger than ever. It is in the context of this reality that we are engaged in this process.

V. Integrating Learning (15 minutes)

Invite each participant to share briefly one new understanding or insight from this session.

Read Genesis 4:8-11:

Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out to the field.” And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He said, “I do not know: am I my brother’s keeper?” And the Lord said, “What have you done? Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” (NRSV).

Give a brief reflection on the reading and this session, sharing some of the following thoughts:

The story of Cain and Abel is a story of brokenness within the human family. God gave the gift of family, and immediately it was broken. The story of Cain and Abel is the story of humanity through the ages. The family of God is broken and divided.

Members of the family exist in a state of constant hostility and mistrust, often seeking to oppress, hurt, and even kill each other. Moreover, we often seek to deny our identity as part of the same family.

Through the years we have seen the human family broken and divided in many ways. We have turned against one another and built barriers of separation through racism, through sexism, through militarism, through heterosexism, through classism, through ageism, through able-ism, through ethnocentrism, and on and on. We have a vision of God's intention for a diverse creation, but as we have seen again in this session, we live as broken people in a broken world.

Close with this prayer or another of your choosing:

God of creation, we are a broken people. We have heard your intention for wholeness in our lives, and have seen the power of evil that breaks your intention. Help us to be honest with ourselves and to face our own brokenness. Help us to remember that you came among us to break down the dividing walls of hostility and to bring us together as one in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Note: If this is a separate session and you will not be meeting again for a week, suggest that participants begin a journal in which they reflect on their learnings throughout the week. As a specific assignment, ask participants to look carefully for examples of racism within the congregation or within their work place during this next week.

Part 2

Defining Racism

Purpose

During this session participants will define the systemic nature of racism as different from personal prejudice or personal acts of bigotry. The focus will be on the dynamics of power within institutions which is central to the definition of racism. Understanding the importance of power in keeping racism going is critical. It turns the focus from the individual to the institutions and from persons of color to European Americans.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, the participants will be able to:

1. Explain the differences between prejudice and racism;
2. Give a definition of racism that reflects its systemic nature;
3. Discuss the implications of the definition of racism for the work of dismantling racism; and
4. Acknowledge that the bonds of racism imprison every person in this society.

Bible Reference

John 8:31-36. *Through Christ, God offers a way of freedom from the bondage of racism.*

Session Outline

Minutes*	Activity	Materials Needed
10	Check-in with participants	Nametags (optional)
5	Prayer and introduction to Session	
10	Beginning the Process: Feelings related to Racism	Newsprint and Markers
40	Updating Knowledge: Defining Racism	Newsprint, Copies of the Definition of Racism
40	Deepening Understanding: Discussion of the Definition	Newsprint
15	Integrating Learning: Closing reflection and prayer	Bible

* These suggested times will allow the group to move through this section in two hours. If you are using the session in a retreat or workshop setting, it will be important to keep the time for closing in this section to give participants the opportunity to share the feelings that may have surfaced during this session.

I. Welcome and Introduction

A. Check-in with participants [10 min]

If you are re-gathering since the first session, make certain that participants know one another, using name tags or re-introducing themselves as needed.

Invite participants to share any reflections, questions or concerns that they have since the last session. List the questions or concerns on chalkboard or newsprint and address them as much as possible. You may not be able to address some concerns at this time, but make certain that the concern is listed and that the person feels he/she has been heard. If possible, come back to that concern at another time within the group, or set a separate time to talk with the person.

If you are re-gathering, check on participants' responses to the assignment. List on newsprint the ways they saw racism at work.

B. Opening prayer and introduction to session [15 minutes]

Begin the session with prayer:

Dear God, we gather as your broken and divided people. We have come again to struggle and to learn. We ask you to be present with us and to open us to new understandings. Give us the courage to face what may be painful and the conviction to answer your call to be a new people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Explain that this second session will explore the definition of racism. State that the goal of this session is to achieve an understanding of the *systemic nature* of racism as opposed to personal prejudice and personal acts of bigotry, and an understanding of the dynamics of power that keep racism going.

II. Beginning the Process (10 minutes)

Write the word “RACISM” in the center of a sheet of newsprint. Ask participants for the first thoughts and feelings that come to them when they hear the words “RACISM” or “RACIST.” Write them on the newsprint.

Explain to participants that the words “racism” and/or “racist” bring up many different feelings in persons and have different meanings to different persons. It is important to acknowledge the thoughts, feelings and differing definitions we bring so we can lay them aside and work on a new definition and understanding that bring us together and help in effectively working against racism.

Put the piece of newsprint aside and write the word “RACISM” on a new sheet of newsprint. Hang this sheet in a visible place and explain that it will be used for building a definition.

III. Updating Knowledge

A. Identify the role of power in racism [15 minutes]

Ask participants to think for a moment about a time when they felt that they were treated unjustly, and to think about why they felt that way. Then ask them to turn to the person next to them. Ask each person in the pair to share that experience and, as a pair, to identify any underlying common understanding of why they felt treated unjustly.

As a total group, on another sheet of newsprint list the responses from each of the pairs. Words or phrases that will emerge are: not having a part in the decision; not feeling that my voice mattered; not feeling that I counted; realizing that someone else had more rights or power.

Identify the lack of power as a common element in people’s experiences of being treated unjustly. Note that in all instances of injustice the person who is being acted against feels powerless to change the situation. The power of decision, the power of policy, the power of resources all lie in the hands of the one who is acting as the oppressor.

Write the word “power” on the sheet of newsprint with the “RACISM.” Explain that as the group has elicited from their experiences of injustice, power is a key element in the definition of racism. A general definition of power is “the ability to act.” When the use—or misuse—of power moves from the individual to the institutional and societal level, it allows all members of the group in power to receive certain benefits while denying benefits to others. Whether or not one exercises power individually, societal institutions and systems exercise power. The definition of power used here is “access to and control of the legitimate systems and institutions in a society.”

B. Identify the Role of “whiteness” and of institutions in Racism [10 minutes]

Ask participants to recall the video from the last session. Ask them to name the kinds of power that others had over the young African American man’s life. List them on newsprint as they are named. Examples will include: power to determine where he would live; power not to wait on him in the store; power to determine how much more he would have to pay for a car; power to give him a job opportunity.

After the list is complete as far as participants can recall, go back over the list and put an **ID** in front of the items in which his mistreatment was the action of an individual,

and an **IN** in front of the items in which his mistreatment was the action of an institution or the larger society. Put a **B** in front of the items that are difficult to distinguish—where the individual is acting on behalf of the institution or of the larger society.

Ask participants to identify the common factors in who held the power over the young man's life. Common factors will be "white" people and "white" institutions and society.

Add the words "white" and "institutions" and "white society" to the "RACISM" newsprint.

C. Define Racism [15 minutes]

Explain to participants that the words "power, white, institutions, and white society" are key to the understanding of racism within the United States.

Hand out the sheet on the Definition of Racism. Explain that the definitions of prejudice, racism, and institutional racism are from the *UCC Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism And The Role of The Church*.

Note that *prejudice* is often misinterpreted as *racism*. Review the definition of the word "prejudice." Note that all persons have prejudices. Ask for examples of groups who have been the focus of prejudice. Explain that people have prejudices against many different people for a variety of reasons. Some of the prejudices we hold are directed against persons of particular racial or ethnic groups. Those attitudes are defined as *racial prejudice*.

Explain to participants that while all persons may have varying degrees of racial prejudice, prejudice is different from racism because of the power to act on those prejudices. In the United States, only European American persons have the power of society and institutions to enforce their racial prejudices. Because of the current inequities of power in this society, reverse racism is not an accurate term. Persons of color participate in systemic racism because of internalized oppression.

[You may again experience some resistance at this point. Participants may raise examples of racism against European American persons in other countries, of individual acts of violence against European American persons, of intergroup conflict between persons of color. Remind participants that this study focuses only on racism within the U.S., and on the important role of power and institutions. While individuals may act out their prejudices against one another, in this country only European Americans have the power of the institutions standing behind them to enforce their prejudices within the larger society.]

Ask one or more participants to read out loud the paragraphs defining racism and internalized oppression.

Racism is racial prejudice plus power. Racism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others. This use of power is based on a belief in superior racial origin, identity or supposed racial characteristics. Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism. Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, cultural, religious, educational, economic, political and military institutions of societies. Racism is more than just a personal attitude. It is the institutionalized form of that attitude.³

³ National Council of Churches, *Policy Statement on Racial Justice* (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1984), pp 4-5.

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two, related forms: individual European Americans acting against individual persons of color, and acts by the total European American community against communities of color. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury, or the violent destruction of property. This type can be reached by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far more subtle, and less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forms in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type.⁴

Institutional Racism is one of the ways organizations and structures serve to preserve prejudice. Intended or not, the mechanisms and functions of these entities create a pattern of racial injustice. Racism is one of several sub-systems of domination in the modern world. It interacts with these other sub-systems to produce broad patterns of oppression and exploitation that plague the world. Among these sub-systems are class and sexual oppression. Women who are victimized by racism face a compound burden. They not only have to deal with oppression due to their racial origin or identity, but they are also confronted with economic and political exploitation based on their sex and/or race.⁵

Internalized Oppression is the way that racism is worked out among people of color. The messages of the “dominant” culture are internalized about oneself and other persons of color and become a means by which one participates in one’s own oppression, living and acting out of those internalized messages. Internalized oppression has been the primary means by which persons of color have been forced to perpetuate and “agree” to their own oppression. Internalized oppression is always an involuntary reaction to the experience of oppression.

Ask for brief comments or reactions to the definitions. Note that this definition differs from a dictionary definition. For example, the most recent *American Heritage Dictionary* defines racism as “the belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others,” and gives a secondary definition as “discrimination or prejudice based on race.” Discuss the differences between that definition and the one used by the National Council of Churches. Explain to participants that the meaning and implications of the National Council of Churches definition of racism may become clearer in the next exercises. Also, again remind participants that this is not an exhaustive study and is only a very beginning study of racism. Many questions and concerns will not be able to be dealt with in this limited time and focus. If time does not allow all participants to express their concerns, ask participants to hold onto their concerns and questions and raise them in the closing or at the beginning of the next session.

⁴ Carmichael, Stokely and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in American* (New York: Random house, 1967, p.4.

⁵ National Council of Churches, op.cit., pp 4-5.

IV. Deepening Understanding

A. Analyze the video using the definitions [15 minutes]

Ask participants to use the definition of racism to analyze the experiences of the two young men as they were shown in the video. In pairs, have them list in the margins examples of the following statements in the definition:

- Racism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others.
- Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism.
- The second type [institutional racism] is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts.

In the total group, ask participants to share their examples of each of these three factors in the definition of racism.

B. Analyze personal experiences using this definition [15 minutes]

Ask participants individually, on the back side of their sheet of definitions, to list privileges and benefits that European American persons receive in this society because of their skin color. Ask them as they make their list to think as holistically as possible, considering everything from how they are treated in banks, stores, schools, and where they live, to whose history is taught in school and whose stories and pictures are in the mainline newspapers and on greeting cards, to the color of bandaids and where they can buy products for their hair and skin.

Explain that for the European American participants this will seem hard at first since “white” persons take the privileges they receive in everyday life for granted, and assume that life as they know it is “normal” for everyone. Using the experiences of the two young men from the video, encourage participants to look at their daily lives with a new awareness.

In the total group, ask for participants’ examples of white privilege, listing them on newsprint. You may wish to move around the circle of people, asking each person to name an example of white privilege and continuing to go around the circle repeatedly until all the privileges that participants have listed have been named. Expect this to be a long list.

Note: You may use a list that you have prepared in advance. Ask participants to read aloud, one at a time. You can add to the list.

After completing the list, ask the European American persons in the group how they feel about this long list of privileges. Allow persons to express their sadness and pain in recognizing their privilege and to feel the unfairness of it. Expect persons to express the fact that some of these privileges should be the right of all persons (such as the freedom to live wherever one wants without fear of harassment) and others should be the right of no one (such as not needing to hear or know the stories and histories of persons of other racial or ethnic groups).

When feelings seem to have been expressed, ask the persons of color in the group how they felt in doing this exercise and in seeing and hearing this (by now means

exhaustive) list of white privileges. Expect a much greater recognition of the reality and extent of white privilege. Also expect anger and frustration at how much their daily lives are affected by this reality and at how unaware European Americans are of their position of privilege within a “white” oriented society.

C. Summarize the Meaning and Implications of the Definition of Racism [10 minutes]

Express appreciation to the group for their hard work in looking at the definition of racism. Acknowledge that looking at the meaning and definition of racism is painful because it exposes for all persons the great damage that is done to everyone in this country through the perpetuation of racism. Explain that European Americans are carefully taught not to see or understand the deep and broad realities of racism, because their blindness and insensitivity is necessary for the perpetuation of racism. A necessary and critical step in working against racism is to see, to feel, and to understand that all of American society is infected with racism. It is deeply imbedded in the thinking, the history, the language, the attitudes, and the actions of life within the United States. It has been a part of the history of this country since Columbus landed on the shores of the Americas.

Ask participants to name briefly what has been lost in this country as a result of racism. Remind the participants that whether racism has been acted out intentionally or unintentionally, it is the results of racism that count; it is the results that show that much has been lost, and demonstrate that the lives and common humanity of all persons suffer when racism is allowed to continue to exist. Note that racism, in different ways, has imprisoned all persons in this society and daily damages and diminishes the lives of all.

Summarize this session by referring to the “RACISM” newsprint of “power, white institutions, and white society.” Explain that a major implication of this definition of racism is that the real issue in changing racism is in changing “white” society. Central to addressing racism is understanding the importance of power in keeping racism going and in shifting the focus from individuals to institutions and from persons of color to European Americans.

V. Integrating Learning (15 minutes)

Because of the huge level of feelings that this session will have raised, it is important to close this section with an opportunity for all persons to express their feelings or thoughts. Invite each person around the circle to express one thing that was hard about this session and one that was good about this session.

Read John 8:31-36:

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him. “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, “You will be made free?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (NRSV).

Give a brief reflection on the reading and this session, sharing some of the following thoughts, adapting the reading as needed when a person of color is sharing the reflection.

A white person might reflect:

Racism has through the years been most often defined as individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group. Whether or not a white person approves of the dominance conferred on him or her, it is there. A “white” skin in the United States opens doors. That’s the system. It’s a system that imprisons, separates, and keeps all of us from truly being free. Through the process of socialization in this society, I have not been taught that in order to be free I need to resist racism. It is a hard and painful process to understand how deeply implicated I am in the systems of racism and how racism imprisons me and shackles my life and my relationships with others.

This word of Jesus, however, is a powerful word of promise and hope. Racism is not a problem that doesn’t have answers. By naming our bondage to the sin of racism, we can be made free. By acknowledging the power and persistence of the sin of racism, we can begin to see the truth and to know the joy of living in new ways as freed children of God.

Close with prayer:

God of Abraham and Sarah, help us to know the truth of your promise that we can be made whole. Give us eyes to see our brokenness and ears to hear the pain and the stories of all who are your family. Go with us as we leave this place and guide our steps to walk in new ways; through your Son, who promises us freedom. Amen.

Note: If this is a separate session, and you will not be meeting again for a week, encourage participants to continue to write in their journals and to reflect on the meaning of the definition of racism and internalized oppression. As a specific assignment, ask participants to be aware of the ways in which they see and/or experience the realities of white privilege during this next week.

Part 3

Resisting Racism

Purpose

During this session participants will recapture the long-term history of resistance against racism and will identify their role in joining that struggle. The emphasis will not be on starting something new, but on joining a long and rich and deep history of resisting the oppression of racism. In this session participants will be asked to make their own commitments to joining that struggle and to discuss ways in which to involve the local church in on-going study and action to work against racism. It is important to emphasize again in this session that this has been only a very brief beginning in raising awareness and much continuing work needs to be done to understand the complexities of racism and to work toward healing in order to build a multiracial and multicultural church.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this session, the participants will be able to:
1. Name persons who have been involved in the struggle of resistance against racism;
 2. Identify the times in their own lives when they have both given in to racism and have resisted racism;
 3. Claim a history of resistance to give them courage to make a commitment to join in the struggle; and
 4. Name the ways in which they will involve the local church in further learning and action.

Bible Reference

Galatians 3:28. *In Christ there are no divisions, for all are made one.*

Session Outline

Minutes*	Activity	Materials Needed
15	Check-in with participants	Nametags (optional)
5	Prayer and introduction to Session	
20	Beginning the Process: History of Resistance to Racism	Newsprint and Markers
30	Updating Knowledge: Small Group Discussions	3x5 cards, List of Four Questions
30	Deepening Understanding: Large group commitment	Newsprint and Markers Copies of Suggested Reading List
20	Integrating Learning: Closing reflection and prayer	Bible Copies of Evaluation form

* These suggested times will allow the group to move through this section in two hours. If used in a retreat or workshop setting, times can be expanded as needed in the opening check-in with participants and in the large group commitment.

I. Welcome and Introduction

A. Check-in with participants [15 minutes]

If you are re-gathering since the second session, make certain that participants know one another, using name tags or re-introducing themselves as needed.

Invite participants to share any insights, questions or concerns that they have since the last session. List the questions or concerns on chalkboard or newsprint. Since this is the final session, you may want to spend additional time addressing these concerns. Given the short-term nature of this study, not all concerns will be able to be addressed adequately. Remind participants that this is only a beginning step, and many questions and concerns will continue to arise as participants become more fully aware of the

complexities of racism. At the end of this session the group will decide if they wish to engage in further study and action, at which time concerns can continue to be addressed.

If you are re-gathering, ask participants to report on white privilege as they saw and experienced it during the past week. Invite any reflections and comments on this reality.

B. Opening prayer and introduction to session [5 minutes]

Begin this session with prayer:

God of our baptism, we give you thanks for your promises of forgiveness and new life. We rejoice in the freedom of not being bound by our failings in the past, but being freed to begin each day as a new person with new opportunity to live in relationship with you and with all of your family. Help us to see the ways in which we can join together to resist the oppression and evil of racism and strengthen us in our commitments; through the Christ who makes us one. Amen.

Explain that this third session will give participants an opportunity to take their place within a long history of persons who have been active in the fight against racism. State that the goal of this session is to claim an identity in resisting work against racism in the church and other community institutions.

Remind participants of the beginning focus on God's intention for creation; give a brief reflection on the brokenness within the human family and of God's promises for a daily rising to new life through baptism. Use ideas from the following sample reflection:

We began this study of racism by looking at the beginning of humankind's relationship with God in the story of creation. We begin this last session on our commitment to work against racism by looking at the beginning of our own personal relationship with God through baptism. In baptism we receive the promise of God that we will be God's children even in the midst of our failings and our brokenness. We have seen the disharmony of God's creation in the sin of racism. But we remember and celebrate that in God's gift of baptism we receive forgiveness of sins as we die to our old selves and rise to newness of life with Jesus Christ. We take off the "clothes" of the old way and put on the new clothes of Christ's liberating way. Through baptism we are given the freedom to begin each day as new people with new courage to walk in God's way. Indeed,

Baptism is the sacrament through which we are united to Jesus Christ and given part in Christ's ministry of reconciliation. Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event: the reconciliation of people to God. It shows the death of self and the rising to a life of obedience and praise. It shows also the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on those whom God has chosen. In baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the Spirit and the knowledge of the call to be God's people always. (*UCC Book of Worship*)

Through baptism we become a part of the one family of God. The church welcomes us each into that one family, without separation or division. Together, in baptism, we confess our faith in the God who makes us one. We also acknowledge in the service of baptism that creation and the family of God have been ruptured by evil, and we are asked whether we promise to resist oppression and evil. In that response, we promise to resist anything that threatens to break up the family. One of those forces of oppression

and evil is racism. Our calling as Christians is to build up the body of Christ—the family of God—and to resist all that threatens the well-being and wholeness of the body.

In this final session, as we recall the long-history of those who have resisted the evil of racism, we also find our strength in our baptism and the promise of God to be with us as we stand fast in resisting evil and working toward wholeness.

II. Beginning the Process (20 minutes)

Explain to participants that another reality that we have, for the most part, been taught not to see is the history of resistance to racism. Since U.S. history has been written through the eyes of European Americans, resistance to oppression has been expressed as “slave revolts,” “Indian massacres,” and “worker rebellions.” The stories of resistance, however, are part of our history, and are ours to claim as we join those of the past who have stood and worked against oppression.

Ask the group to begin to name those who have resisted oppression including individuals, groups, or events of resistance. Be prepared to list them on the newsprint.

The following examples may be used if participants have difficulty getting started. Also encourage participants to name local persons who have resisted oppression.

- Nat Turner, leader of the most successful and dramatic slave rebellion, in Southampton County, Virginia, in the summer of 1831;
- John Brown, a European American, planned to seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and set off a revolt of slaves through the South;
- Sitting Bull, Teton Sioux, advocated opposition to continuing intrusions by European Americans, assassinated in 1890;
- 18,000 Chinese garment workers rallied in New York City on June 24, 1982, for fair and equal treatment and wages comparable with other workers in the industry;
- Cesar Chavez, organizer of the grape boycott and numerous other activities to improve the lives of farm workers;
- A.I.M. (American Indian Movement), founded in 1968, instrumental in the February 27, 1973, declaration of the village of Wounded Knee as liberated territory;
- Black Panthers, organized in the 1960s as a strong militant voice for Black Power, standing for pride in race and insisting on black independence;
- Brown Berets, organized in the 1960s by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales as a Chicano liberation movement patterned after the Black Panthers;
- American Citizens for Justice, a pan-Asian civil rights group founded in 1983 to organize national protests after the light sentencing of two European Americans who clubbed a man named Vincent Chin to death;

- Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, made her way to freedom alone as a young woman and became the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad;
- Rosa Parks, refused to obey the Montgomery, Alabama, law providing for segregation on city buses and touched off the Montgomery Bus Boycott;
- Rev. James Reeb, a European American clergyman from the North, killed in Selma, Alabama, while participating in the freedom movements;
- Filipino and Japanese plantation workers in Hawaii demanded an end to discrimination in pay scales and paid maternity leaves for female workers in 1920;
- Crazy Horse, Oglala Sioux, the last of the Sioux war chiefs, killed on September 5, 1877, at the age of thirty-five;
- Black Elk, warrior and medicine man of the Oglala Sioux, lived the life of the Plains Indian, saw the death of his people, and told his vision of the meaning of life on this planet.

Ask the group to think about the stories of resistance in their own past. Ask them to form pairs to share a story of an individual in their lives who has resisted oppression, or a family story of resistance. For most Americans of European heritage, there is a story of resistance to oppression that led to their ancestors coming to the shores of North America. Stories include a history of resistance to the military draft, to religious oppression, to economic oppression, etc.

Give the pairs five minutes to share their stories, instructing them to share the time equally, and let the group know when half the time has passed so they can switch roles as storyteller and listener.

Ask each participant to share the name of the individual in their lives or to give their family name. Add each to the newsprint as they are named.

Direct the group's attention to the full list of names. Explain that it is important to claim this heritage of resistance. Resistance to racism is as big a part of ourselves as is living within the system of racism. Resistance to oppression has been around as long as oppression has been. Wherever oppression takes place, God instills in the hearts of people the power to resist. In making a commitment to work against racism, it is important to remember that this is not something new. We are simply adding our names and stories to a long list of names and stories. God has been present in the struggle against oppression throughout time, and God will continue to be present in the struggle.

III. Updating Knowledge (30 minutes)

Hand out 3x5 cards to all participants.

Divide the group into groups of three or four. Instruct the groups to respond in turn to each of the following four questions. If the group is small, you may have the questions listed on newsprint where all can easily see them, or, if it will be difficult for all to see, have the questions printed on a handout. Instruct participants to tear their 3x5 card in half and to write their commitment on each half of the card. They will be keeping one

half and sharing the other with the group. Also tell the groups that when the large group reassembles they will be asked what help they need in keeping their commitment.

Questions for small group sharing:

1. Where have you given in to racism?
2. When do you recall fighting against racism?
3. What is your personal commitment to continued resistance against racism?
4. What is your commitment within your church and community?
5. What help do you need in your commitment?

IV. Deepening Understanding (30 minutes)

After the group has reassembled, ask each participant to come up, state their commitment to continued resistance, and tape their commitment card to the newsprint of names of those who have been resisters.

Ask the group what help they need from each other and from the local church to carry out their commitments. List those items on another sheet of newsprint. Discuss any that require group action.

Brainstorm on what commitment this group can make as a whole. What steps can this group take to address racism where it exists within the local church? How can this group help the local church grow in its understanding and become more involved? How can the local church as a whole be committed to resisting racism and to continue its journey to become multi-racial and multi-cultural?

From the list that has been generated, choose two or three things as next steps in this process, and ask for a group commitment to those steps. This process is critical to the ongoing work of the local church and is central to the development of a long-term strategy for working against racism.

(Some next steps could include making a commitment to continue to meet as a group for continued reading, discussion and learning; accepting responsibility for gathering another group of persons to work through this same process; developing a system for data collection on evidences of racism within the local church and community; bringing training events or other study workshops to the local church or community; and where possible sending local church members to receive additional training.)

Set a time limit on those next steps and assign responsibilities for making them happen. It would be helpful to have one or two volunteers from the group to act as conveners of the group to assure continued follow up. It is also important for the group to report back to the responsible committee of the church and to the entire membership of the church. The group may want to share learnings through a worship service, newsletter articles, adult church school, etc. Reporting back to church members will help to ensure that continued study and action will result from this process.

Hand out the *Suggested Reading List* as one way for participants to continue to learn and grow.

V. Integrating Learning (20 minutes)

Move around the circle, giving each person time to share one new understanding, insight, or challenge that they have gained from this time together.

Read Galatians 3:27-28: *As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There 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 (NRSV).*

Give a brief reflection on the reading, sharing some of the following thoughts:

We began this study with the intention of God in creation and with the prayer of Jesus that all will be one. We conclude with the word that we *are* all one in Christ. When we live and act from that understanding, we will live and act in new ways. We do not have to *make* all people one. God in Christ has already done that. We simply have to live as new people.

Close with prayer:

God of our lives, we have heard your word that in you we are no longer separate, but are one. Give us the courage to live as one. Help us to stand against the forces that work to divide and separate.

As we leave this place, go with us and give us strength to live out our commitments. Grant us grace to live in the power and promise of our baptism; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Make certain that participants fill out an evaluation form before they leave. Thank them for their time in filling it out.

Suggested Reading List

- ❖ *America's Original Sin: A Study Guide on White Racism*. Washington, D.C.: Sojourners Resource Center, 1992.
- ❖ Barndt, Joseph. *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991.
- ❖ Bell, Derrick. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanency of Racism*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
- ❖ Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.
- ❖ Castillo, Ana. *So Far From God*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1993.
- ❖ Hacker, Andrew. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. New York: Scribner, 1992.
- ❖ Kotlowitz, Alex. *There Are No Children Here*. New York, Anchor Books, 1991.
- ❖ Lewis, Oscar. *La Vida*. New York: Random House, 1966.
- ❖ Mander, Jerry. *In The Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991.
- ❖ Matsuda, Mari J., Charles R. Lawrence III, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. *Words That Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993.
- ❖ Shorris, Earl. *Latinos: A Biography of the People*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992.
- ❖ Takaki, Ron. *Strangers From a Different Shore*. New York: Little Brown & Co., 1989.
- ❖ Weatherford, Jack. *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988.
- ❖ West, Cornel. *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
- ❖ Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins, 1980.

Definition of Racism

Prejudice: “Preconceived judgment or opinion; an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge; . . . an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.”—from *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, 1983.

Racism is racial prejudice plus power. *Racism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit others.* This use of power is based on a belief in superior racial origin, identity or supposed racial characteristics. *Racism confers certain privileges on and defends the dominant group, which in turn sustains and perpetuates racism.* Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, cultural, religious, educational, economic, political and military institutions of societies. Racism is more than just a personal attitude. It is the institutionalized form of that attitude.¹

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two, related forms: 1) individual European Americans acting against individual persons of color, and 2) acts by the total European American community against communities of color. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. This type can be reached by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. *The second type is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts.* But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forms in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type.²

Institutional Racism is one of the ways organizations and structures serve to preserve prejudice. Intended or not, the mechanisms and functions of these entities create a pattern of racial injustice. Racism is one of several sub-systems of domination in the modern world. It interacts with these other sub-systems to produce patterns of oppression and exploitation that plague the world. Among these sub-systems are class and sexual oppression. Women who are victimized by racism face a compound burden. They not only have to deal with oppression due to their racial origin or identity, but they are also confronted with economic and political exploitation based on their sex and/or race.³

Internalized Oppression is the way that racism is worked out among people of color. The messages of the “dominant” culture are internalized about oneself and other persons of color and become a means by which one participates in one’s own oppression, living and acting out of those internalized messages. Internalized oppression has been the primary means by which persons of color have been forced to perpetuate and “agree” to their own oppression. Internalized oppression is always an involuntary reaction to the experience of oppression.

¹ National Council of Churches, *Policy Statement on Racial Justice* (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1984), pp 4-5.

² Carmichael, Stokely and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967, p. 4.

³ National Council of Churches, op. cit., pp 4-5.

Evaluation Form

Rate the overall study according to the guidelines. In the comments, please note what was most helpful and least helpful in each of the areas.

1) Educational Value of Material Presented: (circle on a scale of 5 – 1)

New & Informative 5 4 3 2 1 Not new or thought-provoking

Comments: _____

2) Format for Presenting Material:

Clear 5 4 3 2 1 Confusing

Comments: _____

3) Process for Integrating Material:

Sufficient, Helpful 5 4 3 2 1 Deficient, Unhelpful

Comments: _____

4) Impact of Material on You Personally:

Energizing 5 4 3 2 1 Boring
Challenging 5 4 3 2 1 Not Challenged
Met my expectations 5 4 3 2 1 Expectations not met

Comments: _____

5) Key things You learned or felt:

