

# Resources for undoing racism in our churches

Gathered and shared by the  
ACC Anti-racism Task Group



# Getting Started

## Defining racism

**Racism** has traditionally been understood as one's personal judgement of and prejudice toward others based on skin color. It is often associated with hateful speech and actions. It is a label to be quickly denied and defended against.

More helpful to the conversation is a definition of racism as systemic - prejudice put into action by individuals and the collective institutions and policies of our society that discriminate based on the color of one's skin, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Similarly, individuals may hold an **implicit bias**, or an attitude

or stereotype that affects our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Bias is baked into our society and learned through our daily interactions.

Our work is to be aware of and overcome these learned biases through the work of **anti-racism**, the proactive and deliberate efforts as individuals and collectives to oppose and dismantle prejudice in its individual, institutional, systemic, and cultural forms.

For other helpful racism-related definitions, see Appendix A.

## ACC Anti-racism Task Group and its work

ACC's Anti-racism Task Group was formed to collect, highlight, and develop resources and learning opportunities for conference congregations and their members. Our hope is to open windows for people to advance in their journey toward inter-racial understanding and a desire to participate in justice-based change first in our own hearts, and then in our congregations and society as a whole.

From the beginning, our team has held the belief that this is the work of the white community and so intentionally included six white individuals

from around the conference.

However, we have also agreed that in many ways, we must follow the lead of people of color by listening to their requests and gaining their feedback as we approach these topics.

As a result, we have tested our ideas and resources with an Intercultural Relations Reference Committee consisting of six people of color from our congregations. Their feedback has been an important piece of this project and has helped develop ideas for additional resources for the future.

## How to use this resource

This resource is intended to help congregations - ideally led by a congregational anti-racism team - learn about, process, and respond together to the heavy and intertwined topics of racism, U.S. history, and white supremacy.

The final version of this guide will contain short-, mid-, and long-term

suggestions for congregations to do this learning, processing, and responding. At this time only short-term suggestions are complete.

Suggestions for each of these timeframes will be oriented around work focused on the spirit, mind, and body:

### Spirit

We define Spirit work as that which transforms us through feeling, internalizing, and wrestling with these issues. Spirit work helps us experience passion, pain, and lament leading to confession, conversion, and worship.

We understand Spirit work as an essential step in our journeys along with, if not a prerequisite for, Mind and Body work.

### Mind

We view Mind work as raising awareness, increasing knowledge and understanding, hearing stories, testing theology and studying history from antiracist perspectives.

### Body

We understand Body work as an expression of the ways we have been transformed by our Spirit and Mind work. We respond by undoing the harms of racism by advocating for justice and equality and doing the work of shalom.

In several places, resources are assigned a number, 1-3, to help you choose which may be right for you and your group, with 1 being the most accessible and three being more advanced in theme. These categorizations are assigned by our team and should serve as suggestions only. Choose for yourself where to begin and continue on.



Committing to start the journey  
taking place over a period  
of up to several months

# Short-term Work

The work of transforming our minds is a life-long journey. To help you and your congregation begin that journey, we're suggesting resources around Spirit, Mind, and Body that will lay the necessary foundation for deeper learning.

We believe these resources are useful both for personal growth and for communal learning and

conversation. These serve well as study material for small groups, Sunday School classes and book clubs.

These resources come as personal recommendations of our Task Group members. These are resources that we've personally found helpful in our own journeys.

# Spirit

## 1. A litany of Lament by Joanna Shenk

This litany was published in July 2016 after the lives of two black men were lost to police shootings. The prayer expresses outrage over the cycle of violence, acknowledges our complicity, laments violence and asks for comfort and strength.

Find it here:

<https://anabaptistworld.org/a-litany-of-lament/>

## 2. Groundwork Madison guides for small group conversation

Groundwork Madison and Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice developed materials for 'living room conversations' about the Movement for black lives platform. The topic is the demand for community control over police in response to the disproportionate and systematic arrest, incarceration, and death of black people at the hands of law enforcement. These living room conversations will provide opportunities to educate yourself on the history of racism and policing. We will provide avenues for you to get involved at a level that fits your capacity, and empower you to lead living room conversations with your friends and neighbors. You will find all the tools you need and steps to take to organize a living conversation.

Find it here:

[groundworkmadison.wordpress.com/living-room-convos](http://groundworkmadison.wordpress.com/living-room-convos)

## 3. ing Podcast by MennoMedia

Our world is increasingly complex, fast-paced, and divided. How are people of faith bringing their best selves to the world each day? How are we leading, growing, and being as people of God? ~ing Podcast is a place to share insights and stories from individuals creatively engaging the present and moving into the future.

Find it here:

[anchor.fm/ing-pod](http://anchor.fm/ing-pod)

## 4. Center for Action and Contemplation

Richard Rohr's daily posts invite readers into action firmly rooted and grounded in contemplation of Jesus' way, truth and life.

Find it here:

[cac.org/category/daily-meditations/](http://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/)

# Mind

## 1. Begin a fixed-day course or work through a reading list, preferably with a group of other people

**Mennonite Church USA's Anti-Racism Basics** page provides a reading list and more to help you begin the journey with learning and personal reflection.

Find it here:

[mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/anti-racism-basics](https://mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/anti-racism-basics)

**The AntiRacist Table's 30 Day Challenge** is specifically curated to educate, to help people face and get past shame, anger, and blame, and to develop empathy by cultivating mindfulness and daily practices centered around equity justice, and humanity.

Find it here:

[theantiracisttable.com/#join](https://theantiracisttable.com/#join)

**An Anabaptist Anti-Racist Reading List** by Anabaptist Historians highlights readings that share a common mission to bring about a more equal Anabaptist Church and a more just future. It features short and online-accessible articles and essays on the relationships between Anabaptist history and matters of race, racism, and violence.

Find it here:

[anabaptisthistorians.org/an-anabaptist-anti-racist-reading-list](https://anabaptisthistorians.org/an-anabaptist-anti-racist-reading-list)

**The 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge** by the American Bar Association intends to advance deeper understandings of the intersections of race, power, privilege, supremacy and oppression. It offers an opportunity to to augment our awareness, empathy, compassion and determination to stand for racial equity.

Find it here:

[americanbar.org/groups/public\\_contract\\_law/leadership/21-challenge](https://americanbar.org/groups/public_contract_law/leadership/21-challenge)

**20 Picture Books for 2020: Readings to Embrace Race, Provide Solace & Do Good** by Embrace.org was developed to help engage children in the broad range of emotions and needs of diverse children in our multiracial society.

Find it here:

[www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020](https://www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020)

## 2. Choose individual books or articles

3. **Only the Right Questions Have Answers by David Evans** (article from Christianity Today)

Without restitution for harm done, there will never be liberty and justice for all. Read it here: [ibit.ly/NKkp](http://ibit.ly/NKkp)

1. **Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism** by Drew Hart. (Book)

Hart writes his story about how he faced racism in different school situations and while at Messiah College, and later serving as a pastor at Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church. He supplements these stories, providing historical context, and explains many relevant issues including police brutality, mass incarceration, white supremacy. (John Williamson)

1. **There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America** by Vincent Harding (Book)

Written by the Mennonite pastor who helped Martin Luther King Jr. write his anti-Vietnam speech, this is the story of the violation of Black Africa and the bondage of its peoples in another land. Harding resurrects forgotten heroes and traces the struggle of their descendants to keep the spirit and dreams of an uprooted people alive.

2. **White Fragility** by Robin DiAngelo (Book)

This book is an intense, next level look at the ways that whiteness plays a role in racism. Members of my congregation are reading through it--slowly--because it's a lot to take in. It holds a mirror to my behaviors and preconceptions as a white person. It's transformative. (Amy Yoder McGloughlin)

3. **Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God** by Kelly Brown Douglas

The author is Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Seminary. Prompted by the murder of Trayvon Martin, the book combines history and theology with a mother's fear for her children. How do we continue to tolerate the deaths of people of color at the hands of the state? How did we get here? And where is God in all of it? A challenging read but, I believe, a necessary one for those seeking to follow Jesus. (Ron Adams)

## 2. Choose individual books or articles (continued)

**Just Mercy** by Bryan Stevenson

1.

Using one case to tie the book together, the author, a black lawyer and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, outlines many, many cases of injustice in the US legal system, particularly in the South and particularly facing people of colour, women and children. Through these personal stories Stevenson makes clear just how deeply the US penal system is broken, for all of us and especially for children, minorities and women. (Ruth Douglas Miller)

**Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist**

2.

**Ideas in America** by Ibram X. Kendi

Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. *Stamped from the Beginning* uses the lives of five major American intellectuals to offer a window into the contentious debates between assimilationists and segregationists and between racists and anti-racists. (Vonetta Storbakken)

**My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies** by Resmaa Menakem

2.

This book is an excellent resource on how trauma is transferred generationally. And a must read to understand the complexities of how racism affects both black and white people. (Vonetta Storbakken)

**Between the World and Me** by Ta-Nehisi Coates

3.

Written from the perspective of a Black father to his son, this book addresses questions about American history and ideals and the concern a parent has for his child in our country that remains heavily influenced by racism. (Brook Musselman)

**Caste** by Ta-Nehisi Coates

3.

*Caste* helped me understand some of the complex contradictions and puzzlements I've been wondering about on our current political/social/economic/other scene. Wilkerson's stories brought me to tears of anguish and outrage for the harms done to so many, and glimmers of hope for finding ways to love our neighbors better. (Ruth Yoder Wenger)

### 3. Listen to a podcast (find them where you get your podcasts)

1. **1619 Project** by New York Times Magazine  
Developed by reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones, this project offers articles and podcasts that re-examine the legacy of slavery in the United States. The Pulitzer Center offers resources and curriculum to engage with the materials that may be used in classrooms and small groups. (Brook Musselman)

Podcast: find it where you get your podcasts

Resources and Curriculum: [pulitzercenter.org/lesson-plan-grouping/1619-project-curriculum](https://pulitzercenter.org/lesson-plan-grouping/1619-project-curriculum)

1. **Seeing White** by Scene on Radio  
Host and producer, John Biewen explores race, whiteness. Episode 5 “Little War on the Prairie” investigates the mass execution of 38 Dakota warriors in Mankato, MN. (John Williamson)

2. **Code Switch** from NPR  
This NPR podcast focuses on the intersections of culture and race. The conversations are fun and honest, and they help me to get a handle on what I see happening in the news and in my community. (Amy Yoder McGloughlin)

1. **Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America** from Vox  
We can't change our future if we don't understand our past. Listen to the podcast by Ben & Jerry's and produced by Vox Creative. (John Williamson)

### 3. Watch Films & Videos

#### 1. **Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Movement (PBS)**

A classic series that looks at the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Inspiring and sobering, the series reveals the power of a nonviolent movement. Ending in 1965, the series also makes clear that there is much still to be done. A study guide is available. (Ron Adams)

#### 1. **Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes**

“A Class Divided”, or “blue eyes, brown eyes”, is a 53-minute episode of PBS Frontline dating from 1995, profiling the actions of a white teacher in a white rural Iowa school. To help children in 1968 (and at the end, adults in 1995) understand what prejudice feels like, the teacher has the group spend a few days making those with brown eyes privileged (they receive praise, preference in all choices, etc.), while those with blue eyes are persecuted (belittled, put down, denied choices...) and then switching roles. The results are eye-opening. (Ruth Douglas Miller)

#### 1. **The Hate You Give (Amazon Prime)**

This film shows us aspects of institutional racism through story. It's a good movie to share with your teens, because it's a story about teens. There is some language in the movie that may be difficult for sensitive ears. (Amy Yoder McGloughlin)

#### 1. **Grace, Justice, & Mercy: An Evening with Bryan Stevenson & Rev. Tim Keller (YouTube)**

Bryan Stevenson & Tim Keller will help us explore ways to sustain hope through a grace filled pursuit of justice and mercy: Tim Keller, speaking specifically to Christians, expounds on the Bible's position on justice and why we must care and act, and Bryan Stevenson explains the facts of the American penal system and its failure to “do justice” and “love mercy”. A precis of his book and impassioned call for what we have to do to change the situation: get proximate, change narratives, and be hopeful. (Ruth Douglas Miller)

Watch it here: [ibit.ly/dcDm](http://ibit.ly/dcDm)

#### 2. **13th (Netflix)**

Filmmaker Ava DuVernay explores the history of racial inequality in the United States, focusing on the fact that the nation's prisons are disproportionately filled with African-Americans. (Teman Cooke)

### 3. Watch Films & Videos (continued)

#### **If Beale Street Could Talk (Hulu)**

2.

This movie, based on James Baldwin's 1974 novel of the same title takes place in New York City. It focuses on Tish and Fonny, a couple in love, and their families. Issues of police racism, incarceration are addressed. (John Williamson)

#### **I Am Not Your Negro (Netflix)**

2.

Writer James Baldwin intended to write a book about three of his friends: Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King Jr, and Malcolm X. He never finished it. This film uses his words to expose the profound disconnect between how white people understand race and racism, and how a person of color understands and experiences it. A beautiful, powerful encounter with an essential American writer and public intellectual. (Ron Adams)

### 4. Leadership Resources

**Recruiting for Board Diversity - Without Disrespecting People of Color** by Jim Taylor is a blog post from August 2020 providing helpful thoughts for board leaders seeking to recruit diversity well.

Find it here:

[blog.boardsource.org/blog/recruiting-for-board-diversity-with-respect](http://blog.boardsource.org/blog/recruiting-for-board-diversity-with-respect)

#### **Intercultural Development Inventory**

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is an assessment tool that measures intercultural competence – the ability to engage effectively and appropriately with people who are different than ourselves. The IDI uses a developmental approach, evaluating individuals, groups or organizations as they work toward intercultural competence. This tool can be used to evaluate programs, develop benchmarks, create program plans and provide coaching for leaders – fostering a deeper awareness about power and privilege in any cultural context.

Find it here: [www.mennoniteusa.org/ministry/peacebuilding/undoing-racism/intercultural-development-inventory-idi/](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/ministry/peacebuilding/undoing-racism/intercultural-development-inventory-idi/)

# Body

1. Support/attend Black Lives Matter actions.
2. Visit a prison or homeless shelter, just as a visitor and friend.
3. Familiarize yourself with local organizations doing anti-racism work and join in.
4. Give to MC USA's Justice Fund, where gifts go directly to congregations working against poverty, police brutality, and racism.
5. Write your governor and members of Congress as a member of the faith community. Visit the MCC advocacy page to get started: [mcc.org/get-involved/advocacy/washington](https://mcc.org/get-involved/advocacy/washington)
6. Support local organizations run by people of color.
7. Support and purchase products/services from businesses owned by people of color.
8. Display yard sign (BLM or other) which reflects your commitment to justice and equity for all.

Mid- and long-term resources for your journey will be available in the near future. To request an updated booklet with these resources when available, email [office@atlanticcoastconference.net](mailto:office@atlanticcoastconference.net).

## Appendix A - Anti-racism Glossary

Found at

[mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/anti-racism-glossary](http://mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/anti-racism-glossary)

**anti-racism** – proactive and deliberate efforts by individuals and collectives to oppose and dismantle racism in its individual, institutional, systemic and cultural forms

**anti-racism audit** – a focused examination of all levels of an institution’s life based on an analysis of the results of an institution’s actions rather than its intentions

**cultural appropriation** – the unacknowledged use and employment of another group’s cultural practices, symbols, and other representations for use or financial gain without accountability or connection to the original community

**cultural racism** – forcing members of one group to “do life” according to standards, norms and ways of being as defined by another group

**implicit bias** – attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (osu.edu)

**identity power** – racism’s ability to define racial identities according to the status of inferior and superior

**individual racism** – acting out racial prejudices by individuals in a context where those prejudices are reinforced by society

**institutional racism** – the support for and promotion of control and access to organizations in a manner that benefits one group and oppresses another; stated intent to provide race-based privilege and engage in racial oppression is not necessary for institutional racism to be at work

**internalization of racism** – the psychological acceptance of, belief in, and acting upon the associated identities of inferiority by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) community members and superiority by white community members

**oppressive power** – racism’s ability to oppress, demean and harm the BIPOC community

**race** – a biological myth and a social reality constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries by Europeans as part of the colonial project, entrenched with notions of white superiority; in the United States, a caste system that mediates privilege, power, resources and status

**racism** – race prejudice plus the systemic misuse of power

**systemic racism** – the macro-level distribution of power and privilege to one group and the oppression of another through the institutions that constitute that system; examples include the educational, health care, and transportation systems

**white privilege** – unearned benefits – both financial and psychological – afforded individuals and groups with light enough skin and European facial features to be perceived as white

**white power** – racism's ability to provide power and privilege to white people and white society based on the perception of white identity.

Used with the permission from Dr. Tobin Miller Shearer,  
[www.widerstandconsulting.org](http://www.widerstandconsulting.org)

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