

Resources for undoing racism in our churches

Part 2

Intermediate-term resources
gathered and shared by the
ACC Anti-racism Task Group



Using this resource



Just like part one of this resource, part two 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 (see our section on definitions on page 10).

The first part, in a separate booklet, featured a wide variety of resources for those beginning the journey through the work of anti-racism.

You can find this first part at:

[atlanticcoastconference.net/
anti-racism-resources](http://atlanticcoastconference.net/anti-racism-resources)

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.

1.

2.

3.

Deepening our understanding
taking place over a period
of several months

Intermediate-term Work

As a conference of primarily white congregations, we recognize the need for us to wrestle with our whiteness and all its implications. Understanding whiteness and its coresponding advantages in our society is the focus of the work we recommend as next steps for individuals and congregations.

It has been said that white privilege is the lack of experiencing racism in one's life. Understanding white privilege is the next step toward understanding the disadvantage of other racial groups.

You will notice that this section of resources is not divided into Spirit, Mind, and Body work, but is all Spirit/Mind

work. This phase includes no new "action items" but rather encourages us to continue the slow, challenging, internal work of transforming our minds rather than grasping for quick fixes.

We still encourage you to continue working through "Body" or outward expression work. We simply want to highlight the importance of the internal work necessary for this journey.

Again, these resources come as personal recommendations of our Task Group members. Some are from an explicitly Christian perspective, some are not. All are resources that we have personally found helpful in our own journeys.

1. Encouragement to care for yourselves

Anti-racism work is not easy work. It can be tiring, discouraging, shame-inducing and overwhelming. If you feel any of these, you are not alone. Because this is challenging work, we encourage you to care for yourself by including reflection and resting exercises, particularly when doing mind/spirit work as part of this journey.

One example of this type of personal and spiritual grounding that we recommend is the practice of *The Examen*, a prompt for introspection for you to follow or adapt to your own character or spirit. You and your group might choose to read the prayer below, found in *A Book of Uncommon Prayer* by Brian Doyle, each day or each meeting time as a way to focus yourself on the journey.

Please find ways to practice self-care as you continue this important, but tough, work.

A PRAYER FOR TRUE JUSTICE

Oh Heavenly Father, our hearts are heavy. Broken. Please give us eyes to see and ears to hear where Your Spirit is working. Help us to see every person the way that You see them. Break our hearts for what breaks Yours, God. Let us not merely say that we love each other. Give us strength to mourn with those who mourn, to weep with those who weep. Let Your justice roll like waters. Let your righteousness and love flow from us like rivers of living water. Purify our hearts, Lord, and fill us with genuine hunger for justice, for mercy, and for true peace. Heavenly Father, let justice and mercy start with me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

2. Resources to wrestle with whiteness - Books

White Like Me by Tim Wise

1. In this memoir/essay collection, Tim Wise demonstrates the ways in which he has seen how racism not only burdens people of color, but also benefits people who are “white like him” in every realm: employment, education, housing, criminal justice, and elsewhere. He discusses how racial privilege can harm whites as well, and make progressive change less likely. He explores the ways in which white people can challenge their unjust privileges, and explains why it is in the best interest of white people themselves to do so. Born in 1968, he traces his own development as an anti-racist on the path of learning what it means to be white in a nation created for people like himself. (Ruth Yoder Wenger)

White Awake: An Honest Look at What it Means to be White by Daniel Hill

1. The author, a well-meaning white Christian, is challenged by clergy of color to reckon with his culture. In some ways it parallels *Dear White Christians*, in insisting that we cannot simply leap to reconciliation and forgiveness but must come to terms with what whiteness means, what it has done to privilege some and harm others. The author describes a journey from well-meaning but hurtful ignorance to deeper understanding and empathy, and does so from an Evangelical perspective. I found his openness to describing his journey, and his desire to be faithful to Christ inspiring. Includes discussion questions for each chapter, making it a good book club read. (Ron Adams)

Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race by Debby Irving

1. *Waking Up White* is the book Irving wishes someone had handed her decades ago. By sharing her sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions, she offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. Each chapter of her journey invites readers to pause and consider their own personal experiences and assumptions. Questions at the end of each chapter further help readers further examine

Dear White Christians by Jennifer Harvey

2. The author’s thesis is that white American Christians are not ready for racial reconciliation, because the gulf of centuries of putting down African Americans in all ways will not allow for the equal share of power needed for true reconciliation. First, she says, white Christians need to make reparations to African American Christians. She goes on to detail what that requires. She addresses her work to members of main-line churches and ‘prophetic’ evangelicals, both groups that have seen that American Christianity has a race problem and have tried to correct it, but without great success up to now. (Ruth Douglas Miller)

2. Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla F. Saad

This is a 28-day program with questions for journaling. Each day, the reader reads a short chapter of several pages and then responds to questions by journaling. How does white supremacy show up in my life, and how can I deal with this. Author claims that the book will change your behavior and help you influence those around you. Journaling helps participants to engage past life experience. (John Williamson)

2. White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity by Robert Jones

Drawing on history, public opinion surveys, and personal experience, Robert P. Jones delivers a provocative examination of the unholy relationship between American Christianity and white supremacy, and issues an urgent call for white Christians to reckon with this legacy for the sake of themselves and the nation. (Teman Cooke)

3. White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide by Carol Anderson

Anderson defines white rage as the systematic, intentional, resistance to Black achievement and progress toward equality (contrasted with the dominant narrative which decries the “Black rage” of BLM and other movements for equality). The book traces how white rage has been demonstrated from Reconstruction to the Obama era. White resistance to Black progress occurs on multiple fronts: criminal justice, housing, education, etc. Pretty much anywhere and anytime African-Americans have tried to assert their rights as human beings, white rage reacts to forcibly, sometimes violently, keep them “in their place.” Includes a brief reading list, and a set of discussion questions. I found this book to be both enlightening and challenging. It makes clear that racism and the structures that benefit whiteness are not accidental or ancient history. What was done back then continues to be done today. (Ron Adams)

3. The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism by Jemar Tisby

The Color of Compromise is both enlightening and compelling, telling a history we either ignore or just don’t know. Equal parts painful and inspirational, it details how the American church has helped create and maintain racist ideas and practices. You will be guided in thinking through concrete solutions for improved race relations and a racially inclusive church. (Teman Cooke)

3. Resources to continue expanding our understanding

Small Group Discussions as used at Frazer, MC, 2021

Partnering with Widerstand Consulting, MC USA is providing affordable online anti-racism training to congregations and conferences. This 10-hour, research-based training gives congregations tools to begin the work of understanding and dismantling racism in their organization by helping to build understanding of the historical roots, individual manifestations, and internal dynamics of insitutional racism. Our task group recommends this excellent training to individuals and groups as a next step after taking the IDI and receiving a personalized assessment.

Find information here:

ibit.ly/6wa1

Lamenting Racism video & discussion series by MennoMedia

“Lamenting Racism is a timely and accessible resource for congregations that see antiracism as a call to discipleship. [This series] offers a welcoming seat in the circle to cry out, repent, and let your voices be heard to the One who hears and acts with and for us.” (Sue Park-Hur, denominational minister of transformative Peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA)

Find it here: www.mennomedia.org/lamenting-racism

Anti-racism Training tutorials offered by Mennonite Church USA

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Find information here:

mennoniteusa.org/news/anti-racism-training-accessible

Long-term resources for your journey will be available from ACC's Anti-racism Task Group in the near future. To request an updated booklet with these resources when available, email office@atlanticcoastconference.net.

If purchasing books, consider buying from BOOKSHOP.ORG to support independant bookstores.

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.

Anti-racism Glossary

Found at

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

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Contact office@atlanticcoastconference.net with any questions, comments or for additional resources.

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.

