



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Another Look at Antiracism

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church, Hayward, CA, Wednesday, May 25, 2022, 1 PM

CHALICE LIGHTING/INTRODUCTION

I just cannot accept the proposition that some people are better or worse than other people because of their race--whatever that may be. I accept my race and the race of everyone simply as a condition of existence, like height, weight, age, sex or shoe size. Now this doesn't mean at all that I am blind to the fact that other people may regard race as the most consequential aspect of their being and my being. I have almost a half century of scars, fortunately most of them on my memory and not on my body, to remind me that I live in a racist society. However, I refuse to permit anyone to infect me with the virus of racial pride, because I know it would turn out to be a cancer that would destroy my spirit, my physical self, and the world in which I live.

The Hon. Wade H. McCree

COMMUNITY SINGING: We Are

(No. 1051 in Teal Hymnal)

SILENT MEDITATION / CENTERING (2 min)

The first sound of the gong brings us to silence. Please take time to center yourself, and temporarily push aside whatever might be preventing you from participating fully in this session. The second sound of the gong returns us to each other's presence.

CHECK-IN (2 ROUNDS)

Please share some thing(s) about your life since last we met. When you finish, choose who goes next.

INTRODUCTION TO RACISM AND CRT [Critical Race Theory]

Wikipedia defines critical race theory as “a cross-disciplinary intellectual and social movement of civil-rights scholars and activists who seek to examine the intersection of race, society, and law in the United States and to challenge mainstream American liberal approaches to racial justice.

Race as a construct is economic and social. To be black or brown or white or “red” says nothing about a person except in economic and social terms. Racism may be defined as prejudice plus power, power that is economic and social, not biological and not anthropological. Rev. Dr. James Cone, describes racism as “America’s original sin and, as it is institutionalized at all levels of society, its

most persistent and intractable evil.” As an African American, he observes that “No day passes in which blacks don’t have to deal with white supremacy. It is found everywhere—in the churches, in seminaries, at publishing houses, in government, and all around the world. There is no escape. If whites get tired of talking about race, just imagine how people of color feel.”

From the *UU World* article on CRT (Spring 2022 issue)

Many people wonder why “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) has incited so much ire in the conservative media and irrational fear among the public. It's essential to recognize that CRT is a sophisticated mode of legal analysis first developed in the 1970s, and most definitely was *not* designed for elementary and secondary school students.

CRT posits that race inflects all aspects of our society. As an often-invisible element of our legal, social, and intellectual structures, race is taken for granted and thus goes unacknowledged. To my eyes, when legal scholars in the 1970s coined the term Critical Race Theory, they inadvertently chose three words that were already inflammatory in the culture wars of that period and today are even more so.

Critical is misinterpreted to mean *ensorious* instead of *analytical* or *important*. Given Americans’ sensitivity about our history of enslavement and discrimination, discussions about **race** engender contention and conflict. And **theory**, as understood by early-twentieth-century social scientists, challenges the universality of claims to truth.

Today, CRT is drawing boisterous opposition from detractors who twist this term to their political ends. This is not surprising, for CRT calls into question some heartfelt assumptions of most Americans, including legal determinacy and the disappearance of racial inequities in our society.

CRT opponents argue that it doesn’t give our society credit for making racial oppression disappear; indeed, it does not because racial oppression is still very much alive. Race is a discursive structure that forms over time and changes throughout history, but its strength and importance do not dissipate.

Opponents also object that CRT scholars advise that we attend to narratives and voices from the margins who traditionally are excluded from the narratives and storytelling that form the basis of legal cases and case law.

It’s unfortunate that those in disagreement with the tenets of Critical Race Theory have chosen to misrepresent the arguments of and the audience for this school of legal thought instead of engaging directly with the premises, facts, and logic of its concepts.

COMMUNITY SINGING: BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND (Lyrics at end of this document)

QUOTES TO PONDER

First, I argue that inherent within religious liberalism is a fundamental tension that undermines our efforts to become an effective prophetic voice in a society that badly needs one. Second, squarely confronting the continuing evil of white racism and our own complicity in it can shift the balance of

this tension and help us reclaim our prophetic voice. Yet, antiracism work reveals some additional tensions and tendencies within liberalism that make this effort difficult to sustain. Third, the evil of racism lies deeper than institutional structures and systemic power relations; it has a spiritual dimension that liberals all too often fail to recognize. As a result, despite our clearest analysis and noblest intentions, we sometimes fail to truly engage and call out the evil that holds us in its grasp. Yet, ironically, it is the spiritual dimension that can not only ground our antiracism work but contribute most to recovering the prophetic power of our own voice, which too often lies dormant or speaks only weakly.

Paul Rasor

History does not record in its annals any lasting domination exercised by one people over another, of different race, of diverse usages and customs, of opposite and divergent ideals. One of the two had to yield and succumb.

Jose Rizal

We must become bigger than we have been: more courageous, greater in spirit, larger in outlook. We must become members of a new race, overcoming petty prejudice, owing our ultimate allegiance not to nations but to our fellow men within the human community.

Haile Selassie

Political tags--such as royalist, communist, democrat, populist, fascist, liberal, conservative, and so forth--are never basic criteria. The human race divides politically into those who want people to be controlled and those who have no such desire.

Robert A. Heinlein

All these walls that keep us from loving each other as one family or one race--racism, religion, where we grew up, whatever, class, socioeconomic--what makes us be so selfish and prideful, what keeps us from wanting to help the next man, what makes us be so focused on a personal legacy as opposed to the entire legacy of a race.

Kanye West

How many years has it taken people to realize that we are all brothers and sisters and human beings in the human race? I mean how many years does it take people to see that? We're all in this rat race together!

Marsha P. Johnson

To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships.

W. E. B. Du Bois

Why don't they pass a constitutional amendment prohibiting anybody from learning anything? If it works as well as prohibition did, in five years Americans would be the smartest race of people on Earth.

Will Rogers

Let's pray that the human race never escapes from Earth to spread its iniquity elsewhere.

C. S. Lewis

At the bottom of education, at the bottom of politics, even at the bottom of religion, there must be for our race economic independence.

Booker T. Washington

We get into the habit of living before acquiring the habit of thinking. In that race which daily hastens us towards death, the body maintains its irreparable lead.

Albert Camus

It occurred to me that there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race, so profound as the difference between the sick and the well.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The human race is a herd. Here we are, unique, eternal aspects of consciousness with an infinity of potential, and we have allowed ourselves to become an unthinking, unquestioning blob of conformity and uniformity. A herd. Once we concede to the herd mentality, we can be controlled and directed by a tiny few. And we are.

David Icke

You cannot talk about race without talking about privilege. And when people start talking about privilege, they get paralyzed by shame.

Brene Brown

There is only one home to the life of a river-mussel; there is only one home to the life of a tortoise; there is only one shell to the soul of man: there is only one world to the spirit of our race. If that world leaves its course and smashes on boulders of the great void, whose world will give us shelter?

Wole Soyinka

Every age has its own poetry; in every age the circumstances of history choose a nation, a race, a class to take up the torch by creating situations that can be expressed or transcended only through poetry.

Jean-Paul Sartre

I'm literally fighting for the equality of every man, woman and child regardless of race, religion, color, creed, and sexual orientation and here to spread a message of peace, love, and positivity.

Logic

The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or a class--it is the cause of human kind, the very birthright of humanity.

Anna Julia Cooper

ANTIRACIST BABY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gezd_Y_Kqc>

PREPARATION FOR GROUP REFLECTION

Read the Group Reflection questions, one by one.

BREAK

GROUP REFLECTION / FEEDBACK

Two rounds, or respectfully discuss each participant's ideas AFTER they have finished. Take a moment of silence and consider your response to one or more of these questions.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION ON RACE AND CRT

Where are you on your path toward becoming antiracist? You may, if you want, address the following topics, explaining how you have changed, or are trying to change your reactions.

- ☺ How do you respond to racist encounters today?
- ☺ How does institutional or cultural racism affect you?
- ☺ Do you identify, from your own personal heritage, with one or several racial or ethnic groups? If so, how do you embody that part of your identity?
- ☺ What is your most vivid experience of racial prejudice?
- ☺ What challenge does racism present to you as a religious person? To your spiritual practice?

COMMUNITY SINGING: WOYAYA (No. 1020 in Teal Hymnal)

FUTURE PLANS

If you want, we can discuss / process how Reverenda Maria-Cristina's announced impending departure has affected you, and what changes you would like us to consider for this coming summer and during the transition to the incoming interim minister

Suggestions for topics to be reflected upon at our fourth-Wednesday meetings?

Plans for second-Wednesday meal sharing and discussions—Restaurants, discussion topics.

SESSION FEEDBACK

What changes would you have made to the session to make it more meaningful for you?

Is it time to revisit our covenant?

EXTINGUISH CHALICE / CLOSING WORDS

I never intend to adjust myself...to the evils of segregation and the crippling effects of discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to an economic system, which takes necessities from the masses to give luxuries to the classes. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and violence. It may be that the salvation of the world lies in the hands of the [creatively] maladjusted.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Blowin' In The Wind (Bob Dylan)

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, and how many times must the cannonballs fly
Before they're forever banned?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind

Yes, and how many years can a mountain exist
Before it's washed to the sea?
Yes, and how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, and how many times can a man turn his head
And pretend that he just doesn't see?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind

Yes, and how many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
Yes, and how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, and how many deaths will it take 'til he knows
That too many people have died?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind