

BUILDING BRIDGES

Black / White Relations In America



By Ralph Ennis, Christine Weddle and Dr. Melindajoy Mingo

©2011 Ralph C Ennis. All rights reserved. Do not reprint without permission.

Content development: Ralph Ennis, Christine Weddle, and Dr. Melindajoy Mingo

Design: Christine Weddle

All Scripture quotations in this publication are taken from: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (NIV), Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society, all rights reserved.

Definitions from Webster's Universal College Dictionary (New York: Grammercy Books, 2004 Edition)

PREFACE

You may be asking, “Why a Bible study only on Black/White relationships? Why not a study on multi-cultural relationships?” And those are valid questions. We are well aware of the historical neglect of Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans in discussions of civil rights and racial issues in America. We acknowledge that there is a need to do work similar to this in these areas. However, we have decided to begin by focusing on historical African-American issues and try to avoid diluting the treatment of Black/White relations here by trying to cover too many different issues at once.

One step towards a Bible study that includes looking at relationships from a more multi-cultural perspective is *RELATIONSHIPS: Bringing Jesus into My World*, part of the CONNECT Bible study series by several of our Navigator staff. I encourage you to consider this resource as an initial step in helping your group move into more healthy multi-cultural relationships.

Please be in prayer for all of us. This is a huge step we are taking and we do not take lightly the fact that the evil one will do his best to throw sand on the tracks. Please be in prayer as we consider the development of additional tools and resources that will bring us all closer in the Kingdom of the Triune God.

—Eddie Broussard, VP of Diversity, The Navigators



WHO IS THIS STUDY FOR?

These writings are for the **White** side of the Black-and-White equation in America. We invite you to join us on the journey into empathetic understanding of the daily challenges our African American brothers and sisters face. The impact of generational sin, different life experiences and cultural values have lead to many misunderstandings and intentional or unintentional offenses across socio-economic lines since time began.

As American's, in particular, this is our opportunity not only to come to a place of empathetic understanding, but also to begin to consider how we can move towards repentance, take action, and right many wrongs through grace, truth and mercy. America continues to suffer the affects of generational sin towards our African American brothers and sisters and this generational sin affects not only their soul identity, but ours as well.

This journey of our souls is one we cannot take alone. First of all we need the Creator God to be our guide as we walk into relationship with our brothers and sisters who are also “created in the image of God”.

Second, we need each other. Empathetic understanding can only come through two-way dialogue, listening and shared life experiences.

While we know one tool cannot deal with all the issues, we do hope this study will be a valuable resource in further opening the doors to a more honest dialogue, greater understanding and celebration of God's beautiful creation – mankind.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. –Genesis 1:26-27

O God,
you made us in your own image and redeemed us
through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the
whole human family; take away the arrogance and
hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls
that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work
through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your
purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations
and races may serve you in harmony around your
heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*The Book of Common Prayer*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue and Guidelines for Small Groups	5
Shallow Words, Not Enough Substance	11
Social Segregation	19
Economic Oppression	25
Political Oppression	31
Judicial and Physical Oppression	36
Psychological and Spiritual Oppression	45
Sexual Subjugation	50
Minimizing and Marginalizing Pain	57
Refusal to Admit Shame	67
Where Do I Go From Here?	70
Notes	74
Additional Resources	76

PROLOGUE

This study is about race relations—specifically between Blacks and Whites in America. It's about seeking internal heart changes and empathetic understanding of those who come from a different ethnic background than ourselves.

In order to appreciate the long-term, generational consequences of slavery and racism in America, we must be willing to be learners—to listen and walk alongside in order to better understand the resulting wounds and shame that continue to effect all of us. We must also be willing to examine our own life experiences that may have more of an effect on us that we are even aware of.

Let me begin by sharing a little of my own story. I'm a White male born in North Carolina in 1950. Growing up involved negotiating the White-only dentist waiting room, White-only schools, White-only privileges. It involved hearing people I loved call Black people very degrading names.

As a young child, I remember standing on my grandmother's front porch with a decision to make. Would I believe Whites that Blacks deserved to be degraded or will I believe that they were just as worthy of dignity as Whites? The choice to disbelieve the messages of White people dear to me and choose to believe that God had made us as equals and thus worthy of dignity was a life changing decision of the heart.

Most heart changes are tested by struggle. Part of God's spiritually transformative struggle for me included receiving the anger of Blacks who had been so deeply hurt by Whites. Some of those pains were trivial. Some of the pains were not trivial. The ultimate issue of race relations for my heart became receiving suffering from God as His severe mercy to a broken world and extending dignity to my fellow Black and White journeyers.

This study is about facing ways the White community has stripped dignity from Blacks and seeking forgiveness as equal humans before God Who is drawing us all to Himself. I invite you to join me on this journey of repentance, forgiveness, and action.

To help you on your journey reflection and dialogue questions are included to encourage you to engage your heart and mind in a personal way with Black / White relations in America. A statement of repentance is suggested to guide your soul to the heart of God. And action steps are provided to help us move forward with intentionality.

This is a journey you may take personally or with your team members. But most of all **it is a journey you are taking with God**. I encourage you to come before the throne of grace with an open heart and mind—open to what the God of all Creation has to say to each and every one of us about loving and caring for one another as children of the Most Holy Triune God.

GUIDELINES FOR SMALL GROUPS

-developed by Rebecca Goldstone

1. **Confidentiality builds trust**

- In keeping with Christian integrity, please avoid any violation or breach of confidentiality.
- Please do not repeat anything said or heard inside the group to anyone outside of the group.
- Refrain from gossip, both in and outside the group meeting.

(Gossip is defined here as any discussion of or about another group member or anyone else, without their being present, which is positive or negative, no matter what the intended purpose.)

2. **Safety is vital for personal growth and life-change**

- Safety is an intangible concept that is vital to healthy personal growth and life-change.
- Group members may require certain space or care to feel safe.
- Please accept and respect each other's boundaries physically, emotionally and spiritually thereby promoting safety.

3. **"I" statements are preferred**

- Sharing in the first person promotes self-responsibility by divulging information only about yourself.
- While sharing, avoid such words such as "we" "they" "us" and "you."
- Making an "I" statement involves more than including the word "I" in a sentence. A true "I" statement divulges information about the person speaking only.

4. **Interference is to be avoided.**

- Interference is defined as advice giving; talking to another group member while someone is sharing, or being disruptive in any way to the group.
- Avoid competition by statement such as, "I'm just like you" or by sharing a similar story.
- Listening attentively and learning from everyone's life experience shows sincere caring and interest.
- Appropriate feedback would be to give short statement of support such as "thanks for your honesty and vulnerability."

5. **Healthy group process allows for individuality**

- This is a small group where everyone has an opportunity to discover areas of need or brokenness; thereby opening their hearts to God's healing.
- Please avoid "probing" or "intrusive" questioning of other group members.
- Please avoid tampering with the personal sharing of another.

6. **The Holy Spirit is the healer.**

- God performs the healing needed in our hearts; the group is just a tool available for this purpose.
- The purpose of the group is to provide a place where the support, love and acceptance of God can be modeled.

7. **Emotional sharing is encouraged.**

- Sometimes it is hard to experience uncomfortable feelings as other's share uncomfortable feelings. Please do not interrupt with another's sharing because it makes you uncomfortable.
- Please avoid any behavior that might communicate that another's feelings are unacceptable or "bad."
- Please allow members to experience their full emotions without interfering.
- Touching or hugging is appropriate after asking and receiving permission from the individual.
- Please allow people to process their thoughts and feelings without resolution.
- Strong emotions are to be encouraged as the group matures and develops.

8. **Personal responsibility and accountability.**

- Recognize that being responsible for our behavior is to accept that true life-change can only occur with God's help as we apply ourselves.
- Accountability can involve asking other small group members for prayer and support during the week.

HEALTHY GROUP PROCESS

The Holy Spirit will easily oversee and supervise each small group. The role of the facilitator is to facilitate a safe, open, accepting environment where God is able to minister to each individual when and how he chooses.

1. **Be Yourself**

A healthy group is one where you can be yourself and take off your mask.

2. **Acceptance of other people**

Diversity can add a healthy dynamic in a group setting.

3. **Quiet time for personal process**

Silence can be one of the most powerful healing environments.

4. **The normalcy of roadblocks and obstacles**

Being stuck can be the catalyst for members to move forward.

5. **Expression of varied emotions.**

Healthy group process allows for members to express feelings such as crying, raising their voice, or being silent.

6. **Safety through acceptance of others' perceived realities.**

A safe group will be able to accept without needing to comment or fix another's statement of their reality or feelings.

HINDRANCES TO HEALTHY GROUP PROCESS

1. **Interference with another's style of sharing**

Each member will be allowed to practice his or her own style of sharing.

2. **Expectations of depth of personal sharing.**

Please allow others to share at the depth they are able to.

3. **Using personal sharing time to "teach" others.**

Structure the group process around the topic of the lesson or Bible study.

4. **Imposition of personal morals on others**

Please allow the text material and the Holy Spirit alone to spiritually challenge members of your group.

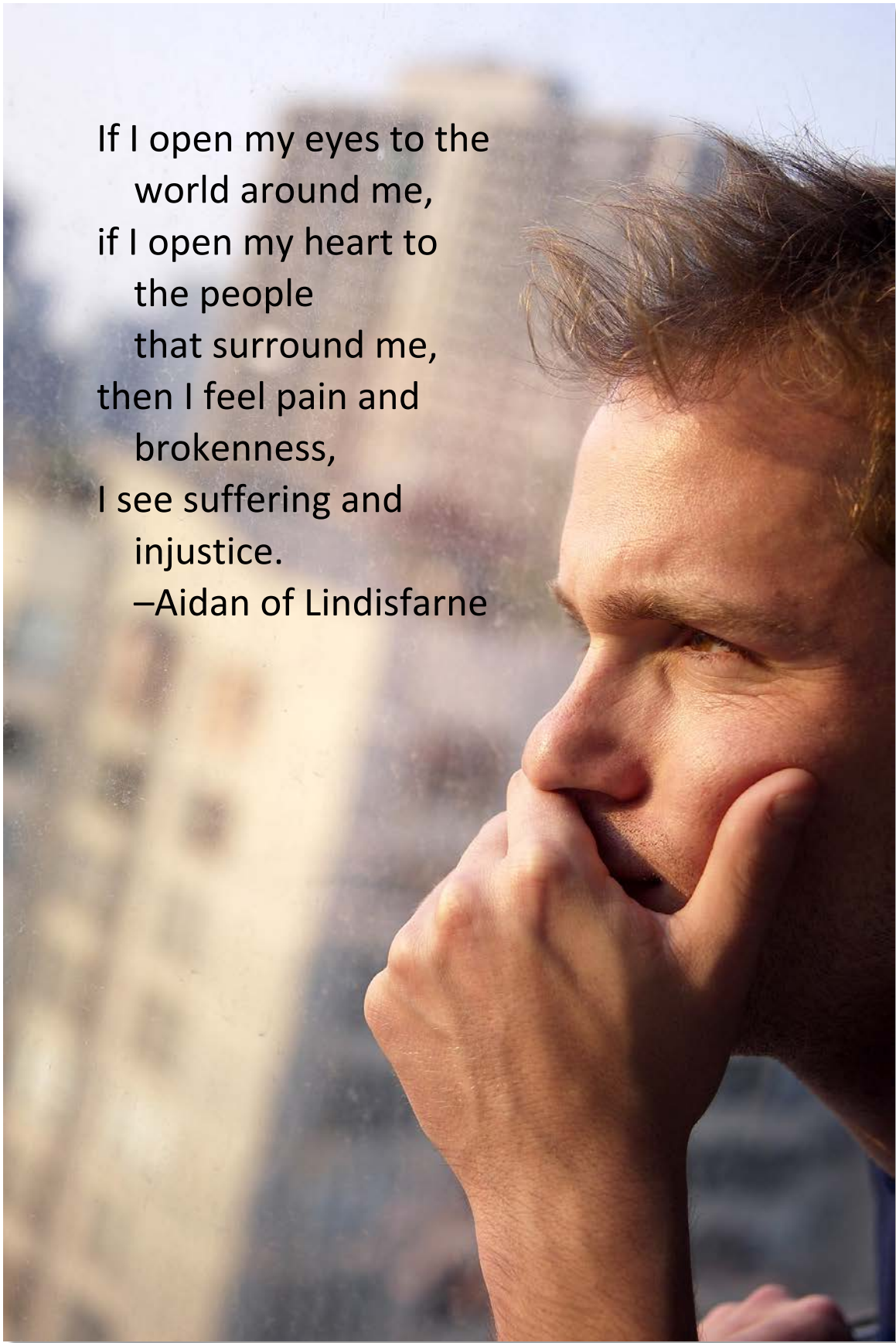
5. **Manipulative tactics to promote sharing.**

Please avoid "pushing" a member to speak or suggesting how someone might be feeling or thinking.

BENEFITS THAT YOU CAN EXPERIENCE

1. A safe place to share vulnerability and honestly.
2. New relationships.
3. An opportunity to be listened to in an accepting environment.
4. A forum for spiritual growth at your own pace.

If I open my eyes to the
world around me,
if I open my heart to
the people
that surround me,
then I feel pain and
brokenness,
I see suffering and
injustice.
—Aidan of Lindisfarne



op•press (f pres'), *vt.* 1. To weigh heavily on the mind, spirits, or senses of; worry; trouble 2. To keep down by the cruel or unjust use of power or authority;

un•i•ty (yOO n' f tE), *n.*...3. the quality of being one in spirit, sentiment, purpose, etc., harmony

em•pa•thy (em' pf thE), *n.* 1. The identification with or vicarious experience-ing of the feelings, thoughts, etc., of another. 2. The imaginative ascribing to an object of one's feelings or attitudes.

un•der•stand (un' dfr stand'), *v.* 1. to perceive the meaning of; comprehend; 2. to be familiar with, have a thorough knowledge of. 3. to interpret or comprehend in a specified way. 4. to grasp the significance or importance of.

val•u•a•ble (val' yOO f bfl), *n.* 2. having qualities worthy of esteem. 3. of considerable use or importance.

wor•thy (wûr' thf), *adj.* 1. having adequate or great merit, character, or value. 2. of commendable excellence or merit;... 3. a person of eminent worth, merit or position.

dig•ni•ty (dig' ni tE), *n.* 1. bearing, conduct, or manner indicative of self-respect, formality, or gravity.

em•pow•er (em pou' fr), *v.* 1. to give official or legal power or authority to. 2. to endow with an ability, enable.



SHALLOW WORDS, NOT ENOUGH SUBSTANCE

My African-American brothers and sisters often tell me that the concept of moving towards unity in diversity and racial reconciliation among Christians today can sound very sincere and yet be very shallow...words alone are just not enough. This means we need to take action, action that requires courage.

But we may be thinking, "these issues are not my problem, so why should I be expected to take action?" Let's start this journey by examining the Word of God and what it has to say about glorifying God and the life He has called us to.

ac•tive (ak'tiv), *adj.* 1. Engaged in action or activity; characterized by energetic work, motion, etc. 2. Being in existence, progress or motion. 3. Marked by or disposed to direct involvement or practical action.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it." —Ezra 10:4

I'll make them of one mind and heart, always honoring me, so that they can live good and whole lives, they and their children after them. —Jeremiah 32:39 (MSG)

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' –Acts 17:24-28

....we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend our-selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. –2 Corinthians 4:2

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. –Philippians 1:20

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. –James 2:17

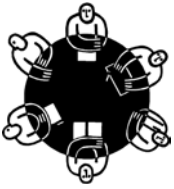
Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. –1 John 4:7

Why are ye silent, ye free men and women? Why do your tongues falter in maintenance of the right? Would that I had more ability! But my heart is so full, and my pen so weak! There are noble men and women who plead for us, striving to help those who cannot help themselves. God bless them! God give them strength and courage to go on! God bless those, everywhere, who are laboring to advance the cause of humanity!

—Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

race (rAs), *n.* 1. a group of persons related by common descent or heredity...3. any people united by common history, language, cultural traits, etc.

rac•ism (rA'siz fm), *n.* 1. a belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human races determine cultural or individual achievement, usu. Involving the idea that one's own race is superior...3. hatred or intolerance of another race or other races.



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

In what situations or in what mediums do you hear/see people talking about the issues of unity and diversity, racism and racial reconciliation today?

What are the variety of feelings you experience when you hear or are a part of discussions on these topics? Be honest, dig deep.

Can you identify a life experience or experiences with someone from another culture/race that caused you to feel like an "outsider"? What did you feel? What behavior did you exhibit?

Have these life experiences actually been personal experiences or something you've viewed from afar, or something someone else has "taught" you? Explain.

What affect have these life experiences had on your current belief system?

I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear. Knowing what must be done does away with fear. —Rosa Parks

TAKE A MOMENT NOW...

and reread the verses at the beginning of this section.

Now, let God speak to your heart about these life experiences and how they have affected your current belief system. Don't talk. Just listen.

We meet YOU in the brokenness of the world and the cries of the hungry for bread. Enable us to be the bread that YOU break, which provides life for the world. And when we come again to YOUR table, Lord, ourselves broken, may we once more become the bread of sincerity and truth, as YOU become for us the Bread of Life.

—Alan Jenkins

re•pent•ance (ri pen´ tns), *n.* deep sorrow, compunction, or contrition for a past sin, wrongdoing, or error.



MEDITATION

Repentance. I imagine when you read that word something happened within your soul. Repent!... why do I need to repent? I haven't done anything! And that may just be the point.

Let's be honest, really honest. All of us feel the seeds of racism simmering, or maybe boiling, within us at times. We are living in a fallen world after all, and Satan, the ultimate deceiver, is there whispering in our ear.

That's when we have a choice. And the choice can lead us to sin, or not to sin. The sin is not so much that we have those feelings. The sin is that we suppress and/or make excuses for those feelings, and when we do Satan does a dance.

As we take this journey into breaking the bonds of the sin of racism the keys will be honestly repenting, asking for forgiveness and seeking mercy at the cross of Christ. And then taking the next steps in the power of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Yes, we must be willing to admit the consequences of past generational sins in our lives. But we must also look into our hearts today in order to break the cycle for the generations to come.

The pain of going to the cross in repentance is real. But our hope is in God and power of His Holy Spirit living within us. Let us glorify Him together!

[Jesus] looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

*"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. **All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.** I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy*

Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one**, Father, just as you 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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one**: I in them and you in me. **May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” —John 17

We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others, the same word many mean for some mean to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men’s labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name—liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names—liberty and tyranny. —from the collected works of Abraham Lincoln



ACTION STEP:

Do you have a personal relationship with someone from another ethnic background? If “no”, what can you do to engage in an intentional and authentic relationship with someone from another ethnic background?

If “yes”, is this an authentic relationship where trust and safety reside? How much have you learned (asked questions, studied, etc.) and/or experienced about that person’s culture?

RESOURCES:

Movies: *The Color of Friendship*
Rosewood (R-due to violence)

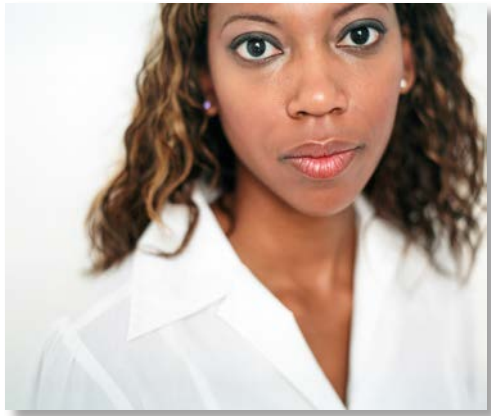
Books: *Being White; Stories of Race and Racism*, by Karyn McKinney, (Routledge, December 29, 2004)

White Like Me : Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son, by Tim Wise (Soft Skull Press, January 9, 2005)

Black Like Me, by John Howard Griffing (Penguin Putnam, 1995)

The Color of Words, by Philip Herbst (Intercultural Press, Inc.)

Letters Across The Divide: Two Friends Explore Racism, Friendship, and Faith, by David Anderson, Brent Zuercher (Baker Books, January 1, 2001)



I Wear a Thousand Masks

I hope you won't be fooled by me for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid to take off, and one of them is me.

I am likely to give you the impression that I'm secure, that confidence is my name and coolness is my game, that the water's calm, and I'm in command, and that I need no one. But I hope you won't believe me.

My surface may seem smooth...beneath I dwell in confusion, in fear, in aloneness. But I hide this. I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear of being exposed. That's why I frantically create a mood to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated facade to shield me from your understanding. But such understanding is my salvation, my only salvation. And I know it.

If I don't keep the mask in front of myself, I am afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.

So I play the game, my desperate pretending game, with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling feeling within. And so my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in the suave surface tones...I tell you everything that's nothing, and nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me. So when I go into my routine, I hope you won't be fooled by what I am saying. I hope you listen carefully to hear what I'm not saying.

I dislike the superficial, phony game I'm playing. I'd really like to be open, genuine, and spontaneous. I want your help in doing this. I want you to risk approaching me even when that's the last thing I seem to want, or need. I want this from you so I can be alive. Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging; each time you try to understand because you really care, my courage to risk sharing myself with you increases.

I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can be a creator of the person that is me, if you choose. But it will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness leads me to maintain distance.

The nearer you approach me, the blinder I may strike back. It is self-defeating, but, at the time, it seems the safest thing to do. I fight against the very things that I cry out for. But I am told that empathy is stronger than walls, and therein lies hope. I desperately want you to understand me, in spite of my distancing tactics.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well. I am every man and woman you meet.

—Author Unknown

SOCIAL SEGREGATION



The message has been clear to Black Americans over the generations. White Americans don't really want to associate with them. Slavery bred segregation in the workplace, schools, country clubs, neighborhoods, etc. This social banishment continues to have many present day manifestations within our hearts. Our insecurities and superior attitudes haven't allowed us to see the sin within our hearts or the God-given dignity in theirs.

seg•re•gate (seg'ri gAt'); *n.* 1. to separate or set apart from others; isolate. 2. to require, often with force, the separation of (a specific racial, religious, or other group) from the body of society.

in•te•grate (in'ti grAt'), *v.* 1. To bring together or incorporate into a unified, harmonious, or interrelated whole or system...4. To give equal opportunity and consideration in (a racial or other ethnic group).

You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the miraculous signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear. —Deuteronomy 7:19

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!
—Ecclesiastes 4:10

I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts. —Psalm 119:63

Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another? —Malachai 2:10

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

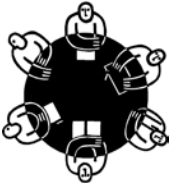
“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” —Luke 18:10-14

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. —Romans 15:7

Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you.
—3 John 5

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. —3 John 11

Chained by their attitudes, they are a slave, they have forfeited their freedom. Only a person who risks is free. —
Unknown



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

Imagine yourself in a roomful of people from mixed ethnic backgrounds. To whom would you be naturally interested in befriending?

What are some fears you may have about reaching out to those from a different cultural background?

Personally, I've never seen much difference between the South and the North. Down South folks don't care much how close I get as long as I don't get big. Up North folks don't care how big I get as long as I don't get too close. –
Dick Gregory, Comedian and Activist

What metaphor would you use to identify the social blending of cultures?

Consider the life of Jesus. In what ways did He reach out to those from different cultural backgrounds or social status?

Luke 7:36-50

Luke 19:2-10

John 4:4-41

As an African-American, I have experienced, too often, the sting of racial discrimination. I have seen in the eyes, heard in the words, felt in the deeds of others their contempt, yes, even their hatred of me. Yet, I know that it is not me that they are hating; for the barriers they have erected between us have not allowed them to know me, to find out who I really am.

....The factors which segregate our communities vary. Some are social factors—people who share a history, an ethnicity, a heritage tend to flock together. That's why we have barrios and ghettos on most major cities throughout the United States.

This segregation is often the result of economic factors—people live where they can afford to live. This usually means that poor people live among poor people, middle-income people live among middle-income people, and rich people live among rich people.

There in the midst of our independent, isolated, self-contained communities, stand our Christian churches, independent, and isolated, and self-contained.

As follower of Jesus, this isolation should greatly concern us! The goal of unity among Christians is to reflect Christ's love for the world through our love for each other. Trustful cooperation between churches is a significant way to show our unity. And yet, too often, we remain isolated and removed from each other. Why?

*—by Jennifer Sudderth, excerpted from Overcoming Barriers,
www.cbeinternational.org, Summer 2005*



What is Jesus' model of reaching out to those from different cultural backgrounds or social status' saying to you today?



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness for not associating with them as friends. This is not what God desires and I am missing out on a gift from God.

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP

Consider the community around you. Are you able to identify isolated people groups? What steps can you take—as learner and a listener—to begin to break down the walls of isolation?

RESOURCES:

Movies: *Glory Road*
Tuskegee Airmen
Once Upon A Time . . . When We Were Colored
Separate But Equal
The Rosa Parks Story
Bojangles
The Imitation of Life

Documentaries: *Blue-Eyed*, by Jane Elliott (California Newsreel: film and video for social change, 1995)

The Power of an Illusion (California Newsreel: film and video for social change, 2003)

Ethnic Notions (California Newsreel: film and video for social change, 1987)

This piece has become a mainstay of university, high school and public library collections . . . for training programs concerned with stereotyping and cross-cultural understanding.

Books: *Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity* (Paperback), by Beverly Daniel Tatum (Basic Books; 5th Anniv., Revised edition, January 7, 2003)



ECONOMIC OPPRESSION

Slavery was far more than economic abuse, but it *was* economic abuse. Through fear, strict discipline and brutality we, I and the White community profited from the labors of our African-American brothers and sisters. We built our homes with their labor. We ate and clothed ourselves from their labor. The sweltering heat and tormenting insects of the plantation yielded substantial wealth to the White communities at the expense of Black sweat and blood.

Even today, we don't share our wealth very well. Because of sin we're greedy and lustful, often at their expense. We still exclude them from the halls of economic power. Their differences just scare us too much. To serve along side them as economic equals would force us to face our shame and lusts in ways we really aren't prepared to do.

wealth (welth), *n.* 1. a great quantity or store of money, property, or other riches. 2. plentiful amount; abundance.

pow•er (pou'ér), *n., v.* 1. Ability to do or act; capability of doing or accomplishing something. 2. Political or national strength. 3. Great or marked ability to do or act; strength; might; force.

“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.” –Leviticus 23:22

There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land. –Deuteronomy 15:11

Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise your name. –Psalm 74:21

He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty. –Proverbs 22:16

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God. –Proverbs 14:31

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.

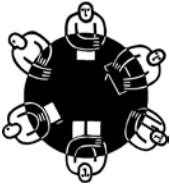
But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” –Mark 12:41-44

Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. –Acts 10:4

The study of economic oppression led me to realize that Negroes were not alone, but were part of an unending struggle for human dignity the world over. —Pauli Murray, 1910-1985, Lawyer and Minister



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

How have past generational sins of economic greed permeated into present day American culture?
Generational sin: typically understood as repetitive behavior that is learned from one generation to the next.

How has economic greed impacted racial reconciliation?

What are ways you have personally seen economic greed affect a person or community?

Compared to the greed we see what are some practical, economic ways you see people supporting the African-American community and those economically oppressed?

What are the variety of feelings that surface in you when you see in your own community, or the media and newspapers, people reaching out to those who are economically oppressed?

Have you considered taking personal action? Why or why not?

OPTIONAL EXERCISE: Find an article on a current event as it relates to economic oppression and discuss the implications to our society.



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness for the generational shame of our cultural greed and lust for wealth. Our nation needs forgiveness for our willingness to humiliate some in order to get undesirable work accomplished.

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP

Have you ever investigated the contribution that African-Americans have made to the American economy...the every day home and business tools that were invented by African-Americans (*i.e. the ironing board invented by Sarah Boone in 1887? Or the cellular phone invented by Henry T. Sampson in 1971?*)

RESOURCES:

Movies: *The Tuskegee Airmen*
 Men of Honor
 The Pursuit of Happyness

Documentaries: *American Cultural History - African Americans DVD (2005)*
 Now You Know! XL - Black Inventors Series

Books: www.africanamericans.com/Inventors

 African American Inventors, by Otha Richard Sullivan (Black Stars)

 100 African Americans Who Shaped American History (100 Series), by Chrisanne Beckner

 Black Pioneers of Science and Invention, by Louis Haber

 Black Stars: African American Women Scientists and Inventors, by Otha Richard Sullivan

 1001 Things Everyone Should Know About African American History, by Jeffrey C. Stewart

 Empowerment Ethics for a Liberated People, by Cheryl Sanders, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
 (September 1, 1995)

What step(s) might you take to help an individual or community with education and economic opportunities?

GOD'S HEART FOR THE POOR

(excerpted from www.neighborhoodministries.org)

Exodus 22: 22-25
Exodus 23: 6, 11

Deuteronomy 10: 18-19
Deuteronomy 14: 22, 25-29
Deuteronomy 15: 4, 7-11
Deuteronomy 16: 10-11, 14
Deuteronomy 24: 12-15, 17-22
Deuteronomy 26: 12-13, 16

I Samuel 2:8

Esther 9:22

Job 5: 15-16
Job 20: 4-5, 10, 15, 18-19
Job 22: 7-10
Job 24: 1-14
Job 29: 11-17, 23-24
Job 30:25
Job 31: 13-23, 31-32
Job 34: 26-28
Job 36: 6

Psalms 9: 12, 16, 18
Psalms 10:9, 12, 14-15, 17-18
Psalms 12: 5-6, 12
Psalms 14: 3-6
Psalms 22: 24, 26
Psalms 34: 2,6, 25-28
Psalms 35: 10
Psalms 37:14
Psalms 68: 4-5, 10
Psalms 69: 20, 32
Psalms 72: 1-4, 12-14
Psalms 74: 20-21
Psalms 76: 9
Psalms 82: 3-4
Psalms 86: 1
Psalms 94: 1, 5-6
Psalms 102: 17
Psalms 103: 2-6
Psalms 107: 41
Psalms 109: 1-3, 15-16, 31

Psalms 112: 9
Psalms 113: 7
Psalms 140: 12
Psalms 146: 2, 5-7

Proverbs 10: 15
Proverbs 13: 23

Proverbs 14: 20-21, 31
Proverbs 19: 17
Proverbs 21: 13
Proverbs 22: 9, 16, 22-23
Proverbs 23: 10-11
Proverbs 28: 3, 15, 27
Proverbs 29: 7, 14
Proverbs 30: 11-14
Proverbs 31: 6-9, 20

Ecclesiastes 4: 1-2
Ecclesiastes 5:8

Isaiah 1: 11, 15-18
Isaiah 3: 14-15, 26
Isaiah 10: 1-3
Isaiah 11: 1-4
Isaiah 25: 1-4
Isaiah 32: 7-9
Isaiah 41: 17-20
Isaiah 42: 6, 7
Isaiah 58: 5-12
Isaiah 61: 1
Jeremiah 5: 26-28
Jeremiah 7: 3,5,6
Jeremiah 20: 13
Jeremiah 22: 3, 16

Ezekiel 16: 49
Ezekiel 18: 5,7, 9-10, 12-13
Ezekiel 22: 4, 6-7, 29-30
Ezekiel 34: 4, 16
Hosea 6: 6
Amos 2: 6-7
Amos 4: 1
Amos 5: 7, 11-12
Amos 8: 4, 6-7

Micah 6:8

Zechariah 7: 9-11

Malachi 3: 5

Matthew 5: 7, 14-16
Matthew 6: 2,3
Matthew 9: 13
Matthew 11: 4,5
Matthew 12: 7
Matthew 19: 16-26
Matthew 23: 23
Matthew 25: 34-44

Matthew 26: 7-11

Mark 10: 17-27
Mark 14: 3-7

Luke 1:53
Luke 3: 11
Luke 4: 18-21
Luke 6: 20
Luke 7:22
Luke 10: 25-37
Luke 12: 15-35
Luke 14: 12-24
Luke 18: 10-14, 18-27

Acts 2: 45
Acts 9: 36
Acts 10: 2,4,31
Acts 20:35

Romans 15: 25-27

2 Corinthians 1: 3-5
2 Corinthians 9: 15-13

Galatians 2: 10

Ephesians 2: 4,10
Ephesians 4: 28
Ephesians 5: 8-9, 15-16

Colossians 3:12

1 Timothy 5: 25
1 Timothy 6:18

Hebrews 4: 15
Hebrews 10:24
Hebrews 11: 37
Hebrews 13: 1-3, 16

James 1: 27
James 2: 1-9, 12-26
James 3: 13, 17
James 5: 11

I Peter 2: 12

1 John 3: 17-19

Revelation 2: 19
Revelation 3: 15-19



POLITICAL OPPRESSION

The desire for the benevolent welfare of the people is not always the motivation for political rule. The lust for power is usually mingled into the equation. Equal rule in our society is still not a reality. We curtail your political influence through intimidation and voting districts. We listen poorly to the concerns of our African-American brothers and sisters. We don't share power well.

gov•ern•ment (gʊvˈfɹn mfnt) 1. The political direction and control exercised over the action of the members, citizens or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states;

"Men cry out under a load of oppression; they plead for relief from the arm of the powerful. —Job 35:9

*Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.
—Psalm 82:3*

Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." —Proverbs 31:9

...learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. —Isaiah 1:17

“So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice...” —Malachai 3:5

Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. —Frederick Douglass, July, 1862



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

What feelings surface in you when you hear and see members of the African-American community speak out against the American political system?

In today's sociopolitical climate, is the Body of Christ standing up for the oppressed?...“the weak and the fatherless”? Why or why not?

How does today's sociopolitical climate compare to the Word of God you have just read?

What step or steps can you take to be a listener and a learner as to how the sociopolitical system (local and nationally) actually affects the African-American community?

The Negro question will trouble the American government and the American conscience until a substantial effort is made to settle it upon the principles of justice.

—Charles W. Chestnut, 1858-1932, Novelist



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness for my/our unwillingness to share power. I/We need forgiveness for our abuse of power. Am I ruled more by my need to control than I am willing to admit?

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP

In your sphere of influence, what steps can you take to become a “voice of justice”?

RESOURCES:

Movies:

Amistad

Glory

Miss Evers' Boys

Selma, Lord, Selma

Once Upon a Time...When We Were Colored

Documentaries:

Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery

America Beyond the Color Line

The New Los Angeles (2005)

JUDICIAL and PHYSICAL OPPRESSION

They want and need justice. We have never given our African-American brothers and sisters true justice for that would severely implicate us. We do not balance mercy and justice equally. To highjack justice is a travesty for all—but especially for them and their children. The lack of true “justice for all”, has severe generational ramifications emotionally, physically and spiritually.



jus•tice (jus´ tis) , n. 1. The quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness.

These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts... —Zechariah. 8:16

*He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.
—Psalm 72:14*

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. —Isaiah 10:1,2

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. —Ezekiel 45:9

Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. —Luke 11:42

There comes a time when a cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice, where they experience the blackness of corroding despair.

—Martin Luther King, Jr., *Soul Cry*



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

What feelings surface in you when you consider why so many in the African-American community have been incarcerated?

Current figures reveal the continuing, extraordinary magnitude of minority incarceration and the stark disparity in their rates of incarceration compared to those of whites. Out of a total population of 1,976,019 incarcerated in adult facilities, 1,239,946 or 63 percent are black or Latino, though these two groups constitute only 25 percent of the national population.

Think back to the issues of segregation, political and economic oppression. In what ways do those practices contribute to increased violence and breaking of laws in a people group?

Injustice and physical oppression of people is still rampant today. How do you react internally when faced with the sights and sounds of physical oppression? (You may want to refer to a movie you've seen or book you've read to capture the sights and sounds of how it made you feel.)

What "generational" effects do you think judicial and physical oppression reap on a people group?

While it may seem that most injustice/physical oppression takes place "a world away," take some time to identify where injustice/physical oppression is taking place around you. What steps can you take to bring dignity, justice and mercy into these situations?

How might stepping up to prevent injustice/physical oppression affect you personally?

What feelings surface when you consider those potential consequences?

How do those consequences compare to allowing an injustice to continue?

Our cultural mandate requires us to work for justice and righteousness so that God's creation reflects his majesty and goodness. That includes engaging in politics. But we must remember as we do this that we are proposing a more excellent way to a needy society, and that we do so in love, no matter how much abuse is heaped upon us. —Chuck Colson

How does your current belief system on race/ethnicity connect with God's Word and His view on equality/inequality and injustice towards His creation?

Equality: Psalm 106:5,6
I Cor. 12
2 Cor. 8:13
2 Cor. 8:14
Hebrews 13:16

Injustice: Exodus 23:2, 6
2 Chronicles 19:7
Job 5:16
Psalm 11:7
Psalm 58:2
Psalm 64:6
Proverbs 13:23
Proverbs 16:8
Ecclesiastes 4:1
Isaiah 58:6
Jeremiah 22:13
Ezekiel 9:9
Habakkuk 1:3
Zechariah 7:9

**Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not
for themselves. —Abraham Lincoln**



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness for our many national injustices toward them. These injustices are numerous and span many generations. If I/we really understood God's mercy would these injustices continue?

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of our land as Your love would make it:

A land where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;

A land where the benefits of civilized life are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;

A land where different races and cultures live in tolerance and mutual respect;

A land where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

And give us the inspiration and courage to build it, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*Eulogy For The Martyred Children*,
Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963





ACTION STEP

In what practical ways can you come alongside our brothers and sisters from the African-American community to provide hope for a new and better future? (i.e. Prison ministries, Volunteer Programs, Community Centers, Mentoring, etc.)

A 2002 study showed that faith-based prison programs result in a significantly lower rate of re-arrest (recidivism) than vocation-based programs—16 percent versus 36 percent—with a national recidivism rate of nearly 70 percent (Assessing the Impact of Religious Programs and Prison Industry on Recidivism, Texas Journal of Corrections, February 2002).

RESOURCES:

Movies: *A Lesson Before Dying*
 A Time to Kill (*R due to language and violence*)
 Crash (*R due to language and violence*)

Documentaries: *American Experience - The Murder of Emmett Till* (2003)

WHAT IS JUSTICE?



....Three decades of ministry in the criminal justice arena have taught me that neither conservatives nor liberals have it right. The real answer is not an either/or approach; it is the biblical view, which embraces both the distributive and retributive models.

Biblical justice recognizes that both punishment and meeting social needs are essential to a just society. The Bible calls for punishment—which C.S. Lewis called "balancing the scales of justice"—not necessarily because it is a deterrent, but because justice demands it. But Scripture also demands social justice: Ancient Israelites were told to leave gleanings at the side of the field for the poor, maintain honest scales, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked.

Secularists, both liberal and conservative, fail because they see people as objects—either to be punished or to be serviced—whereas biblical justice is much grander, viewing people as humans made in God's image. As the eminent scholar Neal Plantinga argues in *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, the world is supposed to work in a certain way because that's how God designed it. God seeks shalom, which in the biblical definition means not just the absence of war, but genuine accord and harmony, a society in which people care for one another, a "universal flourishing." "Shalom," Plantinga says, "is the way things ought to be."

The problem is that humans don't behave the way we should in order for human society to function as God intends. The crime problem is caused by neither poverty nor softer crime policies. It is caused by human sin. This is why the Christian view of justice must be aimed toward restoring the shalom that is marred by sin. It means restraining and punishing wrong conduct, but it also means promoting "human flourishing."

This is why Prison Fellowship developed what we call "restorative justice," teaching that we must go beyond punishing wrongdoers by reconciling criminals and victims, asking criminals to make restitution, and restoring offenders to the community. That's why, when inmates are released, Christians should be there to help them find a job, a home, furniture, and friendships—assistance that helps keep them from falling back into crime, assistance that will restore the wholeness of the community.

This is what Christians should be seeking in society.

—Chuck Colson



PSYCHOLOGICAL and SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION

Superior attitudes are part of our White heritage. But a superiority that stated “Blacks have no souls” almost goes beyond belief. This statement may astonish some today, but as a primary justification of slavery it was accepted that Blacks were sub-human and could be treated as such. This was the worst sin against our Black brothers and sisters. It justified so many other sins. Can pride and arrogance take a higher form than to judge another human as sub-human and soul-less?

pride (prId), *n.*, 1. the state or quality of being proud; self-respect; self-esteem. 2. A feeling of gratification arising from association with something good or laudable. 3. A high or inordinate opinion of one's own importance or superiority.

ar•ro•gant (ar´f gʃnt), *adj.* 1. Making claims or pretensions to superior importance or rights.

In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. —Job 12:10

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. —Proverbs 11:2

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor. —Proverbs 18:12

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—... —Colossians 1:21-22

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. —Colossians 3:12

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant... —Philippians 2:1-7a

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. —James 3:13

It wasn't so long ago that we ourselves were stupid and stubborn, dupes of sin, ordered every which way by our glands, going around with a chip on our shoulder, hated and hating back. But when God, our kind and loving Savior God, stepped in, he saved us from all that. It was all his doing; we had nothing to do with it. He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit. —Titus 3:3-5 (MSG)



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

What are some of the major historical events that have their foundation in one people group feeling superior over another culture?

How have these events affected the way society feels about different people groups today?...in particular, the African-American community?

In John 17:15, Jesus prays just prior to his crucifixion, *"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."* How does Satan and his minions work in the lives of men—even followers of Jesus—to induce feelings of pride, arrogance and superiority?

Does Satan use feelings of pride, arrogance and superiority in you especially as it relates to other people groups?

Identify some those situations in which these feelings easily arise.

What does it look like to treat someone with dignity in your everyday life?

There is no such thing as an insignificant human being. To treat people that way is a kind of sin and there's no reason for it. None. —
Debbi Fields



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness of my/our arrogance and pride. They are precious brothers and sisters in the human race. My/Our failure to acknowledge this fact should call into question our place in creation.

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP:

Can you identify a symbolic act toward a person of another culture that resulted in a positive relational connection?

RESOURCES:

Documentaries: *The Psychological Residuals of Slavery* (Individual Version)
 500 Years Later (2005)

Books: *Divided by Faith : Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, by Michael
 O. Emerson, Christian Smith (Oxford University Press, USA; New Ed edition (September
 6, 2001)

United by Faith : The Multiracial Congregation As an Answer to the Problem of Race, by
 Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, Karen Chai Kim

SEXUAL SUBJUGATION



In every war, rape is used as a weapon. It is used to conquer. It occurred many times within the slavery system—on plantations by masters and their sons. White males used and abused Black sisters repeatedly over generations. It's estimated that a majority of African-Americans have some white blood in them—and it wasn't mainly through interracial marriages. These sexual acts of violence

had little to do with the desire for pleasure, intimacy, or procreation. Rather, rape is about power, lust, hate, revenge, subjugation, and humiliation. It's about conquering a person's soul.

In today's world violence is not gender specific although the resulting behaviors may be. The scars on a person's soul run deep. Extending and receiving mercy—from God and others—is our only hope.



a•buse (a byOOz´), *v.* 1. to use wrongly or improperly; misuse. 2. to treat in a harmful or injurious way. 3. to speak insultingly or harshly to or about. 4. to commit sexual assault upon.

hu•mil•li•ate (hyOO mil´f at´), *v.* 1. to cause (a person) a painful loss of pride, self-respect, or dignity; mortify; abase.

mer•cy (mûr´ sE), *n., pl. -cies.* 1. compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; compassion, pity, or benevolence.

But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. —2 Samuel 13:14

...then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive, and deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of men)... —2 Chronicles 6:30

Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. —Psalms 79:8

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. —Proverbs 28:13

Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.” —Ezekiel 16:63

Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ —Matthew 18:33

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. —Luke 1:50

For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. —Romans 7:5

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. —Romans 12:1

...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. —Hebrews 10:22

Abuse seriously hinders the development of a person. It crosses over boundaries of love and respect and seriously cripples one’s ability to give and receive love. Most forms of abuse are surrounded by the secrecy of the “no talk” rule of dysfunction-al families, and so the scars that are left go untreated.

—Craig Lockwood, *Falling Forward:
The Pursuit of Sexual Purity*



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

What feelings surface in you when you have seen or heard about someone not being treated with sexual dignity . . . being abused?

What would you say or do if you knew about a situation like this?

In what ways is a person's soul affected by an act of abuse or sexual indignity/violence?

What are the generational consequences of such acts on an individual and/or people groups' collective soul?

Long-term Effects of Sexual Abuse:

shame...

powerlessness...worthlessness/depersonalization...

abandonment/betrayal...

anger/contempt.

—Craig Lockwood, *Falling Forward:
The Pursuit of Sexual Purity*

In your heart and outward practice, do you treat people from different cultures with sexual dignity? Is there a difference between one culture from another? If yes, why the difference?

Is there a difference between what's in your heart and what is your actual outward practice? If yes, what are the contributing factors to this difference?...what's your personal responsibility in rectifying this?

Words alone can mean little in a situation like this. What hope and healing can be brought to such a person and/or people group?

God's heart is always to *redeem*—to reach into the fire of our own making and by His mercy pull out the good. Only God can bring blessing where we have sown curse.

—Paula Rinehart, *Sex and the Soul of A Woman*



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American sisters for forgiveness for the generational shame of their humiliation through acts of sexual violence.

I may need to ask my African-American brothers for forgiveness for the generational shame of our humiliation of them by taking their women and keeping them powerless from justice. Our cultural sin is tremendous. We are the ones who deserve the dishonor. We are speechless in the face of these crimes and know not how to respond. May God have mercy on us.

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP:

How do you extend mercy and grace to someone who has been violated?

RESOURCES:

Movies: *Roots* (Mini-series)

Books: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, by Harriet Jacobs
(Dover Publications (November 9, 2001)

Sexual Assault: Will I Ever Feel Okay Again? by Kay Scott, Bethany House Publishers (July 1993)

The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse, by Dan Allender,
Navpress Publishing Group; Rev. ed., Rev. and updated edition (July 1990)

My Sexuality and Emotions: God's Design Lived Out, Module 3, Jesus' Good News Bible study
series, by the National Training Team, The Navigators (2006)

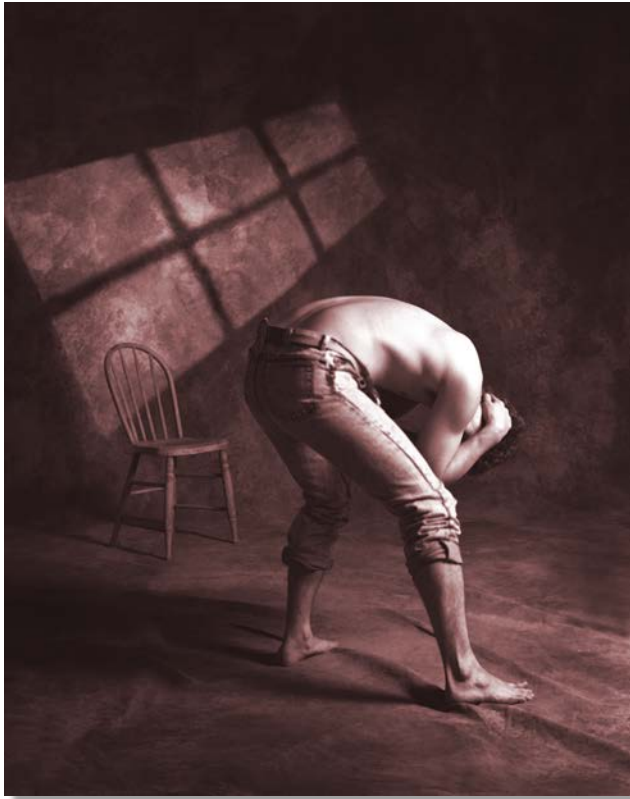
steps to inner healing through listening prayer¹

THE STEPS to inner healing are an attempt to help you listen to God over areas of repetitive emotional pain. However, emotional healing is rarely a step-by-step process—it is a living relationship and may not follow these steps. It is important to emphasize that it is up to God to answer these questions by revealing what's going on in your heart. It is not a matter of you having to figure out the answers and fix the problem!

STEPS TO INNER HEALING

STEPS	QUESTIONS TO ASK GOD
1. Identify the struggle or painful emotion God would have you deal with. Allow yourself to feel the emotion.	What repetitive negative emotion do You want me to focus on? Would You help me clarify or define this emotion? Is there a present situation causing me to feel this emotion now? Would You please help me to feel this painful emotion to provide a window into my soul?
2. Discovering the root wounding event.	When was the first time I experience this emotion?
3. Discerning any lie that was believed.	In this painful event, what lie did I come to believe?
4. God reveals the truth.	What truth do You have to tell me about the lie I came to believe? Is there a second lie I came to believe in this painful event?
5. Experiencing His freedom.	Where were You, Jesus, when this happened to me? What were you doing and feeling back then?
5. Discovering where Jesus was and/or what He was doing when the event took place.	
7. Uncovering and renouncing any vows that may have been made.	Were there any vows I made during or after the wounding event to protect myself from future pain?
3. Extending and receiving forgiveness.	Am I willing to enter into the process of forgiving? Have I forgiven the long-term effects or consequences of the sin against me, as well as the act? Have I forgiven the one who hurt me? Have I forgiven myself? Have I come to peace with You for allowing the wounding event to take place?
9. Identifying and breaking any pronouncements that may have been made over me.	Did anyone make a pronouncement over me?
10. Identifying and breaking any demonic strongholds that may bind me.	Did the demonic world influence these painful events or my responses to them? Have demons been bound in Jesus' name and sent away? Has Your Holy Spirit healed these wounds?

¹ Used by permission of the People Resources Team (PRT) of The Navigators.



MINIMIZING and MARGINALIZING PAIN

One of the hardest things to deal with in any abusive or oppressive situation is for pain to be minimized or marginalized—"It's not that bad, and we don't want to talk about it." Or similarly, "It was bad, and we'll talk about it to our comfort level. It's not as bad as you portray, and we won't talk about that part." These abusive and/or oppressive pains are not just from the past. They are renewed regularly.

min•i•mize (min' f miz'), *v.* 1. To reduce to the smallest possible amount or degree. 2. To represent at the lowest possible value or importance, esp. in a disparaging way; belittle.

pain (pAn), *n.* 1. physical suffering typically from injury or illness. 2. an instance of such suffering; a distressing sensation in a part of the body. 3. severe mental or emotional distress.

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
—Proverbs 15:4

For they persecute those you wound and talk about the pain of those you hurt. —Psalm 69:26

I am in pain and distress; may your salvation, O God, protect me. —Psalm 69:29

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. —Isaiah 49:10

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. —Matthew 9:36

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. —Revelation 21:4

America's greatest crime against the black man was not slavery or lynchings, but that he was taught to wear a mask of self-hate and self-doubt. —Malcolm X, 1925-1965



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE...

What do think it would look like to feel the pain of systematic racial oppression?

Do you believe racial oppression exists today? Why or why not?

Do you feel that the “playing field” is equal in our society today for all people? Why or why not?

Excerpted from DiversityInc.com, August 20, 2005

...last week 13 black employees alleged that Tyson Foods’ plant in Ashland, Alabama, maintained a segregated bathroom and break room. The suit alleges that a “whites only” sign and a padlock denied them access to the bathroom. Several white employees had keys to the facility, according to the lawsuit.

When black workers complained, the plant manager told them it had been locked because they were “nasty and “dirty” and then, in retaliation, announced the closing of the break room, which the same white employees who had keys to the bathroom turned into their own private lounge.

What are your true /real feelings about affirmative action programs?

Identify some of the long-term affects of systematic racial oppression.

We often say Jesus came to heal the oppressed and broken-hearted, how did He model that?

When you consider Jesus, what limits can you identify on your thinking of healing the pain of the oppressed and broken-hearted?

How might you have minimized or marginalized the pain in someone else's life...especially a person from a different ethnic background?

What was preventing you from allowing them to express the depth of their pain to you?

Are you experiencing unresolved wounding in your own soul that affects your ability to open your heart to others who are experiencing deep cultural shame and pain? If so, what does this look like for you?



SEEKING FORGIVENESS

I may need to ask my African-American brothers and sisters for forgiveness for I/our refusal to allow the full extent of their pain to be publicly validated. But do I continue to wish to be shielded from their pain> Will they forgive I/our weakness at the sight of pain we've caused, thereby causing them more pain and preventing God from entering in and healing us?

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE

Heavenly Father, I come before your throne of grace and mercy to personally repent of and ask forgiveness for...



ACTION STEP:

If you are experiencing unresolved wounding in your soul, who can you connect with to take steps toward healing?

Also, what opportunities are available in your community to help the healing process begin for those who have or are experiencing deep pain in their lives? (i.e. women's shelter's, etc.)

As you interact with our African-American brothers and sisters, ask permission to ask questions, and then listen, ask clarifying questions, but most of all be willing to listen!

4

Essentials of Grace in a Multiethnic Environment – T R U E

Excerpted from presentation handout by Eddie Broussard, VP of Cultural Affairs, The Navigators. ©2002. Used by permission.

TRUST

1. **Trust:** trust is “confidence in and reliance on good qualities, especially fairness, truth, honor or ability.”²
Trust is developed, it cannot be assumed on the basis of position, it should be established on the basis of relationship and experience
2. **Humility:** trusting God and Others with Me
3. **Integrity:** integrity is key to trust. 1) Integrity is that quality of character that elicits trust; 2) Integrity means the same throughout, pure (homogeneous); 3) Competency to carry out requirements of a role (Ps. 78:72); 4) Integrity brings the influence of both person and role
4. **Vulnerability:** be vulnerable, not just transparent. Express and experience vulnerability.
5. **Process of Forming Trust** (Phase I: Forming High Trust Culture, Leadership Catalyst, Inc.)
 - A. Seek Permission
 - B. Verbalize Affirmation
 - C. Allow people to contributing from their Strengths
 - D. Trust the Strengths of others (be influenced by)
6. **Process of Protecting Weaknesses**
 - A. Use our strengths to protect each other’s weaknesses
 - B. Submission is a “love word” in relationship

RESPECT

1. **Dignity:** “inherent nobility and worth”[Merriam Webster Dictionary]
2. **Value:** relative worth, utility, or importance” “something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable.” [Ibid.]
3. **Respect (and Dignity):** Respect is a response of esteem and special regard given to a person of the basis of their dignity and value before God.

² Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. *How would I find out or know if I am not treating a person with dignity?*
2. *How can you communicate dignity to new ethnic minorities in your ministry?*
3. *How might you malign the dignity of an ethnic minority in your ministry?*

Bonus (Tough Question) *If you are from a dominant cultural background in a relationship with an ethnic minority, how might the dynamics of power in the history of relationship between your two cultures affect your attempts to communicate dignity to that person?*

UNDERSTANDING DIGNITY

1. Understanding *Understanding*

- A. What does it mean to understand?

2. Understanding is not Assumed Familiarity

- A. E.g. I had dinner with the person, so now I know him or her.
- B. I read a book about African Americans, so now I understand who they are.
- C. I have an African American neighbor, so now I understand African Americans.

3. Understanding is not Stereotypes or Shallow, Inaccurate Assumptions

[Practical Suggestions for Dealing with Stereotypes from *Survival Kit for Multicultural Living*]

- A. Regard stereotypes with suspicion.
- B. Analyze the stereotypes you may have of a group you belong to.
- C. Analyze stereotypes you have of others.
- D. Test stereotypes against your own information and experiences.
- E. Always be prepared to discard your stereotypes and to revise and refine generalizations about groups of people.
- F. Analyze your language for stereotypes that unwittingly creep in (e.g., “Indian giver”)
- G. When talking about groups of people, use qualifying words like *generally*, *tend to*, *often*, *likely to be*.
- H. When you discover “exceptions to the rule,” be prepared to revise the rule rather than simply to declare an exception.
- I. Try to discover what the stereotypes you hear or hold are based on.
- J. Be on the lookout for reinforcement of stereotypes in Hollywood and the media.
- K. Talk with friend or acquaintances about their views on how they are stereotyped and about their stereotypes of you.
- L. Don’t expect stereotypes of yourself or others to change overnight; this is a lifelong process.

4. Suspending Judgment helps Understanding

- A. Suspending judgment is an expression of humility and wisdom. (Prov. 18:13)

5. Relational Dynamics and Deep Historical Wounds that have Present Effect

- A. Deep Wounds from the Past and Trigger Points
- B. Understanding the Damage and Present Effects of Racial Prejudice
 - 1) Emasculation of Men: Russia & America
 - 2) The depth of the effect of these kind of “injuries” to the human soul requires deep healing. Do we give attention to this in our view of spiritual formation? Do we take the “just get over it” attitude?
 - 3) *Suggestion: Read Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown, 1971. Read books that detail the atrocities against peoples on the basis of their ethnicity and try to understand what this would do to the psyche of a people.

EMPOWERMENT

1. Envisioning

- A. Ownership.
- B. Inspiration.

2. Relating

- A. Empowerment in the body of Christ has a relational dimension. See Barnabus’ actions with Saul (Acts 9:26-30; 11:25). There must be a genuine relational dimension to our development of men and women of color. It is important to remember that those who come from outside of the historical American power structure have suffered disenfranchisement and the ensuing emotional and psychological consequences. There should be a coming-alongside that communicates support, confidence in and respect, and opens new important relationships.

3. Resourcing

- A. Finances
 - 1. Salary
 - 2. Operational
 - 3. Ministry Initiatives
- B. Infrastructure
 - 1. People
 - 2. Equipment (E.g. Computer, Fax Machine, etc.)
 - 3. Organizational Systems
- C. Training and Development
 - 1. Training
 - a. Specific skill training for the role

- b. Perspective development - Experience

- 2. Development

- a. Specific ongoing skill
- b. Coaching
- c. Find new developmental opportunities, responsibilities, and roles

- 4. **Sharing Authority and Power**

- A. Give the necessary authority to carry out the role.
- B. Share authority to build confidence, competence, and experience.
- C. Don't avoid reasonable risk.
- D. Involve others in real discussion that makes a difference.



REFUSAL TO ADMIT SHAME

The world asks the question, “What kind of human being could participate in or allow the holocaust to occur?” That’s a question intended to encourage people to face their personal and cultural shame. The implied answer is someone less than truly human could be involved in such cruelty or else humanity is deeply flawed to an extent that we just can’t bear look at it. Are we rotten at the core?

It’s easy to say, “Well, those things happened so long ago. It has nothing to do with me today.” But that’s simply an excuse to avoid recognizing that the generational shame of oppressing African-Americans—or anyone different from us—continues to have social, economic, political, judicial and psychological ramifications today. It’s time to take responsibility.

re•fuse (ri fyOOz’), *v.* 1. to decline to accept (something offered). 2. to decline to give; deny (a request, demand, etc.). 3. to express a determination to not (do something)

re•spon•si•ble (ri spon’ sf bfl), *adj.* 1. accountable, as for something within one’s power... 4. having a capacity for moral decisions and therefore accountable.

Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know. –Job 34:33

No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse. –Psalm 25:3

May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, the LORD Almighty; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel. –Psalms 69:6

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, —Acts 3:19

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. —Revelation 3:3a

The exclusion of the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people, from a Christian community may actually mean the exclusion of Christ; in the poor brother Christ is knocking at the door. — Dietrich Bonhoeffer



FOR REFLECTION and DIALOGUE ...

Ethnic and/or cultural shame. We expect that of other nations when acts against humanity have been committed. As you honestly consider our American heritage of the abuses Whites have committed against Blacks, what level of responsibility—ethnic shame—do you think we as White Americans should feel? Explain the thinking/feelings behind your answer.

Reflect back on what the Word of God has had to say through this study. Does that connect with what you have just written? Why? Or Why not?



WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

—Isaiah 61:1-3

Jesus spoke these words in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth and proclaimed, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

As followers of Jesus, how are these words applicable to us today?



WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU ABOUT ACTION STEPS YOU CAN TAKE REGARDING...

...becoming a listener and learner from someone from another cultural background, especially the African-American community?

...opportunities I have to understand the wounds, the shame, and the consequences of slavery and racism in America?

...steps I can take to see that our African-American brothers and sisters are not excluded from the halls of economic power?

...having courage to speak out against superior attitudes that lead to pride and arrogance which ends up judging another human as sub-human and soul-less?

...preventing physical oppression and sexual acts of violence birthed out of a need for power, lust, hate, revenge, subjugation, and humiliation?

...preventing ongoing and/or unrealized social segregation?

...taking steps to see that equal rule in our society cut across ethnic lines?

... balancing mercy and justice equally?

...bringing hope to the personal and cultural shame for White Americans?

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:31



O God,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince
of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great
dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions; take away all
hatred and prejudice, and whatever may hinder us from godly
union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one
Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one
Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one
heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and
peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one
mouth glorify *thee*; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Prayer for Unity of the Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- Prayer for the Human Family #3, Book of Common Prayer, Oxford University Press (March 30, 2000), p. 815
- Eulogy for the martyred children—Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963, *Soul Cry*, Cook Communications (January 25, 2005), p. 17
- Aidan of Lindisfarne, (era, 600)

SHALLOW WORDS, NOT ENOUGH SUBSTANCE

- Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Dover Publications (November 9, 2001), p. 48
- Alan Jenkins, British Poet (b.1955-)
- Rosa Parks, (1913-2005)
- *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler, Volume VII, “Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland” (April 18, 1864), pgs. 301-302
- *I Wear a Thousand Masks*, Author Unknown

SOCIAL SEGREGATION

- Dick Gregory, Comedian and Activist, as quoted in *African American Quotations*, compiled by Richard Newman (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 2000), p. 29
- By Jennifer Sudderth (excerpted from *Overcoming Barriers*, www.cbeinternational.org. Summer 2005)

ECONOMIC OPPRESSION

- Pauli Murray, as quoted in *African American Quotations*, compiled by Richard Newman (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 2000), p. 117

POLITICAL OPPRESSION

- Frederick Douglass, July 1862, as quoted in *African American Quotations*, compiled by Richard Newman (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 2000)
- Charles W. Chestnutt, as quoted in *African American Quotations*, compiled by Richard Newman (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 2000), p. 200

JUDICIAL AND PHYSICAL OPPRESSION

- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Soul Cry*, compiled by Ronald C. Jordan (Colorado Springs, CO: Honor Books, an imprint of Cook Communications, Inc., 2004), p. 17

- Chuck Colson (excerpted from *Christianity Today, A More Excellent Way*, February 2006, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 144
- Chuck Colson (excerpted from *What Is Justice?*, *Christianity Today*, August 2005, Vol. 49, No. 8, p. 80
- Abraham Lincoln

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION

- Debbie Fields

SEXUAL SUBJUGATION

- Craig Lockwood, *Falling Forward: The Pursuit of Sexual Purity*, (Anaheim, CA: Desert Stream Press, 2000) p. 155
- Craig Lockwood, *Falling Forward: The Pursuit of Sexual Purity*, (Anaheim, CA: Desert Stream Press, 2000) pgs. 156-158
- Paula Rinehart, *Sex and the Soul of a Woman*, Zondervan (March 1, 2004)

MINIMIZING AND MARGINALIZING PAIN

- Malcolm X, as quoted in *African American Quotations*, compiled by Richard Newman (New York, NY: Checkmark Books, an imprint of Facts on File, Inc., 2000), p. 392
- *4 Essentials of Grace in a Multiethnic Environment*, excerpted from presentation handout by Office of Cultural Affairs, The Navigators. 2002. Used by permission.

REFUSAL TO ADMIT SHAME

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, (1906–1945), German Lutheran Pastor and Theologian
- A. Charles Ware, *Prejudice and the People of God*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), pgs. 82,84
- Prayer for the Unity of the Church #14, Book of Common Prayer, Oxford University Press (March 30, 2000), p. 818

BUILDING BRIDGES

Black / White Relations In America

Download at: www.ralphennis.com/other-writings