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Douglas Edward McClain Date

Effecting Racial Transformation through Pedagogy and Proclamation: in an Historically White Southern Congregation

Addressing the congregation of Hobe Sound United Methodist Church, Hobe Sound, Florida

On Issues of:

Racism, White Privilege, White Supremacy, White Fragility, and Systemic Racism

By

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Doctor of Ministry

Candler School of Theology

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Abstract

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Hobe Sound, Florida is a small unique beachside community nestled between the larger cities of Stewart and Jupiter. This unincorporated area is visibly divided on racial lines. Northern and southern neighborhoods in this community are predominantly African American while neighborhoods in the central and eastern areas are predominantly white. This community boasts one of the wealthiest addresses in the country, Jupiter Island, and some of the poorest neighborhoods, Gomez, and Banner Lake. Newly appointed to the United Methodist Church, it became apparent that there was little awareness in the congregation to the on-going racial issues facing America today. The thesis: is it possible to bring an awareness and transformation to the racial issues facing this United Methodist Church in Hobe Sound, Florida?

The plan is to establish a baseline understanding of inherent biases, discrimination along societal norms, and the church's response to systemic racism. Utilizing surveys, interviews, a sermon series, and a four-week small group study, will chart the direction of the research. A post questionnaire will be taken to identify if any self-awareness and transformation has occurred.

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Contents

Thesis and Goal

The focus of this research is directed toward moving the laity from First United Methodist Church, Hobe Sound, Florida to confront and compel change in thought and behavior toward racism, white privilege, white fragility, white supremacy, and systemic racism, through pedagogy and proclamation. The goal of the project is for congregants of this white faith community to gain an understanding of how they intentionally or unintentionally contribute to racism, how they think about issues affecting race, and their response. This project's aim is to confront, convict, and compel the laity of First United Methodist Church in Hobe Sound, Florida to open their hearts, enter the conversation on racism, and make changes in their racist thoughts and behaviors. Author Verna Myers in her recent book, *What if I Say the Wrong Thing*, reminds us, that in general, the Christian Church has been impotent in building a community in which power, privilege, and advantage are not equally shared by all. She notes that we make assumptions all the time about people and categorize them based on those assumptions: they are people like us, or people unlike us. Such assumptions and categorizations have become automatic to us. Diversity may be our stated message, but our actual lack of inclusion can easily communicate a contrary message.[1] This creates a system of dichotomy: one superior and one inferior group. To members' minds, the white congregation of the Methodist Church in Hobe Sound, Florida aligns with the superior group.

[1] Verna Myers, *What If I Say The Wrong Thing? 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People* (Chicago: ABA Publishing, 2013), 43-49.

A New Appointment-First United Methodist, Hobe Sound, Florida

The appointment system of the United Methodist Church offers pastors opportunities to serve God in diverse communities. My most recent appointment moved me from a relatively well-functioning cross-cultural community (church and community) to one of racial segregation (church and community). It does not take long to discover the racial divide in Hobe Sound, Florida. Entering the unincorporated town from the north on U.S. Highway 1, one passes several neighborhood communities. Wealthier, predominately white persons occupy the northernmost communities. The closer one drives to the center of Hobe Sound; neighborhoods are of the financially less fortunate. Situated close to the center of town are two small neighborhood communities. On the northeast side of U.S. 1 is located the Gomez community of predominantly black residents. Continuing south on U.S. 1 for about a mile, one looks southwest toward another neighborhood community, Banner Lake. Banner Lake also consists of mostly black people. Heading south, the neighborhood communities are again populated by increasingly wealthy and mostly white residents. Of special note, to the east lies Jupiter Island, one of the wealthiest addresses in the United States. On Jupiter Island you may encounter the likes of Tiger Woods, Greg Norman, and other mega-rich, business, sports, and entertainment celebrities. To the west lies farmland. In July 2019, I was appointed to the First United Methodist Church of Hobe Sound, Florida.

Advent, Definitions, Process, and Goals

Advent

This project arises out of my appointment to the First United Methodist Church Hobe Sound, Hobe Sound being a starkly racially divided town in Florida. The appointment presented

an opportunity to build a bridge between the white and black communities. The original project intended to create such a bridge by gathering together local clergy for regular meals, and form them as table fellowship communities, who, by gathering, eating, and socializing regularly, would pass on to their congregations, this new way of being community. Jesus often enjoyed such table fellowship, eating at the homes of sinners, tax collectors, and others to establish new relationships for the transformation of their lives and communities. Such table fellowship is an important element in Scripture. It is at the table that one is afforded the opportunity to develop relationships by gaining an understanding of the other (Lk. 5:29-34, 7:36-50)[2].

Yet on encountering local clergy resistance to such an idea, the restrictions in response to the Covid-19 virus, and a comment made in a Bible study class ("we do not know how to talk to those people"), I realized that the research thesis and direction needed modification. Events in 2020 made face-to-face access to people difficult. Unable to gather with people outside of family and the local church, it became evident that I needed to launch a new thesis, one, centered within and for the congregation of First UMC Hobe Sound. My research would now focus on discovering attitudes toward race that exist within the community of faith at this one church. Could this white congregation mature sufficiently in their faith to understand their participation in and complacency about racism?

Definitions

[2] John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible. Thomas Nelson, La Habra, CA. 2006. Remaining biblical references and quotations will be from this printed version. Additional references to table fellowship can be found in Lk 9:10-17, 10:38-42, 11:37-53, 14:1-24, 19:1-10. These do not include all table fellowship references in the New Testament, but are meant to illustrate to the frequency of Jesus' community building around a meal.

Racist- A racist is any white person who willingly or unwillingly, wittingly or unwittingly, participates in and benefits from white power and privilege.[3]

Systemic Racism- Policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organization that support and result in a continued unfair advantage to one group of people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.[4]

White Privilege- The implicit or systemic advantages that people who are deemed white have relative to people who are not deemed white; it is the absence of suspicion and other negative reactions that white people experience.[5]

White Supremacy- The belief that white people are superior to those of all other races, and especially the black race, and should therefore control government and society.[6]

White Fragility- The inability and failure of white people to accept and acknowledge their participation in racism, systemic racism, and white privilege.[7]

Process

The process of congregational transformation regarding racist attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors begins with a questionnaire (Appendix A). A random selection of those attending First UMC Hobe Sound was identified and given the questionnaire on race. Note, there was no definition of terms on the initial survey. The raw data (Appendix A1) was interpreted into

[3] Joseph Barndt, Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), Kindle Edition, location 1740.

[4]https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/systemic-racism.
[5] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/white-privilege.
[6] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/white-supremacy.
[7] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/white-fragility.

percentages (Appendix A) of those responding. Additionally, phone interviews (Appendix B) were conducted. The following step is to preach a sermon series on listening, love, acknowledging our differences/celebrating our similarities, and how our self-interest keeps us from forming genuine relationships (Appendix C). In conjunction with the sermon series, a four-session class is taught adapting curriculum from the World Trust Educational Services (WTES) for instruction and conversations around racial equity. Four distinct groups will be formed: those who participated only in the classes, those who participated only in worship, those who participated in both, and a group that participated in neither. The initial survey will then be re-administered, this time with terms defined. Responses will be analyzed.

Between March 2 and 13, 2020, a preliminary survey was distributed to determine this congregation's awareness of their own racial bias. While one hundred percent (100%) of those surveyed agreed that racism exists in our society, a full sixty percent (60%) believe they have not personally contributed to racism. Eighty-seven percent (87%) agreed that outside factors beyond their control keep racism alive. The congregation's prejudice toward people of other racial groups was problematic at ninety-three percent (93%). Seventy-three percent (73%) of those surveyed reported having witnessed racism in their local community. When asked if they had ever heard the aforementioned terms, 23% said yes to white privilege, 100% to white supremacy, 7% to systemic racism and none to white fragility.[8] Based on numbers alone, one could draw the conclusion that this congregation is either undereducated, uninformed, or simply misinformed about their participation in systemic racism. An encouraging result from the survey

[8] Douglas McClain, Results from the Survey of Hobe Sound United Methodist Church conducted between March 2-13, 2020. See Appendix A.

was that one hundred percent (100%) of the respondents agreed that self-awareness could help remove negative feelings toward other racial groups. Slightly discouraging results came when only sixty-five percent (65%) thought religious communities are a major factor in shaping one's response to different racial groups. One hundred percent (100%) agreed that relationships improve the quality of life in a community, and eighty percent (80%) think racism can be solved in our society.[9] While it is encouraging to see the positives from this survey, it is discouraging (but not unexpected) that many respondents reported witnessing acts of racism in our community. A challenge lies in helping congregants who realize their need to become self-aware.

A continued in-person dialog became difficult as the Covid-19 safety protocols were now restricting religious institutions' ability to meet. The congregation at this point faced what researcher Richard Osmer calls an adaptive challenge. Osmer's focus is on the way congregations are "learning organizations" that face adaptive challenges. These challenges may be small, or they may loom large in the spiritual well-being of the church. Encountering an adaptive challenge presents an important opportunity for a congregation to draw on sources to understand and respond to the challenges they face.[10] In the summer of 2020 this congregation faced several adaptive challenges; among them was confronting their own white privilege. What to do in response? Osmer calls for catechesis through his Leadership Frame. In this learning

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[9] McClain, Results from Survey, 2020. For a discussion/definition of these terms: white fragility, white privilege, white supremacy, systemic racism, racist, and others- see Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2018). and Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility, Why is it So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism?* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018).

[10] Richard Osmer, The Teaching Ministry of Congregations (Louisville: Westminster Press, 2005), 248-250.

approach engaging with adults in meaningful conversation regarding matters of faith in their everyday lives forms relationships.[11] The resulting relationships hold the potential of creating social capital, that can be useful in addressing and understanding challenges to transformation.

To accomplish additional research and dialog, phone calls became the option of necessity. I therefore called individual congregants and engaged them in conversation. During the call(s), I worked questions from Appendix B into the conversation(s). A pattern developed: my conversation partners recognized racism as a problem, but they considered it to be a problem for other people in other places, not for them. This confirmed my premise about racism. This white congregation was either uniformed, misinformed, or uneducated about the persistence of racism, racists, systemic racism, and white privilege. By responding as they did, they affirmed their own white fragility. By refusing to talk about issues on race, pretending they exist for other people and places but not ours, we avoid facing reality.

White fragility is much more than mere defensiveness or whining. It may be conceptualized as the sociology of dominance, is an outcome of white people's socialization into white supremacy, and is a means to protect, perpetuate, and reproduce white supremacy.[12] Robin Di Angelo in her book on talking about racism observes that white fragility is triggered by discomfort and anxiety. White fragility is born and exists to maintain a system of superiority and entitlement. Despite its name, white fragility is not weakness, but a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage.[13] White fragility functions to: maintain white solidarity, preclude self-reflection, trivialize the reality of racism, silence the discussion, make

[11] Osmer, The Teaching Ministry of Congregations, 2005.
[12] Robin DiAngelo, White Fragility, Why is it So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 113-115.
[13] DiAngelo, White Fragility, 2018. 2-3.

white people the victims, hijack the conversation, protect a limited worldview, take race off the table, and protect white privilege.[14] Racism does not rely solely on individual actors; the racist system is reproduced automatically and communally or societally. To interrupt it, we must recognize and challenge the norms, structures, and institutions that perpetuate it. But because they benefit us, racially inequitable relations are comfortable for most white people. Consequently, if we whites want to interrupt this system, we must get racially uncomfortable and be willing to examine the effects of our racial engagement.[15] As Ijeom Oluo concludes in his work, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, race is not something people can ignore anymore.[16]

Following the initial surveys and conversations, a four-week sermon series on dismantling the social and political norms in the early Church and in our current context will be proclaimed. (See Appendix C.) Simultaneously, I will implement a curriculum (Appendix D) for the purpose of small group instruction. In both proclamation and pedagogy, the aim is to establish good communication, one in which persons hear and learn by listening to each other. Listening requires more engagement than simply hearing, and moves us closer to change. We not only use our ears to listen; we also listen by means of additional physical aspects; quiet hands, feet, and mouths.[17] Preaching/instruction gives voice not only to the preacher/instructor but is also heavily dependent upon participant responses. At the completion of the sermon series and instruction, the survey will

[14] DiAngelo, White Fragility, 2018. 122.
[15] DiAngelo, White Fragility, 2018. 135
[16] Ijeoma Oluo, So, You Want to Talk About Race (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2018), Kindle Edition Basic Books, 5.

[17] Harrison, Sandra dir. Eye Opener with Jane Elliott. New York: Admire Productions 2004. https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/watch/eye-opener-with-jane-elliott

be re-administered (Appendix A) to the original respondents. (Note: for research purposes, respondents' responses were confidential, the names of initial respondents were kept separately.)

Goals

The goal of this project was to raise the self-awareness about their participation in racism of the white congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Hobe Sound, Florida. My hope was that, following a sermon series and participation in a four-week study on racism, the congregation would be more aware of their participation in systemic racism. Further, I hoped that armed with new knowledge and understanding, the congregation would be more open to cross cultural engagement. I hypothesized that those participating in both the sermon series and the study would become more self-aware than those who participated in only one project segment and of course, than those who participated in neither segment. The aim: to move congregants of First UMC Hobe Sound to acknowledge that systemic racism exists, that they have benefitted from white privilege, and to accept they themselves are racist. Naming and confronting racism moves Christians closer to seeking justice and equity between the races. My hope is that as we each overcome our racist complacency, we Christians will discover and desire to dismantle the entire system of white supremacy, and to use our own white privilege to effect positive change.

Historical Setting of Hobe Sound

Hobe Sound, Florida is a small, unincorporated, beachfront community of less than ten-thousand people. It was originally occupied by the Jaega- a Native American tribe. The Spanish were the first European nation to settle the area. In 1696 Jonathan Dickinson was shipwrecked at this location and named the native settlement, Hoe-bey. In an article published in the Palm Beach Post newspaper, it is reported that Henry Flagler later developed Hobe Sound in the late 1890's.

Flagler needed the land around Hobe Sound to complete his railway from Miami to Jacksonville. To develop the area, Flagler is reported to have hired a circus, instructing it to set up west of the area. Flagler gave the local blacks free-passes, and while they were enjoying the show, Flagler had their shanty towns burned to the ground. That action displaced over two-thousand blacks.[18] Hobe Sound continued to develop, after the completion of the railroad. By 1916, a hospital was built for the black community in the Pine Ridge area. It was originally built of wood for about $1600. The hospital was neither state of the art nor close to the standards of the white hospitals. This was the only hospital for blacks in the five counties of South Florida. This hospital remained open until desegregation.[19] To this day there remains a system of white supremacy resulting in a long-standing hurt. The white community has remained silently unconcerned.

In this small community desegregation efforts have fallen short. Through daily encounters in Hobe Sound, I observed that the two African American communities, Gomez, and Banner Lake, continue to remain separated. The white Jupiter Island philanthropists continue to fuel the division of the two black communities through their financial and employment support of the Banner Lake community. Through these same observations, I noticed that the white neighborhoods also remain segregated.

Community Analysis

On Thursday February 27, 2020, I conducted an interview with Lisa Dames, past director of the Banner Lake Community. Ms. Dames had volunteered in this full-time position for the previous 10 years. Dames indicated to me that somewhere close to one hundred seventy-five homes in Banner Lake were constructed and paid, mortgage free, by white, multi-millionaires of

[18] Eliot Kleinberg, *Post Time* (West Palm Beach: The Palm Beach Post, January 19,2020), 1.
[19] Kleinberg, *Post Time*, January 19,2020.

Jupiter Island between the 1950's and 1970's. An additional twenty-two homes were constructed by Habitat for Humanity in 2016.

It is Lisa Dames' opinion that the wealthy's treatment of Banner Lake residents has been the catalyst for the decades-long resentment it endures from the Gomez community. The Gomez community has never been the benefactor of wealth from Jupiter Island. Habitat for Humanity has not constructed homes in the Gomez neighborhood. Therefore, these two communities have little to do with one another. Dames indicated to me that the distancing of these communities resulted from the perception that the blacks of Banner Lake were given everything, whereas the blacks of Gomez have had to work for what little they have.

Dames told me of an almost century-old system which continues to divide the two black communities. Dames surmised that the Gomez community inhabitants continue to struggle for work, live close to poverty level, and have fewer financial resources than those who live in Banner Lake. The assumption in Banner Lake is that white people will always take care of them. Students from Banner Lake are discouraged by parents, grandparents, and their community to achieve in school. Instead, they are socialized into believing that they cannot succeed in the outside world. The expectation is that they will follow in their parents' footsteps, serving the wealthy on Jupiter Island. Dames admitted, occasionally students do leave the community for higher education at a university or trade school. Those who succeed rarely if ever return to the community. Most of the men in this community are life-long benefactors of the system. They work in the community for a while, living at home with a wife or girlfriend. Soon a baby is on the way, and for most men a crime is in the future. Dames indicated that these crimes are mainly minor crimes related to illegal drugs. Whatever the crime, it is sufficient for some time in jail. They are gone long enough for

the baby to be born, and upon release the cycle repeats. Therefore, most children in this community are products of a broken system that keeps them there.[20]

As Florida continues to develop, this small unincorporated area called Hobe Sound remains attached to its decades old pattern of development. I have visited many of the neighborhoods in Hobe Sound observing homogenous communities. White people continue to live, in this bedroom town, in white neighborhoods and black people live in black neighborhoods. The local business district is small, mainly confined to the two main arteries, U.S. 1, and Bridge Road. Here one will find specialty shops with a splattering of national chain stores. Hobe Sound has no manufacturing or warehousing. Hobe Sound is a uniquely situated bedroom location away from the hustle and bustle of South Florida.

Historical Setting of First United Methodist Church Hobe Sound

Hobe Sound United Methodist Church was planted forty-seven years ago. The congregation and its leadership have remained predominantly white for the duration. On August 19, 1973 the first service was held at the Hobe Sound Civic Center. Paul Bauer, a full-time schoolteacher was assigned to be a part-time volunteer pastor. Later Paul became the full-time pastor serving the congregation for five years. The church was chartered on October 28, 1973 with forty-six members. In 1974, property on U.S. 1 was purchased by the Melbourne District of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, adjacent to the Gomez community and the Majors, a Greg Norman designed private golf community that is considered Tiger Woods' home course. By the end of 1974, construction began on the 10-acre site. The sanctuary and education wing were completed in September 1975. In 1976, construction of a thrift store began,

[20] Lisa Dames, Confidential Interview for the purposes of this research conducted at Harry and the Natives, February 27, 2020.

and was completed in June 1978. This has since provided a needed source of revenue for ministry and mission work. That same year Bob Fortier was appointed pastor. Three years later in 1981 Brett Sanford became the new pastor, and by October 1983 the mortgage on the church buildings were paid in full. By 1985, the congregation had swelled to over three hundred, and plans were made to construct a new sanctuary and office space. On Easter 1987 the new sanctuary, chapel, administrative and educational wing were consecrated. The next pastor to be appointed was John Powers (1988-98). He led the opening of a now closed, pre-school, (1989), launched contemporary worship (1996), opened a now closed soup kitchen (1997), and consecrated a youth building (1998). Fred Ball followed John Powers from 1999 to 2000. Since 2000, the campus footprint has remained the same, using five of the ten acres originally purchased. Since then, Rev. Linda Standifer (2000-2003), Rev. Jim Trainer (2003-2009), Rev. Marcus Zellman (2009-2014), Rev. Marta Burke (2014-2019), and Rev. Douglas McClain (2019 to present) have served as pastors of this now 550+ member church. In 2008, a courtyard was completed between existing buildings adding a beautiful tropical setting for outdoor hospitality and fellowship. In the last decade, the church has paid off all its mortgages and is debt free. The church also supports a sliding fee, pay-for-service, Community Christian Counseling Center, run by licensed mental health counselors. The church also established an endowment fund, planted shrubs, and painted all exterior buildings.[21] Yet for all that activity, church records show little evidence of any ministry addressing racism, white privilege, and/or systemic racism. The church's focus has been on facilities and feeding ministries. The congregation is made up of fiscally conservative and theologically orthodox traditionalists. However, they are generous and quick to respond to a need

[21] Bette Evans and Barbara Caldwell, First United Methodist Church Hobe Sound History (Hobe Sound: Church Archives 35th Anniversary, 2008), accessed July 30, 2020.

by focused and designated financial giving. One such need is a weekly backpack program containing four meals sent home with ninety disadvantaged elementary students every school week.

Analysis

It became apparent that my white congregation was uninformed, misinformed or simply uneducated about the difficulties black Americans still face in 2020. I believe that most of them do not want to admit racism is still an issue in modern America. United Methodist Bishop Will Willimon reached the same conclusion about whites in general, who he says are uninformed about, unfamiliar with, and simply uneducated in matters of race. He explains, "When whites claim, 'I am color-blind in my dealings with others,' it's usually an indication of ignorance of how we have been thoroughly indoctrinated into race"[22]

There was little awareness in this congregation that they contributed to and benefitted from their position of white privilege. They rejected the notion that other races lack the same opportunities as their white counterparts. DiAngelo asserts, the assumption is that the access enjoyed by the controlling group is universal.[23] Members of this congregation could articulate, because of their whiteness, they were the majority of the population. In conversations they could recognize people of differing colors being in the minority in America. Subtly they classified people who did not look like them or who apparently had special opportunities to which they had no access, as minorities. They either did not see or refused to see any inherent bias in their

[22] Will Willimon, Who Lynched Willie Earle? Preaching to Confront Racism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 59.
[23] Robin DiAngelo, White Fragility, Why is it So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), XIV

thinking. Yet the truth is we all have biases, some implicit (meaning they are unconscious), and we are largely unaware of them.[24] Classifying people as minorities comes easy for this congregation of white people. They choose to notice differences in skin color before seeking the humanity of the person. Overly focusing on difference is one of the chief reasons we do not see the commonalities among our fellow humans. Consciously or unconsciously, we may be resentful of the fact that more people of difference are obtaining access to opportunities and areas where people more like me have always been in the majority and had preference.[25]

Phone interviews indicated that many in this congregation dismissed any notion that white people are privileged. They did not realize or understand the challenges blacks and other people of color still face today. Not a single person in this congregation disclosed that they speak about race at home. They have little awareness of the differences in levels of education, income, and employment rates between whites and non-whites in Hobe Sound. They even failed to acknowledge the higher incarceration percentage of non-white people in America today. When they did recognize such differences, they attributed them to poverty, ignoring skin color. Jose Vargus illustrates two of these misconceptions in his MTV interview. Interviewing young white and people of color, Vargus discovered that there is little discussion of race in conversations at home. Addressing higher education and scholarship opportunities, he found both groups felt they

[24] Excellent resource on implicit bias, Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald. Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People (New York: Bantam Books, 2016).

[25] Verna Myers, What If I Say The Wrong Thing? 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People (Chicago: ABA Publishing, 2013), 12-27. An excellent video illustration of being the minority is found at Ron Hart, That Moment I Realized White Privilege. Soul Pancake. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHA8vWkXjew

were discriminated against in scholarship opportunities. However, statistics prove that white students are forty percent more likely to get a scholarship than their black counterparts.[26]

Biblical/Theological Reflection

Telephone assessments indicated this white congregation found it difficult to define adequately the terms racist, white privilege, or systemic racism. They rejected the notion that they themselves were racist in any way, instead insisting that racism is a problem in people different than they themselves. This affirms the biblical commentary and mandate: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."[27]

God calls us Christians to love our neighbor, and the New Testament writings instruct us that as Christians there is no longer a distinction between men/women, free/slave, or Jew/Gentile. What supersedes such distinctions is that we are now one in Christ. Yet people remain grouped, and these groups tend to be based on skin color. Hospitality is to be offered to the stranger, to the other, to the least, this is biblical. In our current 2020-2021 context, we might rephrase this as saying there should no longer be divisions, distinctions, and hierarchies such as White/Black, Black/Latinx, White/Asian, et.al.

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[26]JoseVargas, dir., White People. MTV, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjj1PmJcRM. An excellent book illuminating barriers minority groups face Patricia Sanchez-Connally, Race, Gender & Class**:** Latinx First Generation College Students Negotiating Race, Gender, Class and Belonging **(**New Orleans Vol. 25, Iss. 3/4 2018),234-251 https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/docview/2298709349/AE741C6E9F274D01PQ/17?accountid=10747

[27] Matthew 7:3-5 (NAS)

Moreover, we are to go further than merely not creating hierarchies and divisions. Those in power have a particular responsibility to extend such hospitality to our neighbor, especially for those less fortunate/different than themselves. As an example, we have Jesus, who showed empathy for the distressed of the world, among them: the homeless (Mark 5:1-20), the widows (Matthew 23:14), the despised (Luke 19:1-10) and the imprisoned (Matthew 5:21-26; 18:29-31). Life in occupied Palestine meant living with and adjusting to harassment of the civil authorities who in many and various ways, confronted, compelled, and convicted (Matthew 5:39-41) those with the least power and authority.[28] Life in the United States today likewise unfortunately requires those of color to adjust to the demands of the powerful. It is a continued system which elevates whites and further disadvantages persons of color.

True community occurs when all people and their voices are seen and heard. Christians claim to be the beloved community, but if this, our community of faith, is to reflect the Kingdom of God, we will need to confront our own privilege and status resulting from our whiteness. The church's future can only be a promising and ethical one if we model a richer and deeper definition of community -- one that moves beyond the excessive individualism of western culture and that promotes solidarity with one another and with all God's people.[29] The apostle Paul envisioned this

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[28] Arthur Sutherland, I Was a Stranger, A Christian Theology of Hospitality (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 2-3.

[29] Lee Boyung, Transforming Congregations through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church (Nashville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=5974216. Created from Emory on 2020-08-26 08:02:11. p 37. For a detailed exposition on placing the responsibility for racial justice on the majority, not the minority, is found in, Cleveland Hayes, and Nicholas Hartlep, Unhooking from Whiteness: The Key to Dismantling Racism in the United States (Boston: Sense Publishing, 2013), Electronic Book. Excellent also is, Michael K. Duffey and Deborah Nash ed., Justice and Mercy Shall Kiss: The Vocation of Peacemaking in a World of Many Faiths (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 2008), ProQuest Ebook central,http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=3017125.

new church community as opposing the hierarchical worldview of the upper class. He clearly and unambiguously urged higher-status Christians to change their attitudes in ways that supported lower-status Christians. Today, we also can make a difference in inter-racial and cross-cultural relationships by imitating Paul's own kenosis or self-emptying and status reversal.[30] God's purpose is not only to form righteous individuals but also to build a new community, one that embodies shalom or God and God's people living in harmony. To accomplish shalom, individuals and communities need transformation.

Biblical scholar Marcus Borg (2003) points out that transforming lives is central to both Christianity and other enduring world religions. Transformation should be moving us away from the "-isms" and closer to the full inclusion of all persons. Such inclusion welcomes and is equitable to all, to white/black, wealthy/poor, free/imprisoned. After examining first-century writings, biblical scholar Elaine Pagels (2005) concluded: "What attracted crowds of newcomers to early Christian groups was witnessing extraordinary behavior." For many early Christians "practiced loving-kindness, showed self-control in sexual matters (unlike others around them), and became incredibly generous in caring for orphans, the poor and those in prison."[31]

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[30] Boyung, Transforming Congregations Through Community, 2013, 38. Further readings on identifying and lowering of one's white status, Eddie Moore, Jr., Marguerite W. Penick-Parks, and Michael Ali eds., Everyday White People Confront Racial and Social Injustice: 15 Stories (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2015). Also, Jill Robbins, How I Finally 'Got' the Meaning of White Privilege (Huffington Post, July 8, 2016). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jill-robbins/what-white-privilege-means_b_10874218.html.

[31] Robert B. Ellsworth and Janet B. ELLSWORTH, Life-Transforming Congregations, International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies 6(1): 46–60 (2009) Published online 8 January 2009 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/aps.189. For additional readings on transforming haters into nonauthoritarian humanitarians see, Martin Oppenheimer, The Hate Handbook: Oppressors, Victims, and Fighters (Lexington Books, 2005).

Unfortunately, the congregation of First United Methodist Church in Hobe Sound has been impotent in building a community that honors biblical principles of inclusivity and hospitality. Instead, it perpetuates stark imbalances of power, privilege, and advantages. The white congregation of First UMC Hobe Sound aligns with the privileged and powerful.

Those in the privileged group do not realize that individuals in the less privileged often fail to reach their potential or feel excluded, unseen, and disrespected because social systems and institution(s) perpetually exclude and disadvantage them. Christians today find themselves a part of an established, imbedded, and interwoven system that privileges white citizens simply for being white and disadvantages all others, in Hobe Sound's case, particularly blacks. These inherited advantages position some of us better than others to take advantage of opportunity.[32] Such systems of inequity are called structural or systemic racism.[33]

Rationale

To recognize and begin to dismantle the local systems of white privilege and racism, we must first acknowledge our country to be in the grip of racism. The United States is a racist nation because its policy makers and policies have been racist from the beginning and have perpetuated this system for the sake of their own enrichment and advantage. Yet there are ways to combat and

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[32] Martin Oppenheimer, The Hate Handbook: Oppressors, Victims, and Fighters (Lexington Books, 2005). ProQuest EbookCentral, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/emory/detail.action?docID=1331621. Created from emory on 2020-08-26 07:18:55, 39-40. See also, Barbara Trepagnier, Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide (New York: Paradigm, 2010).

[33] Oppenheimer, The Hate Handbook, 2005, 5. To discover the radical extreme to which racist structures lead check out, Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, The Data of Hate (New York Times, July 12, 2014). https://nyti.ms/1kifZ4t.

overcome it.[34] Bringing to the forefront the issue of racism in this year of Covid-19 pandemic was a series of police shootings/murders of Black bodies. Several of these heinous acts of unnecessary brutality were recorded and gained national attention through social media and television newscasts. Once again, the murders of (mostly) young black males by police launched nationwide and even global protests. Terms like white privilege, racist, racism, white supremist, and systemic racism, were thrust on the white American community. Fueling the national debate, it seemed white America was rejecting that they held privilege. In interviews, members of this congregation also dismissed the notion that a system of white privilege and systemic racism was at work in our community.

Clearly, many of us white folk have become numb to racism and violence, rarely acknowledging it, if at all. A burning question remained with me through all the televised national protests: how was the church responding to issues of race before these senseless police related shootings/murders of blacks and their resulting protests? Where have the congregations of Christians been actively engaged in their neighborhoods working to end injustice as they build community? Black author and professor Leah Gunning Francis wrote about the clergy response to the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Gunning recognized that "this is not a one-time thing; this has happened before."[35] This event caused clergy to demonstrate resistance as an act of faith. Clergy came forward, joining with the protesters. Clergy prayed, took time to listen, understanding they were not the leaders of the protests, they were there for support. The clergy came to see their role as making known to all the presence of God. Their role

[34]Ibram X. Kendi, How to Be an Antiracist (New York: One World, 2019), 223.

[35] Leah Francis-Gunning, Ferguson and Faith, Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2015).

was to call all people to see black people as human beings created in the image of God.[36] Theologically, there is already a foundation in the life of the church to own the community as part of their identity.[37] This is also fundamental to Methodism, as Methodists are keenly aware of John Wesley's understanding that the world is our parish, and that, as Wesley organized Methodist societies in his time, the Church should be proactive in justice issues.

The events of Ferguson are not isolated, neither were they merely an issue between one officer and one young black male. "This is a whole systemic thing that we can't move away from anymore"[38] Systemic racism exists in reality, not in theory. A black child born today is less likely to be raised by both parents than a black child born during slavery. The absence of black fathers across America is not simply a function of laziness, immaturity, or too much time watching Sports Center.[39] Instead the truth is that thousands of black men have disappeared into prisons and jails, many of them locked away for minor drug offenses that are largely ignored when committed by whites. More African American adults are under correctional control today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began. The clock has been turned back on racial progress in America, though scarcely anyone seems to notice. All eyes are fixed on people like Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey, who have defied the odds and risen to power, fame, and fortune.[40] It is the likes of Oprah, Barack, Tyler Perry, Steve Harvey,

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[36] Francis-Gunning, Ferguson and Faith, 2015. 9-18.
[37]Francis-Gunning, Ferguson and Faith, 2015. 93.
[38] Francis-Gunning, Ferguson and Faith, 2015, 41.
[39] Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (New York: The New Press, 2012), 58.

[40] Alexander, The New Jim Crow, 2012, 180.

and others that have led whites to believe there is equal access for all and that anyone can obtain their dreams. Clearly there is disparity between the races.

Though First UMC Hobe Sound has so far widely avoided dealing head on with issues to do with racism, my hope is that it can still change course and draw on the full power of its theological and prophetic resources, to call attention to the evils of racism by speaking truth into the power of our broken systems. I hope this group of white people can wake up to the reality of a racist system, one that favors whites over blacks and other people of color, and to their part in perpetuating systemic racism by denying it and reaping its rewards. I wonder: if I introduce to them, theologically and prophetically, the realities of racism and a biblical response to it as the church, will they be able to change their thoughts and actions to effect transformation for a more racially just world? According to Nancy Ammerman, what is meant by faith seeking understanding includes discernment, worship, making sense of our lives, and transformative action.[41] My hope is that this white congregation will harness their faith and seek understanding to comprehend their part in perpetuating racism, and then to take action to begin changing their behaviors. When this congregation does so, it can move from a posture of reactive impotence to one of proactive transformative power. So how do I get them there? I hope to do it through preaching, teaching and curriculum that addresses it head on.

Preaching, Curriculum, and Teaching

As pastor and leader, I felt compelled to bring this conversation forward. Unfortunately, even God's children tend to pick sides. One side believes everything is fine just as it is (because it is fine for them). They devote considerable resources to maintaining the status quo. Another

[41] Nancy Ammerman, Ed., Studying Congregations A New Handbook (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 23.

side typically presses for total change of the racist systems disadvantaging minorities and people of color. Lastly, one final side or group moves toward the center. Here, where justice and mercy meet, people are willing to listen to the other for the transformation of the world. At the place where justice and mercy meet, we make a difference.

Preaching

I planned to preach a series of four sermons in conjunction with teaching a Scriptural curriculum that tackles inequity, race, and discrimination. The series finds its initial traction in discovering a method for building community. In this message, two sisters are compared during a visit by Jesus. The Gospel of Luke (Lk 10:38-42) illustrates for the listener two potential responses when encountering someone, in this case, the Christ. Mary is depicted as the sister who takes time to sit and listen to Jesus. Martha is the sister who thinks she knows what Jesus needs. Martha is found to be excessively busy, attempting to provide the necessary food and hospitality for her visitor. Martha does not take the opportunity to discover what her guest might need, rather she gets to work, busily trying to offer what she thinks is needed. Mary, on the other hand, takes the necessary time to sit and listen to her guest. The theme of this message centers on Mary's action to take time to listen. The sisters will serve as the back-drop to the ways in which the Church tends to jump right into doing things, without ever hearing what the other needs. Mary will serve to model for us the importance in listening to our neighbors. To effect change, this white congregation, will need to open dialog with their neighbors and take the time to listen, before serving up a solution. On the second Sunday of the series, the parable of the Good Samaritan is proclaimed (Lk 10:25-37). Here, we see love without preconceptions in action. The message will look at the systems in place both then and now. In the day of the Good Samaritan, a system of racial inequity existed. Samaritans were viewed as the ultimate outsider. They were of mixed

origin, both Jew and Gentile. Centuries of intermarriages would have made identifying a Samaritan from a Jew rather easy, much like our ability to easily categorize people based on skin color. Even in the days of Christ, there existed a system of racial inequity. By addressing the needs of the injured traveler, the Samaritan crossed that imaginary, yet real, boundary line. If we are to do the work on addressing the racist within ourselves, we also must be willing to acknowledge a system of racial inequity and have to courage to cross those boundaries.

Once we acknowledge a need for listening to the other and that systems of racial inequity stem as far back as antiquity, proclamation moves to inform us that people in essence are no different from one another, in that, we are all equally beloved by God, (Gal 3:26-29). Paul's letter to the Galatians implores followers of Christ to embrace our similarities while we also acknowledge our unique differences. In the days of the early church, it became important to look past someone's outward appearance, to discover their inner beauty, one clothed in Christ. The early church made no distinction between Jew/Gentile, slave/free, woman/man; they were all one in Jesus Christ. The proclamation this week will challenge the listener, to set aside any preconceived categories of people in our context, especially being sensitive to the black/white divide and seeking ways to be clothed together in Christ. In the fourth and concluding message of the series, Luke 12:13-21 introduces a rich fool to us. In this parable Jesus has an interaction with a wealthy person whose self-interest is on display to the detriment of genuine community. Here we see how the wealth of this man kept him from forming the most important relationship possible. This rich fool represents to us; the one-up group, the power class, the majority, who prefer to remain in control of their personal wealth, their position, and/or their influence. The lesson to be had in this narrative rests in an ability to shift one's perspective, pass along the new pedagogy, and form genuine community. (Appendix C)

Curriculum

The curriculum chosen not only informs but also encourages transformation and change. This curriculum also demonstrates those best practices for making change happen, including positive affirmations. Ruth King illustrates the power in positive affirmation to change behavior.

> *On a recent still night as I watched global protests on TV against the killing of Black people, my heart caught a scene that profoundly crushed me … A Black man, maybe 24 - the age of my grandson - short, round body, dreadlocks, right hand gripping a baseball bat, walking with increasing intensity toward the window of a retail store. Then the most unexpected and amazing thing happened. Black protesters surrounded him, affirming him with hopeful chants, and encouraging him to join them in a peaceful protest. It took a few moments but then he surrendered to their care. I sensed that perhaps his deeper wish had been met in that* moment*: to be seen, to have the weight of his rage shared, and to be cared for.*[42]

This story captures reflections of our collective journey. We can recognize parts of ourselves in this young man. It comes down to how we feel. Sometimes we are insanely enraged not knowing what to do with that rage, other than act in destructive ways. Sometimes we feel powerful and ready to make changes. To make any good change, we must combine love with power. This story demonstrates the value of rage and love and how it can be channeled to drive change. Who would

[42] Shakti Butler, World Trust: Social Impact through Film and Dialogue. https://mailchi.mp/1d26ed8b920e/imagining-a-racially-just-future-july-updates?e=03aaf368dd

have guessed that one of the byproducts of Covid-19 would be to forge a deeper pathway to racial justice? On any other regular day - during which most people would have more than likely been involved with the daily doings of work and their own lives - the response to yet another murder of a black human being might not have met with such widespread outrage and shock. Perhaps the outcry for defunding police departments would have found little traction. The summer of 2020 may have begun to turn the national discussions in a positive direction. But it is just as-and probably more- likely that our outcry will shrivel back into faded memories of all the forgotten murders, lynching, genocide and outrageous historical injustices that have been perpetuated on people of color for generations.[43]

The World Trust Educational Services understand their mission to be one of a collective effort at redressing power, economics, and cultural ways of being. They understand that for changes to occur, a bold vision must be cast. This vision will drive the creation of new systems with structures that highlight community safety, economic security, and the kind of healing that can knit people into wholeness.[44] This curriculum encourages pastors to step boldly into their prophetic imagination in teaching and preaching.

As we enter 2021 and the years to follow, we are poised to birth a radical movement, amplifying our capacities for telling the truth, being accountable and walking with one another into a racially just future. Our only other option is to retreat to our desired poll, dig in deeper, and refuse to do the hard work of reconciliation. Ijeoma Oluo in the book, *So You Want to Talk About Race,* indicates, tying racism to its systemic causes and effects will help others see the important

[43] Butler, Social Impact through Film and Dialog.
[44] Butler, Social Impact through Film and Dialog.

difference between systemic racism, racists, and white privilege. In addition, Oluo indicates that the more practice you have at tying individual racism to the system that gives it power, the more you will be able to see all the ways in which you can make a difference.[45] One of the sticking points that keeps us from experiencing a fair and just world is our inability to distinguish the difference between, equality and equity. Our collective white refrain is "all people are created equal." This is an untruth. If we were all equal, each of us could do anything the other can do. This is simply not possible. Humanity was and is being created in God's image. This image of God is vaster than our imaginations can handle. We are all gifted different graces and abilities to be used in the Kingdom of God for the benefit of God and our neighbor. Equality is the state of being equal and we are all not equal for any given task. What we really are seeking is a system that moves us away from inequity. Merriam-Webster defines equity as "justice according to natural law or right, specifically, freedom from bias or favoritism." It continues to define the term as "a body of legal doctrines and rules developed to enlarge, supplement, or override a narrow rigid system of law".[46] Equity concerning racism would be free of bias and favoritism, narrowing the gap created by a rigid system of laws. To address the equity bias as related to racism, World Trust Educational Services has developed a series of teaching modules.

Teaching

To engage participants in the learning process, a teaching method identified as the "circle method" was selected because it allows for group participation in retelling our stories. Yvette Murrell and Mariah March are strong proponents of storytelling. Through their research, Murrell

[45]Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2018), 35.
[46] www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equity

and March indicate that a circle is the best place to tell our stories. The circle process provides pauses wide enough to hold heartfelt, meaningful stories that carry us to the parts of ourselves that long to be authentically expressed and embraced. Here we stop and pause, to focus our attention establishing a safe intentional setting for asking questions and listening to occur, creating a space for healing. When creating spaces for people, if the brain senses fear, then all opportunity for learning and participation is lost.[47]

It was Christina Baldwin's and Ann Linnea's important research that provided the base for crossing the divide on difficult conversations. They reaffirm the essential practice of taking a seat on the rim and turning to one another to uphold racial, ethnic, gender, economic, and environmental justice. They continued by indicating that a circle defined a physical space by creating a rim with a common sense of sustenance at the center. We have always known that the circle is a natural way to gather for conversations. A circle is democratic space where we can look each other in the eye, lean in and listen, and include all voices with a sense of equality and equity. The practice of circle often leads to more creative options, wiser decisions, clearer actions. Conversation is influenced by the shape of the space where people are gathered. The circle is a shape for putting purpose in the middle and listening to every participant's contribution to the whole. The Circle Way offers social structure that

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[47] Yvette D. Murrell and Mariah March, The Power of Setting Intentions, Using Restorative Practices, Theater and Art for Healing and Social Justice (Oakland: World Trust 2018).

often helps conversation arrive at a deeper, more intentional place. These components of structure help ensure that each person is heard and that meaning, and wisdom emerge.[48]

Psychologists Robert and Janet Ellsworth, in their work on transforming congregations, note that one of the six indicators of a healthy church is that the church uses transforming teachings to help people handle difficult times, as well as encouraging people to read spiritual material and apply some of the teachings.[49] The circle process supports such teaching and learning, that leads to action. They describe this process as follows:

> *Several actions set the circle process in motion. The group gathers with a welcome, followed by a round of checking-in so that every voice can be heard. People articulate and respect agreements that define the role of individuals and how they will treat each other. Topic and intention guide the conversation. To elicit story and wisdom, practices of listening and speaking are observed. There is a way to pause the action and call for reflection. Decisions made, whether by consensus or hierarchical design are enhanced by hearing all points of view beforehand, and cooperation is*

[48] Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea, The Circle Way-Taking a Seat to Take a Stand. http://www.thecircleway.net

[49] Robert B. Ellsworth and Janet B. Ellsworth, Life-Transforming Congregations, International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies 6(1): 46–60 (2009) Published online 8 January 2009 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/aps.189.

> *facilitated by participation. Before people leave, there is a round of checking-out and a brief farewell."*[50]

With a teaching method in place, I return to the curriculum.

World Trust Educational Services (WTES) has produced modules for instruction and conversations around racial equity. Divided into four distinct topics, all designed for discussion in community. There is a module on understanding racial inequity. A second module uses a racial equity lens to frame current issues. The third module investigates the processes for building community. The modules conclude with a discussion around shifting our perspectives. Each module is designed to take anywhere between four and six hours. In my context, I sense these modules will require some modifications for time and length.

During the initial teaching it will be necessary to fully engage the curriculum, noting areas to focus on and areas to limit for future useability. These teaching modules may prove beneficial, especially to Florida United Methodist Churches, as resident Bishop Kenneth Carter has made racial equity a Conference priority for the next quadrennial.

Module one provides a framework for understanding the system of racial inequity. By understanding that there are systems at work in maintaining inequity, individuals and groups will explore the nature of structural racialization, and how they participate in it and perpetuate it. Participants will learn what it means to use a systems analysis approach for understanding structural inequities. Finally, this module will help develop emotional

[50] Ellsworth, Life-Transforming Congregations, 2009.

intelligence. It will also offer opportunities for practicing strategic approaches to address structural inequity. Module two begins to frame issues with a racial equity lens. Systems of beliefs which inform policy and law, can contribute to, and perpetuate injustice. This injustice rests on unconscious and conscious beliefs about who matters in society and who does not. To make right what is inherently wrong, collective action is required. This module contains the work of the Applied Research Center, a racial justice think tank that uses media, research, and activism to promote solutions. This module provides examples of how injustice is perpetuated through the media and court systems. Participants will interact with art and film clips. They will learn how to frame an issue with a racial equity lens and practice it. The purpose of this module is to: understand the power of 'framing'; learn how 're-framing' is an important tool for building effective strategies for racial equity and change; and to begin to explore how media coverage and public discourse can be shifted to impact outcomes. Module three is concerned with building community. The WTES designed this module for schools but the material is easily transferable to the local church setting. The major contributor of this module is Justice Matters, an organization working to build and support a national racial justice movement and agenda in local schools and on a national level. The purpose of this module is to: create authentic partnerships among parents, families, teachers, and leaders; support the creation of a culture that values all people, including people of color; and provide an understanding of how we, as members of society, become aware of others, their stories, and why they matter. The fourth and concluding module is designed to begin shifting our perspective on racial equity and how to pass this learning on to others. An organization named E3 (for Education, Excellence & Equity) is the major contributor to this module. It imagines a future which embraces the

lived and learned experiences of each person. It seeks to demonstrate the value all people bring to the conversation. The purpose of module four is to: explore other ways of knowing people; learn the value of cultural competencies; and examine an individual's perspective.[51]

During these four modules, learners are introduced to and encouraged to participate using: video, art, poetry, reflection, group discussions, and even sculpting. This material engages the senses and different learning styles and should provide a breadth of opportunities for responses and for change strategies to occur in the individual and group. Many strategies for change involve multiple members working on some issue. The Association for Specialists in Group Work, *Best Practice Guidelines* (Thomas & Pender, 2008) refers to the concept of assisting members in generating meaning from the group experience; this, in essence, refers to the processing of any change strategy. Gladding (2012) defines processing as "helping group members to identify and examine what occurred in a group in order to understand themselves and the group better".[52] Dynamics within a group vary, as do learning styles. One method of teaching will not be sufficient for today's student, young or old. The twenty-first-century brain likes novelty. By using multisensory strategies such as props, chairs, writing, and drawing, there is a greater chance that members will be more engaged and, therefore, that more change will occur.[53]

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[51] Shakti Butler, World Trust: Social Impact through Film and Dialogue. https://mailchi.mp/1d26ed8b920e/imagining-a-racially-just-future-july-updates?e=03aaf368dd

[52] Christine Schimmel and Edward Jacobs, How to Select and Apply Change Strategies in Groups (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014). *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. Group Work Practice Kit. 26 Aug. 2020, doi: 10.4135/9781506335766.

[53] Schimmel and Jacobs, How to Select and Apply Change Strategies, 2014.

Conclusions and Commentary

Once the preaching of sermons and the four learning modules are completed, the initial survey will be readministered to the original respondents and to any additional participants. When health restrictions ease, sermons have been preached, and curriculum has been taught, I would expect a congregant to be more aware of their participation in systemic racism and of their own racist attitudes and behaviors. I anticipate that by having these conversations in a non-threatening/accusatory manner, some congregants will come to remove some of the barriers and defensive reactions toward their participation as a racist, in racism, white privilege, and systemic racism in a way they can acknowledge, claim, and work toward justice. Those who will take the time to engage in conversations and are attentive to their purpose should become aware that racism is not an individual issue, it is a national issue effecting every person in some way. Being labeled a racist, identifying one's own white supremacy, living under laws and rules that benefit some and not others are difficult, but not as difficult as the work needed to make changes.

It is difficult to change a culture of beliefs and behaviors that value the majority while disadvantaging those in the minority. In her work, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice,* Mary Clark Moschella indicates that culture is formed and reformed through the stories that guide our lives, the systems, and symbols that we believe in and live out through our actions. Moschella is a proponent that as we begin to recognize and honor differences rather than ignoring or trying to rule them out, an important dimension of becoming genuine community is formed.[54] The truth is you do not have to be racist to be a part of a racist system.

[54] Mary Clark Moschella, Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 48.

Appendix A

Racial Survey

Percentage of Respondents

I believe racism exists in our society.	Yes **100%**	No **0%**
I feel that racism is more a past problem in our society than a current issue.	Yes **17%**	No **83%**
I have referred to other races as “they”, “them” “those people”.	Yes **68%**	No **32%**
I have been/am a contributing factor in racism.	Yes **40%**	No **60%**
I have made an intentional effort to explore the racial differences of people.	Yes **73%**	No **27%**
I have taught my children the value of befriending a variety of races.	Yes **87%**	No **13%**
I have friends from different racial groups.	Yes **93%**	No **7%**
I have existing relationships with racial groups other than my own.	Yes **55%**	No **45%**
I feel that factors outside my control keep racism active in our society.	Yes **87%**	No **13%**
Sometimes I might feel my racial group is superior to another racial group.	Yes **40%**	No **60%**
I think that prejudgment of other racial groups is a problem in our society.	Yes **93%**	No **7%**
Sometimes I have negative attitudes toward people from minority communities.	Yes **80%**	No **20%**
I have witnessed the effects of racism in my community.	Yes **73%**	No **27%**
I feel frightened when near a racial community that is different than mine.	Yes **25%**	No **75%**
Self-Awareness can help remove negative feelings toward other racial groups.	Yes **100%**	No **0%**
I have discriminated against another racial group.	Yes **32%**	No **68%**
Religion is a major factor in shaping one’s response to different racial groups.	Yes **65%**	No **35%**
I have thought/behaved in an unchristian manner toward another racial group.	Yes **50%**	No **50%**
I have invited a person(s) to church or a church event from a different racial group.	Yes **50%**	No **50%**
I believe relationships improve the quality of life in our community.	Yes **100%**	No **0%**
I think that different racial groups are good for a community.	Yes **90%**	No **10%**
I believe there is equal opportunity for all people in my community.	Yes **45%**	No **55%**
I have worked on community projects with different racial groups.	Yes **69%**	No **31%**
I think racism can be solved in our society.	Yes **80%**	No **20%**

Have you heard the terms?			Can you define the terms?	
White Fragility	Yes 0%	No 100%	Yes 0%	No 100%
White Privilege	Yes 24%	No 76%	Yes 2%	No 98%
White Supremacy	Yes 100%	No 0%	Yes 0%	No 100%
Systemic Racism	Yes 7%	No 93%	Yes 0%	No 100%

Appendix A1

Racial Survey

Raw Data

I believe racism exists in our society.	Yes 42	No 0
I feel that racism is more a past problem in our society than a current issue.	Yes 6	No 36
I have referred to other races as “they”, “them” “those people”.	Yes 25	No 17
I have been/am a contributing factor in racism.	Yes 12	No 30
I have made an intentional effort to explore the racial differences of people.	Yes 33	No 9
I have taught my children the value of befriending a variety of races.	Yes 37	No 5
I have friends from different racial groups.	Yes 39	No 3
I have existing relationships with racial groups other than my own.	Yes 27	No 15
I feel that factors outside my control keep racism active in our society.	Yes 37	No 5
Sometimes I might feel my racial group is superior to another racial group.	Yes 12	No 30
I think that prejudgment of other racial groups is a problem in our society.	Yes 35	No 7
Sometimes I have negative attitudes toward people from minority communities.	Yes 27	No 15
I have witnessed the effects of racism in my community.	Yes 33	No 9
I feel frightened when near a racial community that is different than mine.	Yes 18	No 24
Self-Awareness can help remove negative feelings toward other racial groups.	Yes 42	No 0
I have discriminated against another racial group.	Yes 18	No 24
Religion is a major factor in shaping one’s response to different racial groups.	Yes 31	No 11
I have thought/behaved in an unchristian manner toward another racial group.	Yes 21	No 21
I have invited a person(s) to church or a church event from a different racial group.	Yes 21	No 21
I believe relationships improve the quality of life in our community.	Yes 42	No 0
I think that different racial groups are good for a community.	Yes 38	No 4
I believe there is equal opportunity for all people in my community.	Yes 19	No 23
I have worked on community projects with different racial groups.	Yes 29	No 13
I think racism can be solved in our society.	Yes 35	No 7

	Have you heard the terms?		Can you define the terms?	
White Fragility	Yes 0	No 42	Yes 0	No 42
White Privilege	Yes 10	No 32	Yes 1	No 41
White Supremacy	Yes 42	No 0	Yes 0	No 42
Systemic Racism	Yes 3	No 39	Yes 0	No 42

Appendix B

Racism questions to work into phone conversations.

1. Do you think some of the protests in our larger cities are because there are groups of people who have been historically viewed as the majority and others as minorities?
2. What groups of people may still be viewing themselves as in the minority? Why do you think that is their perspective?
3. Do you consider yourself part of the majority group? Why is that your perspective?
4. Being part of the majority, does that make you a racist?
5. Maybe you are a little prejudiced in some way, since prejudice is an opinion based on limited information?
6. If the definition of a racist is any white person who willingly or unwillingly benefits from being white, how do you think you have benefitted from being white?
7. Many people are saying now, maybe more than ever, that white people have the power and privileges and people of color do not, how then are we supposed to respond to that? What power and privileges do you have that others do not have?
8. I never considered myself a racist, but I have not really done anything to help people of color, I have just lived my life. Since I am white like you, it could be said that we are part of systemic racism. How do you think we should respond if someone calls us a racist or says we have white privilege or are a part of a system that was designed and maintained by whites to keep people of color from benefiting from the in-place systems of government and societal norms?
9. Maybe we are not a racist community, but how might the United States be considered a racist country?
10. It is being argued that in America there has been over 400 years of laws written by and for whites, to benefit whites. That has established a country maintained by a system of racism. How have you participated in this system? How have you benefitted? How do you think our church has benefitted?
11. How does it make you feel if I were to call you: a racist, tell you that you benefit from white privilege, that you are a part of systemic racism?

Appendix C

Sermon Series

Week 1	**Sermon Title**	**"Listen and Learn Something"**
	Sermon Text	**Luke 10:38-42**
	Sermon Focus	Martha makes excuses, Mary takes time to listen.
Week 2	**Sermon Title**	**"Love with no Preconceived Notions"**
	Sermon Text	**Luke 10:25-37**
	Sermon Focus	Good Samaritans love others different than themselves.
Week 3	**Sermon Title**	**"Those People are no Different than Me"**
	Sermon Text	**Galatians 3:26-29**
	Sermon Focus	Those baptized in Christ embrace similarities while acknowledging differences.
Week 4	**Sermon Title**	**"The Rich White Fools"**
	Sermon Text	**Luke 12:13-21**
	Sermon Focus	There are some rich white fools whose self-interests robs them of genuine community.

Appendix D

Results of Post-Assessment

I believe racism exists in our society.	Yes	No
I feel that racism is more a past problem in our society than a current issue.	Yes	No
I have referred to other races as “they”, “them” “those people”.	Yes	No
I have been/am a contributing factor in racism.	Yes	No
I have made an intentional effort to explore the racial differences of people.	Yes	No
I have taught my children the value of befriending a variety of races.	Yes	No
I have friends from different racial groups.	Yes	No
I have existing relationships with racial groups other than my own.	Yes	No
I feel that factors outside my control keep racism active in our society.	Yes	No
Sometimes I might feel my racial group is superior to another racial group.	Yes	No
I think that prejudgment of other racial groups is a problem in our society.	Yes	No
Sometimes I have negative attitudes toward people from minority communities.	Yes	No
I have witnessed the effects of racism in my community.	Yes	No
I feel frightened when near a racial community that is different than mine.	Yes	No
Self-Awareness can help remove negative feelings toward other racial groups.	Yes	No
I have discriminated against another racial group.	Yes	No
Religion is a major factor in shaping one’s response to different racial groups.	Yes	No
I have thought/behaved in an unchristian manner toward another racial group.	Yes	No
I have invited a person(s) to church or a church event from a different racial group.	Yes	No
I believe relationships improve the quality of life in our community.	Yes	No
I think that different racial groups are good for a community.	Yes	No
I believe there is equal opportunity for all people in my community.	Yes	No
I have worked on community projects with different racial groups.	Yes	No
I think racism can be solved in our society.	Yes	No

Have you heard the terms?			Can you define the terms?	
White Fragility	Yes	No	Yes	No
White Privilege	Yes	No	Yes	No
White Supremacy	Yes	No	Yes	No
Systemic Racism	Yes	No	Yes	No

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