



SACRED *Conversations*

ON RACE, CULTURE,
AND RECONCILIATION

“BUT LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS,
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN EVER-FLOWING STREAM.”
AMOS 5:24 (ESV)

A Multicultural Ministries Resource Guide
THE SALVATION ARMY USA CENTRAL TERRITORY

SACRED CONVERSATIONS ON RACE, CULTURE AND RECONCILIATION

PURPOSE & DESIGN OF CONVERSATIONS

SACRED CONVERSATIONS AROUND RACE, CULTURE AND RECONCILIATION is a resource designed to assist officers, soldiers, and employees to have gracious conversations around the complex and sensitive topics of race, our racial histories, and racial reconciliation. These conversations will be enriched by gathering people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. Taking into consideration that conversations about race can be difficult, and at times, uncomfortable, the format is designed with this reality in mind. The sessions begin with the basic questions and build to deeper levels of engagement with each session. The sessions are also designed so that the novice, as well as the more experienced, can enter the conversation in meaningful ways. It is our hope that knowledge will be gained, perspectives enlarged, understanding deepened, and bridges built towards a lasting reconciliation.

The critical parts of the conversation are listed, with a brief explanation. More detailed information of these components can be found in the appendix at the end of the guide. The meetings should include welcoming participants; sharing the purpose of the conversations; clarifying the role of the facilitator; presenting ground rules for creating a safe space; the use of story sharing and mutual invitation as primary tools; and establishing anchors for safe spaces.

Facilitator and participants are partners in this journey together. The facilitator's primary role will be to establish ground rules with the group; promote discussion through thoughtful questions, and ensure that each participant has the opportunity to share. Participants are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the dialogue process by being open, thoughtful, focused and willing to share their stories which are essential to the conversation.

These conversations are designed to be more than just a one-time event, but an ongoing guide for the journey.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO

WHAT WE WANT TO DO WITH THESE CONVERSATIONS:

- ☞ Create ways for people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to speak honestly and listen to each other.
- ☞ Create ways for participants to see and understand the “invisible” and destructive effects of racism.
- ☞ Have conversations that are meaningful to “beginners” and to those who have been exploring these issues for a long time.
- ☞ Hold conversations that look at the “black and white” nature of race, and is inclusive of other ethnic and cultural groups, as well.
- ☞ Look at our national situation and see how it plays out at the local level.
- ☞ Take stock of the challenges within our sphere of influence and work with others to make changes that lead to communities that reflect our mission.

FACILITATOR ROLE

The role of the facilitator is to help group members have a conversation that makes room for all voices. Are you worried about your ability to answer every question about race, our country’s racial history, or racism? The facilitator’s role is not to be an expert on the topic, but a fellow traveler who embraces the opportunity to learn.

TIMEFRAME

The conversations can be adapted to last 45 min. to 1.5 hour.

CONVERSATIONS GUIDE

This guide provides a process for 6 consecutive conversations and the promotes an option for continuing these sessions.

GROUND RULES FOR CREATING A SAFE SPACE

We believe that how we communicate is important and will determine what we are willing to share. To this end, we propose choosing one of the two ground rules that follow for creating a safe space when dealing with difficult topics.

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are *not* here to debate who is right or wrong.

OTHER COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Use “I” statements.

No “interrupting”.

Maintain “confidentiality.”

Be “present” – body, mind, and spirit.

THE TESTIMONY | STORY SHARING

The testimony is an important part of our tradition. It provides an opportunity for people to bear witness, to share their story, to speak the truth of their personal experience. Stories are shared without interruption, and without the need to debate, convince, or win an argument. A timer can be used, if necessary, to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to do so. Sharing our stories will be integral to the success of the conversations.

MUTUAL INVITATION | THAT ALL MIGHT SHARE

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to share, we will use mutual invitation as a tool.

ANCHORS FOR SAFE SPACES

In addition to agreeing on how we will communicate, it can be helpful for individuals to have an word, phrase, or picture that “anchors” them in a safe space and strengthens their resolve when the conversation becomes difficult or uncomfortable. This tool can help participants persist in the hard work that can lead to healing.

Example of Anchor Questions

Think of a space where you feel especially safe.

Think of an image or a picture that makes you feel especially peaceful.

Think of those times when you felt especially safe or peaceful.

CONTINUUM OF A RACIAL RECONCILER

You’ll want to watch the video to see THE MESSAGE for an understanding of these terms. Go to <https://willowcreek.tv/sermons/south-barrington/2016/01/how-chicago-must-change/#top>

Active Racist | Passive Racist | Beginner Reconciler | Advocate

See **The Message** (Bill Hybels @ Willow creek community church) **(15:40)**

This continuum of a racial reconciler was presented by Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church during his message following a conversation about race with the Rev. James Meeks, pastor of Salem Baptist Church in Chicago, IL.

SESSIONS

SACRED CONVERSATIONS ON RACE, CULTURE & RECONCILIATION

Each conversation will establish the Purpose for gathering, Respectful Communication Guidelines, the process for Mutual Invitation, Anchors for Safe Spaces, Role of the Facilitator, and the Testimony as a primary format for sharing and learning. This will be followed by a topic with a series of questions. Some groups will want to move through several questions; other groups will want to delve more deeply into one or two.

SESSION ONE

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT RACE?

- *Where are we?*

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so difficult to talk about race/racism?
 2. What is the beneficial part of talking about race/racism?
 3. When it comes to race, what problems are we facing?
 4. What are the most serious challenges facing our country?
 5. What are the greatest strengths for dealing with those challenges?
 6. What is God calling you to do or be in response to this conversation?
-

SESSION TWO

IT COULD HAPPEN HERE

- *Where are we?*

QUESTIONS:

1. How have race-related events and the racial tensions around the country affected you?
2. What incident do you recall that brought the reality of these racial tensions to the surface for you?
3. What was your response to what you heard or saw (i.e. new reports, articles, videos, twitter, Facebook, etc.)
4. What are the underlying conditions that might make us have different approaches to talking about race?
5. What are the underlying conditions or barriers that hinder better race relations?
6. What is God calling you to do or be in response to what you've heard?

Note: Incidents or people that participants might recognized having occurred in recent history (since 2012) might include Trevon Martin; Michael Brown and scenes from Ferguson, MO; Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Members and the Pastor of Mother Emmanuel AME Church, The Dallas Police Officers, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, etc.

SESSION THREE

MAKING THE CONNECTION

- *Who are we?*

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell a story or give an example to show how your background or early experiences have affected your ideas about racism and other ethnic groups.
 2. What was your first exposure to messages that concern racial stereotypes? Who told you about them?
 3. When did you first realize that some people thought about race very differently than you?
 4. Have you experienced racism or discrimination? What is your first memory of that? Have you seen it?
 5. How has racism affected people you know?
 6. What is God calling you to do, be or change as a result of this conversation?
-

SESSION FOUR

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

- *Who are we?*

QUESTIONS:

You may have heard family members, friends, co-workers, or neighbors make prejudiced remarks.

1. How do you think they learned their prejudice? How do you feel when you hear people talk this way? How do you react?
 2. What is one value around race/ethnicity or cultural differences that you learned from your parents that you would like to pass on to the next generation?
 3. What is something you learned about race/ethnicity or cultural differences that you do not want to pass on to the next generation?
 4. What is God calling me to do, be, or change as a result of this conversation?
-

SESSION FIVE

YOUR PERSONAL INVENTORY

- *Who are we?*

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your racial, ethnic and cultural heritage? What are you most proud of from that heritage?
 2. Growing up, what kind of contact did you have with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds? When were you first aware that there were such things as racial and ethnic differences?
 3. What are your first memories of people of color being treated differently than whites? What are your first memories of whites being treated differently than people of color? Recall specific incidents if you can. How did you feel?
 4. How did important adults in your life (parents, teachers, ministers, etc.) help you understand and interpret your experiences with racial groups different from your own? What did they tell you about specific groups?
 5. What is God calling you to do, be, or change as a result of this conversation?
-

SESSION SIX

OUR ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS AND RACISM

- At the previous session, invite people to bring something that represents their racial or ethnic background. This can be a picture or drawing, a poem, food, or music to share with the group.

DIRECTIONS:

Bring an item to share with the group. It should be something that tells about your racial or ethnic background. It may be a picture, a drawing, an object, a poem, food, music, or whatever you like.

COMMENTS:

“Often we think about racism as something that only affects “blacks” and “whites.” However, while our racial history in the U.S. is troubled and complex, our challenges are much more complex than that. This activity gives us an opportunity to learn more about who we are and where we came from. We will look at how our background affects the way we relate to each other and to our communities. This will help us learn more about the nature of racism. And it will help us work together to overcome it.” –

CULTURAL ITEMS

Share cultural items. Each person describes what they brought.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did you choose your item?
2. What does it say about your background and who you are today?
3. What do the things we brought have in common? Where are their differences?

4. What is God calling you to do, be, change as a result of our conversation?

OPTIONAL SESSIONS

SESSION SEVEN

IMAGINING OUR FUTURE

- *Where do we want to go?*

Think about the kind of community we want to have and look at changes we can make in your sphere of influence.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of community (neighborhood? Church? Workplace? School? or Organization? do you live in now? What does that community look like? What is the racial or ethnic makeup of the community? How are people interacting with each other?
2. In what specific ways do you wish race relations were different in your community? What would have to happen so that race relations would improve?
3. Tell a story about a time when race was “center” within that community?
4. What are some of the helping/hindering forces to improving race relations, even if there are different ways of understanding that story.
5. What are some steps that can be taken to improve race relations in your sphere of influence (neighborhood? Corp/Church? Workplace? organizations? schools)?

SESSION EIGHT

AMERICA BY THE NUMBERS WITH MARIA HINOJOSA (VIDEO)

▫ *Looking at the future today*

Maria Hinojosa is an award winning journalist. She is the anchor and executive producer of Latino USA on National Public Radio, a public radio show devoted to Latino issues. She is also the founder, president and CEO of Futuro Media Group, which produces the show.

Use excerpts from Opening Video @ <http://www.pbs.org/video/2365355639/>

QUESTIONS:

1. What word, image, phrase comes to your mind when you hear these demographics?
 2. What does the video say about the changing demographics in the U.S.?
 3. In what ways are people you know responding to these changes?
 4. What is God calling you to do, be or change as a result of what you've seen and heard?
-

SESSION NINE

CONOCIMIENTOS

▫ Taking a deeper look

“Welcome. We will take the next hour getting to know one another across racial differences, and we will do it by using a process called *conocimientos*, devised with the intention of building a community across our differences. The focus is on “racial” difference in this case, but it can be replaced by other types of difference that divide us.”

CATEGORIES:

Your name

Meaning of your name

Your birthplace

Your grandparents’ birthplaces

One value you learned from your elders that you will pass on to future generations

One thing you will not pass on

The leader can begin by introducing his or herself using the categories. Continue the process until all have been introduced. Each person will have one minute (or other length of time depending on the number of participants). After everyone has introduced himself or herself, debrief the experience by asking questions such as:

How did it feel?

How did it compare to other forms of introductions?

What have you learned about yourself and others through this sharing?

*What do you see as the strengths of the *conocimientos* categories?*

Some of the strengths you might want to point out include:

Human rather than functional—asks about who we are rather than what we do

Connects us to our past (we are related to those who have gone before us)

Connects us to each other as we hear similarities
Points out diversity among us
Reminds us that racism is taught (we pass things along)
Reminds us that we are not bound by the past (we don't have to pass everything along)

This activity is an adaptation from Tools for Dismantling Racism in Becoming the Beloved Community, Antiracism Resource Packet, Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. Louisville, Kentucky

SESSION TEN

RACE THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION

▫ Taking a deeper look

TEN THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RACE (Handout)

“Our eyes tell us that people look different. No one has trouble distinguishing a Czech from a Chinese, but what do those differences mean? Are they biological? Has race always been with us? How does race affect people today? There’s less—and more—to race than meets the eye”

Give participants the handout – TEN THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RACE. Have participants review the list and identify 2-3 statements that were new or most surprising to them about Race.

QUESTIONS:

1. Of the statements on the list, which are new or the most surprising to you?
 2. In what ways did these statements challenge your understanding about race?
 3. What is God calling you to do, be, or change as a result of this conversation?
-

**But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-
flowing stream. --Amos 5:24 (ESV)**

APPENDIX

This appendix includes tools used for the Conversations, with detailed explanation.

MUTUAL INVITATION

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. If you are not ready to share yet, say “I pass for now” and we will invite [you to share later on]. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

We invite you to listen and not to respond to someone's sharing

immediately. There will be time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

Whom you invite does not need to be the person next to you. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share. If you don’t want to say anything, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

Source: The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb, Eric H. F. Law, pp 113-114

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR CREATING SAFE SPACES

RULES TO GUIDE - Four Ground Rules for Reconciliation

1. Use “I” Statements
2. No “Interrupting”
3. Maintain “Confidentiality”
4. Be Present
 - a. “Body”
 - b. “Mind”
 - c. “Spirit”

EXPLANATION:

Use “I” Statements

Allow people to own their own statements and feelings. “I” statements keep us from making dogmatic statements that can alienate other people.

For example, using the term “everybody” can put others on the defensive. As a result, it can diminish the possibility that others will hear what is being said. The correct way to use an “I” statement is to say, “I feel...” “I think...” “In my opinion...” **rather than** “I think that you...” or “Everybody knows that...” or “All right-thinking people...” Another way of using an “I” statement is to say, “My experience is...”

No interrupting

Introverts and extroverts process and share differently. For example, extroverts often process aloud and need the opportunity to clarify their thoughts and what they intend to communicate. Introverts typically process internally and need opportunities to share their thoughts and finish what they are saying. We want to create a space for both to speak without being interrupted. This is one way of ensuring that a variety of voices and perspectives are heard and people are being respected.

Maintain Confidentiality

Part of creating a “safe environment” is providing a space for people to share difficult and sensitive information. In discussing reconciliation, people often take the risk of saying something personal or embarrassing. It is important to honor this risk by not allowing others to discuss what has been shared outside of the context of the session. When this occurs trust is broken and discourages any future honesty by other members of the group. This would also include not sharing pictures or comments of others on social media without getting their permission.

Be Fully Present

This one should not be overlooked! In this day of smart phones and social media, people are often physically present but not fully engaged with those around them. We need the whole person to be involved to get the most out of discussions. Therefore you should ask people to agree to turn off (or at least silence) their cell phones and commit to being fully present to the experience. You want each person to be present in mind, body and spirit!

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are *not* here to debate who is right or wrong.

Communication is one of the most important elements in building a more inclusive community. People of different backgrounds bring with them different communication styles. Sometimes these differences can cause conflicts among members of a community—often in an unconscious way.

Guidelines for communication are like the traffic rules that one has to understand and observe before getting a license to drive a car. We are required to pass a test proving that we know and will follow the rules in order to lessen the possibility of traffic accidents. With interpersonal communication, we do not require people to pass a test but we do need to remind people about how to interact respectfully. Conditioned by our society, we may react to others who are different with negative attitudes, put-downs, judgments and dismissal. If we are to express the essence of God's inclusiveness, we need to agree to behave differently when we are attempting to build a more inclusive community. The Respectful Communication Guide lines provide a foundation to uphold the well-being of the community.

These Respectful Communication guidelines or some other form of communication guidelines must be used in each session.

These guidelines have been used most often by the Kaleidoscope Institute and have been developed over the years through working with various groups. They are written in an acronym that helps group members remember the guidelines. During the first meeting of the group, the meaning of each letter should be explored. In later meetings, the guidelines should at least be read and agreed upon, and sometimes, with briefer explanation.

Source: <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines>

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Facilitating difficult conversations can be emotionally draining or even painful. Make time to process, reflect and recharge in positive ways. Find colleagues or friends who can listen while you debrief conversations about race and racism. Keeping a journal and using writing to process and reflect can be helpful, too. – adapted from Let's Talk: Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students

The dialogue leader's role is an important one that requires especially good listening skills and knowledge of when not to talk. The dialogue leader must also help set and follow ground rules for participation in the dialogue. Establishing rules helps to create a safe environment for openness and sharing. The dialogue leader's basic responsibility is to the group as a whole, while also considering each person's individuality and level of comfort.

Leading a dialogue is an intensive activity requiring a high level of alertness and awareness. That is why dialogues are often conducted by two or more leaders. It may be particularly valuable to have co-leaders who are of a different race or ethnic background and gender. Co-leadership can help to balance the dialogue and "model" the type of collaboration you hope to encourage.

Discussion leaders are critical to making the dialogue work.

While the leader of a dialogue does not need to be an "expert" or even the most

knowledgeable person in the group on the topic being discussed, he or she should be the best prepared for the discussion. It is up to the dialogue leader to keep the group moving forward, using phrases that enhance conversations and encourage discussion. This means understanding the goals of the dialogue, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing questions to help the group tackle their subject. The dialogue leader guides the process to ensure that it stays on track and avoids obstacles that could derail it. While the discussion leader guides the dialogue, he or she is also impartial in it, that is, not favoring one person or point of view and not adding personal opinion. The dialogue leader lets the participants dictate the flow of the discussion. Solid preparation will enable you to give your full attention to how the participants are relating to each other and to what they are saying.

The dialogue leader plays several roles.

At the start of the session, remind everyone that the purpose is to have an open, honest, and cooperative dialogue, and that your

role as leader is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and follow the ground rules. Before the discussion begins, help the participants establish ground rules and ensure that all participants are willing to follow them. Ground rules must emphasize respect, listening, honesty and the importance of sharing time equitably. Stress

the importance of respecting different opinions and perspectives. You might post the ground rules on a flip chart.

Source: Community Dialogue on Race: Conducting a Discussion on Race

EVALUATIONS

These can be written or expressed verbally in order to measure the impact of the dialogue. Questions might include:

Why did you join the group | What were your expectations | Were you comfortable participating in the discussion | Did the dialogue give you new insights about how to improve race relations | Was the dialogue climate positive and respectful | Did you find the dialogue to be a valuable experience overall | How might it have been improved | Would you like to participate in a future session | Did the experience motivate you to act differently | What additional comments do you have | END

Source: Community Dialogue Guide: Conducting a Discussion on Race

HANDLING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Here's how to handle some challenging situations.

The best method for handling challenging situations is to anticipate them and be prepared. Each conversation is a unique experience, providing new opportunities for the discussion leader. Even those who have been facilitators for many years are often faced with new problems requiring on-the-spot creative action. There are no certain answers; sometimes groups just do not go well, and other times all participants seem engaged and satisfied. The following scenarios present some possible challenges to the dialogue leader and offer some guidelines for handling them.

THE CHALLENGE

The group is slow to respond to the process.

How to Handle It: Check to determine whether your directions have been understood. You may need to restate the purpose of the process and how it should be carried out. You may also have people who resist participating because of "power" issues in the group. If so, invite them to participate to the degree they feel comfortable. Assure them that the purpose of the process is to share different insights, experiences, and personal reflections on the topic. However the members choose to participate is valuable. It is also important to make sure members are physically comfortable.

THE CHALLENGE

One or a few members dominate the dialogue.

How to Handle It: The instructions you give to participants about respecting time limits are helpful. Invite participants to be conscious of each person having time to share his or her reflections, ideas, and insights. It may be helpful to invoke the ground rule "It is important to share time equitably" when a few individuals dominate the discussion. Another solution is to tell the group you want to hear from those who have not said much. Participants will look to you to restrain domineering members. Sometimes, this situation happens when those dominating the dialogue feel they have not been heard. Restating the essence of what they've expressed can show that you have understood their point of view. *Here is where Mutual Invitation can be a very useful tool.

THE CHALLENGE

The dialogue leader feels strongly about an issue and has trouble staying unbiased.

How to Handle It: The dialogue leader needs to remain on task, which is to guide the process and to elicit and respect all members' thoughts. If leaders really respect the views of others, show interest and curiosity for other experiences and viewpoints, it will not be difficult to keep personal ideas from over-influencing the dialogue. This is not to say that the dialogue leader never shares with the members in the process. However, you must guard against moving from a discussion leader into a "teacher/ lecturer" mode.

THE CHALLENGE

A participant walks out of a group following a heated conflict.

How to Handle It: Sometimes the conversation may become heated. Other times, people may seem to be on the verge of fighting; and sometimes they may even walk out. The best way to deal with conflict is to confront it directly. Remind participants that they were told initially to expect conflict but that they agreed to respond to differences respectfully. The dialogue leader should always stop name-calling, personal attacks, and threats. This is one situation where you should readily appeal to the group for support. If they accepted the ground rules, they will support you.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov/archive/crs/pubs/dialogueguide.htm>.

HANDOUT: RACE: THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION

Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race

Our eyes tell us that people look different. No one has trouble distinguishing a Czech from a Chinese, but what do those differences mean? Are they biological? Has race always been with us? How does race affect people today? There's less – and more – to race than meets the eye:

1. **Race is a modern idea.** Ancient societies, like the Greeks, did not divide people according to physical distinctions, but according to religion, status, class, even language. The English language didn't even have the word 'race' until it turns up in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar referring to a line of kings.
2. **Race has no genetic basis.** Not one characteristic, trait or even one gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.
3. **Human subspecies don't exist.** Unlike many animals, modern humans simply haven't been around long enough or isolated enough to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface appearances, we are one of the most similar of all species.
4. **Skin color really is only skin deep.** Most traits are inherited independently from one another. The genes influencing skin color have nothing to do with the genes influencing hair form, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, athletic ability or forms of intelligence. Knowing someone's skin color doesn't necessarily tell you anything else about him or her.
5. **Most variation is within, not between, "races."** Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.
6. **Slavery predates race.** Throughout much of human history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or war, even debt, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. Due to a unique set of historical circumstances, ours was the first slave system where all the slaves shared similar physical characteristics.
7. **Race and freedom evolved together.** The U.S. was founded on the radical new principle that "All men are created equal." But our early economy was based largely on slavery. How could this anomaly be rationalized? The new idea of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.
8. **Race justified social inequalities as natural.** As the race idea evolved, white superiority became "common sense" in America. It justified not only slavery but also the

extermination of Indians, exclusion of Asian immigrants, and the taking of Mexican lands by a nation that professed a belief in democracy. Racial practices were institutionalized within American government, laws, and society.

9. **Race isn't biological, but racism is still real.** Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to white people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.
 10. **Colorblindness will not end racism.** Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies and institutional practices that advantage some groups at the expense of others.
-

NOTES

We reviewed several resources created by churches and community organizations in developing this “starter” guide for SACRED CONVERSATIONS ON RACE, CULTURE AND RECONCILIATION. But, two have been the primary sources from which we’ve drawn tools for the facilitators, questions and activities for the conversations, and that have helped in clarifying our purpose for the guide. They are the following:

Everyday Democracy (formerly the Study Circles Resource Center). (2008) Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation: A Guide for Public Dialogue and Problem Solving. https://www.everyday-democracy.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Facing-Racism-in-a-Diverse-Nation_Everyday-Democracy.pdf.

U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service. (2003). *Community Dialogue Guide: Conducting a Discussion on Race*. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/archive/crs/pubs/dialogueguide.htm>.08.30.16.

RESOURCES

Duty, R. (2009). *Talking Together as Christians Cross-culturally: A Field Guide*. Revised Edition. Retrieved from http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Talking_Together_As_Christians_Cross_Culturally_A_Field_Guide.pdf. 08.01.16

Hinojosa, M. America by the Numbers (2014). *Mainstream, USA*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/video/2365331457/>.

Hybels, B. (2016). *The Message*. Continuum of a Racial Reconciler Retrieved from <https://willowcreek.tv/sermons/south-barrington/2016/01/how-chicago-must-change/#top>. 07.30.16.

Law, E. (n.d.) *Respectful Communication Guidelines*. Retrieved from <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines>. 08.01.16.

Law, E. (1993). *Mutual invitation*, The wolf shall dwell with the lamb (pp. 113-114). St. Louis. Chalice Press.

McNeil, B. (n.d.) *Four ground rules for reconciliation*. Retrieved from <http://saltermcneil.com/4-ground-rules-for-reconciliation/>. 05.01.16.

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Inc. (2010). *Conocimientos* Tools for dismantling racism in becoming the beloved community, antiracism resource packet. Louisville, Kentucky.

California Newsreel (2003). *Ten things everyone should know about race*. Retrieved from <http://newsreel.org/guides/race/10things.htm>. 05.01.13.

Let's talk: Discussing race, racism and other difficult topics with students. Role of the facilitator. Retrieved from <http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>. 08.01.16.

Lastly, The term “Sacred Conversations” is a phrase that churches have used in gatherings that intentionally address the difficult topics of our times. But, we first saw the term in print in a document of the United Church of Christ: Sacred Conversation on Race. This is a church-wide initiative for United Church of Christ congregations. The resource can be found at <http://www.ucc.org/sacred-conversation/>.
