

Guide for individual or group reflection



Recommit to Racial Justice



NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

Recommit to **RACIAL JUSTICE**

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How to Use This Guide

In this guide, you will find an examination of racism in our nation's history and its contemporary manifestations in the United States. This is a limited resource that fails to cover every facet of racism. Instead, it is our hope that the information included will provide a foundation for you to build upon with additional learning and experiences.

The additional resources listed at the conclusion of each chapter are optional supplements for your learning. These resources are a good place to begin, and myriad of other writings, videos, art, experiences, data, and more exist that can further enrich to your understanding of racial justice.

This guide is published online at www.networkadvocates.org/recommittoracialjustice. You may find it easier to navigate and find the additional resources which are hyperlinked there.

Take this guide at your own pace. It can be read and reflected upon individually or in a group. If you have any questions or reflections you would like to share with NETWORK as you engage with this resource, please email info@networklobby.org.

Thank you for your engagement.



We are called to work for **RACIAL JUSTICE**

“Sisters and Brothers:

We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

For our sake God made Christ to be sin who did not know sin,
so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.

Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

For God says: ‘In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’

Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

Welcome to our journey of recommitting to racial justice. We invite you to join us as we dive into the challenging truth of racism in our society and the continuing saga of white privilege. We at NETWORK have been grappling with this reality for years. In the process, we have examined the structural racism in our laws. These often unseen structures keep us bound in social sin through the racial wealth and income gap, health disparities, and more.

Our study has led me to see that our societal structures are woven together with the vestiges of slavery and prejudice and the continued modern structures of racism today. But even more challenging are the many ways that I benefit as a white person in our racist society.

As a staff, we have been reading the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. She points out one aspect of white privilege is that we white folks can avoid talking about race. We find it painful and sometimes embarrassing. White folks have the luxury to avoid the conversation. I realized I do this. I worry that I might say something insensitive; I’m personally embarrassed. And I can change the subject. In addition to avoidance, individualism, DiAngelo posits, is at the heart of society’s inability to move beyond anecdotal experience and make real systemic change. We white people do not see the structures that secure our privilege and cement the racial divides.

It is important to focus on the issue of structural racism and privilege in these very challenging times. Doing this work requires us to embrace our role as ambassadors of the divine, and work together to rid ourselves of the social sin of racism. This is a communal need. If we build awareness of the societal dimension of this sin, then we can work together to dismantle the structural sin of racism. It won’t be easy; it will require many of us to awaken to the ways that we white people unwittingly benefit from racism—and still be willing to change.

So let us spend this time together in an exploration of structural racism in our time. St. Paul is correct as he writes in the Second Letter to the Corinthians:

“Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

*—Sister Simone Campbell, SSS
Executive Director of NETWORK Advocates for Catholic Social Justice*

What Does it Mean to Recommit to Racial Justice?

Thank you for joining us in this difficult but essential work for racial justice. In this time of hyper-polarization and racial strife in our country, it seems important for people of faith to recommit to our shared connection as members of the human family. Consequently, over the course of this Lenten season, we will engage in an extended examination of the systemic use of power and privilege to oppress and disadvantage people in this country based on a racial hierarchy.

We are blessed to be in a community of justice-seekers at NETWORK that is racially diverse, geographically diverse, and spans many age groups and life experiences. Racism is a powerful force that touches every aspect of our lives. Therefore, we need everyone to bring their full selves, with all of their gifts and talents, to this effort.

Examining and reflecting on racism in our history, policies, and society and taking action are drastically different experiences for white people and people of color. People of color have been speaking, organizing, and acting against racism for centuries. It is impossible to deny the truth that, while there have been exceptions to the norm, the majority of white people and institutional power in our nation have always (up to and including today) been on the side of white supremacy. It is time for white people to do the work of racial justice, educating themselves and finding ways to act in solidarity with people of color against racist policies and practices.

Why NETWORK capitalizes the B in Black and keeps the w in white lowercase:

We believe that the way we use language has power. While there are many discussions over the proper capitalization (or not) of Black and white, NETWORK has decided to capitalize the B and keep the w lowercase. In doing so, we are making an intentional decision to place power and importance on a community that is often undervalued in our society. Read more about this decision from the Columbia Journalism Review at https://www.cjr.org/analysis/language_corner_1.php.

We created this guide particularly attuned to the work that white members of our Spirit-filled network must do to examine their white privilege and the effects of systemic racism. We hope, however, that the faithful content and spiritual nourishment are valuable to the entire NETWORK community.

If you have any questions or reflections you'd like to share with NETWORK as you engage with this resource, please email them to info@networklobby.org.

We look forward to this journey with you!

A note for white participants about processing this information: Please be intentional about how you process your learnings about race and racism, and with whom. We cannot assume that people of color are freely available to provide the emotional labor of explaining racism to white people. Unless a person of color has explicitly invited you to reflect on race and racism with them, or is working in a professional capacity and receiving just compensation for their time and effort, refrain from launching an extended discussion about this content with people of color.

Shared Agreements for Engaging in Racial Justice Work with NETWORK

In our continuing work of becoming an anti-racist and multicultural organization, we have established these shared agreements as a baseline for conversation and reflection about race and racial justice. Often things can be misunderstood or miscommunicated, especially with topics as sensitive as race and racial justice, and it is important to create a space for our reflections and our discussions to be productive and healthy. Please read our shared agreements and consider them carefully before proceeding.

Speak up/Make space

This is a different iteration of what some people call “step up/step back” that is more mindful of physical ability (that not everyone can or will step). It also exists to dismiss the idea that “moving back” is what anyone needs to do. Speak up/Make space instead means that we need to make a conscious effort to consider who usually speaks up about racism and who remains silent. Additionally, we should also consider whose voices are listened to with more respect and/or authority, why that is the case, and how we can amplify important voices that do not have the audience they deserve.

We are each experts on our own experiences

We can only speak to our own lived experiences and nobody can invalidate the things that we have seen, heard, or felt. Our personal history and experiences deserve to be examined to understand our social location and our socialization. In conversations about race, be sure that you are only speaking as yourself and not speaking for someone else or their intentions.

Example: “When this happened, I felt this way...”

Respect confidentiality/Continue the conversation

This does NOT mean “what happens in this room stays in this room,” and we will never pick up an important conversation again. It simply means we should process and continue the conversation while being intentional about respecting people’s vulnerability and pain.

Whether or not it has been named, the personal manifestations of power are present

White supremacy and racism are embedded within every institution within the United States. This means that every person is living within that social context, which bestows a unique amount of privilege or disadvantage on each person in the room depending on their identities. Recognize your identity and the identity of others as you participate in conversations about race and racial justice.

Embrace and express discomfort

Lean into the discomfort that arises when thinking or talking about race and interrogate those feelings internally and externally.

Example: “I felt anxious reading ...” or “I noticed myself feeling defensive and I think that came from ...”

Practice self-care

This work can be emotionally taxing. While we wish for everyone to lean into their discomfort in order to learn, we recognize that for some people this can bring up trauma, and no one can learn when they are feeling traumatized. If necessary, feel free to take a break to collect yourself and return to the content when you are ready.

Resolution will not happen today

We are not going to solve racism by the time you complete this guide, and that’s okay.

Are you willing to agree to these shared agreements as you encounter and reflect upon this content? These principles apply to your experiences with this “**Recommit to Racial Justice**” guide and may also be helpful in other conversations you have around race and racial justice, so feel free to use them.

Preparing Our Hearts to Recommit to Racial Justice

We hope this is a time for repentance, a time for setting aside our familiar habits and comforts and for wandering in the desert. For many of us, a desert is unfamiliar terrain and may seem treacherous with its parched sand and rocks and relentless sun and heat.

This should also be a time for renewal. Though we may stumble and at times question our path through this desert, our journey is not aimless or without beauty. God says to us, “Return to Me with all your heart,” (Joel 2:12), and each day we step deeper into the wilderness. Hiking through a desert, you will probably experience deep thirst, perhaps exhaustion from heat, but you will also see towering *saguro* cactus, water flowing through an *arroyo*, a stunning sunrise. As we journey, we know that we are always walking in God’s love; we know that we are always walking towards the Resurrection.

A Meditation for White Participants written by Meg Olson, NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization Manager

NETWORK invites you to deepen your commitment to working for racial justice and to connect the work of racial justice to your personal faith. Learning about and reflecting on the white supremacy that permeates the structures and society we live in is hard work. The journey is challenging; we may stumble, and we will lament.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Reflect on your own social power. How does your racial identity grant you privileges or disadvantages? What about your age, gender, education, economic status, or ability? How might your own social power affect your journey?

Breathe in. Breathe out.

You will most likely experience discomfort. Embrace that discomfort. Sit with it and examine it. Explore it as you reflect on the weekly readings.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

You may find yourself clinging to the comfort that you already “get racism.” “I serve in the inner-city.” “My church is diverse.” “My adopted grand-daughter is Black.” Challenge yourself. Name three actions in the last month that show your commitment to being anti-racist. Where do you see your learning edge? What more can you do to dismantle white supremacy? Go there.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

You may find yourself calling out others. “If the Church would only...” “This administration...” “My neighborhood association!” Turn inward. This is your journey. How do you see racism in your own upbringing or beliefs? How do you see yourself participating in the institutions or structures that uphold white supremacy?

Breathe in. Breathe out.

You may find yourself feeling hopeless. “We’ve been working on this for years and nothing has worked.” “I can’t reach everyone that I want to.” “Legislation doesn’t change hearts.” Hopelessness prevents us from taking action to dismantle white supremacy; it keeps the current system in place. Think about what you’ve already done. How have you educated yourself about racism? What work have you already done to end economic

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Meditation cont.

inequality or promote health equity between white people and people of color? Name where you find hope in the movement for racial justice.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

You may find yourself experiencing tremendous guilt or even self-loathing. Forgive yourself. If you are doing this work, you are not immoral, and you are certainly not a bad person. Through your whiteness, you are complicit in a system that you may not have been aware of for many years. God is within you and in every part of your life. May this experience of suffering help you be in deeper solidarity with the generations of people who have been hurt by racism.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Though we may stumble and at times question our path through this desert, our 40-day journey is not aimless or without beauty. Remember that the narrative of people of color in this country is not just one of oppression and pain, but one of resistance, resurrection, and joy. Know that our collective resurrection will happen when white supremacy is fully dismantled. Know that by recommitting to racial justice this Lent, you are responding to God's invitation, "Return to Me with all your heart."

A Reflection for Participants of Color written by Tralonne Shorter, NETWORK Senior Government Relations Advocate

To Fellow Readers of Color:

It is my prayer that you will approach this content with a sense of hope, welcome, and grace. As you read this guide, know that it is not perfect nor is it meant to be a comprehensive exposition on every subject related to race.

Some, upon seeing the title "Recommit to Racial Justice," will presume that this is a call to action for white people alone.

To them I say: Resist the urge to cede your power by bearing little to no responsibility in creating the precipitous change in our world, communities, schools, workplaces, and churches needed to dismantle white supremacy, fragility, and privilege. I encourage you especially to "not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

There is understandably anger, hurt, resentment, frustration, and pain. But remaining in this space obstructs our own liberation. There are no justified resentments, Wayne Dyer said. While we will never forget the pain of our communities and our ancestors, we must find ways to heal ourselves and our families.

We all bear the burden of dismantling the power dynamics that support a false narrative in white spaces, especially progressive white spaces, that sees people of color as tokens of achievement or victims needing saving by privileged, God-fearing white people.

Let us renew our minds and hearts so that privilege no longer dominates us.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Reflect on your own power. How does your racial identity grant you privileges or disadvantages? What about your age, gender, education, economic status, or ability? How might your own social power affect your journey?

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Words of Wisdom

Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist."

— *Audre Lorde, The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*
1979

Reflection cont.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Consider your role in creating the world you wish to see. Turn inward. This is your journey. How are you called to resist racism against all people of color?

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Find inspiration and reasons for hope. Remember those who have worked for racial justice before us. Think about what you have already done. Name where you find hope in the movement for racial justice.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

We affirm this truth: To be Black or Brown is beautiful, strong, resilient, phenomenal, and worthy of love, respect, and a seat at an integrated table. This takes nothing away from white people.

Take Action

Father Bryan Massingale is a leader in the fields of theological ethics and liberation theology and a noted authority on issues of social and racial justice. His teachings and writings make up critical contributions to the contemporary Catholic conversation around race and racial justice.

In 2017, Fr. Massingale addressed the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice, an annual gathering of Jesuit high school and college students. In his speech, he asked “**What ought to be our contribution to racial justice?**” While Fr. Massingale directs his remarks towards the high school and college students attending the Ignatian Family Teach-In, his message is profoundly relevant for justice-seekers of all ages. Set aside some time to watch Fr. Massingale’s 50-minute speech, “The Magis and Justice,” found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyMYQFjzmZQ.

We Pray

Loving God,

You are with us in oppression; you are with us in liberation.

You are not bound by systems, nor by time or place. You have seen the effects of racism tear apart whole lives, families, communities, and societies. You have been with us in the harm and the confusion, the injustice, and the struggle.

As we sit at this crux of learning, resistance, and healing, may your spirit guide our thoughts and actions. As we reflect on our own humanity in the face of systemic injustice, may your wisdom transform us. Let us come to know our lived experience in the context of institutionalized racism.

We must first understand oppression to move forward on the path to liberation. Allow us grace, humility, and perseverance to process what we are learning. Be with us on the holy path of justice.

Amen.

Written by Lindsay Hueston, NETWORK Communications Associate

Reflection Questions

1. Does the learning Sister Simone mentioned in her introduction, that white people have the privilege of individuality, resonate with you?
2. How did you react to the grounding meditation addressed to you as a white participant or person of color? If feelings of defensiveness or indignation arose, take some extra time to think about or journal about why that feeling emerged.
3. One of our shared agreements states that “resolution will not happen today.” Father Massingale, in his address to the Ignatian Family Teach-In, likens the work of racial justice to a relay race (46 minutes into the video). How do you feel about the idea of this work, no matter how hard you try, being incomplete?
4. Father Massingale says “When we are physically ill, we enter into rehabilitation; when we are soul sick, we need to be re-created.” (44 minutes into the video.) Imagine what that re-creation might look like for yourself, your community, our nation, and our world.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*
February 28, 2010

www.orbisbooks.com/racial-justice-and-the-catholic-church.html

Father Bryan Massingale’s 2010 book studies racism in the United States from our early history to the present day, and evaluates the Catholic Church’s historical responses to racism and its institutional support for the work of racial justice.

- “If You Love Me, Do Your Homework”
April 18, 2018

www.thewitnessbcc.com/if-you-love-me-do-your-homework

In this article, Tamara C. Johnson, a Black woman, writes to her “white friends, associates, and churchgoers” to say how draining and damaging to her own health it is to continuously explain racism to them. She calls on white people to educate themselves on systemic racism and gives examples of how to do this, if they are serious about ending racism.

- “11 Easy Mistakes to Make When Thinking About Racial Inequality in the U.S.”
November 12, 2015

www.sojonet.net/articles/11-easy-mistakes-make-when-thinking-about-racial-inequality-us

Author Joe Pettit lists “11 easy but serious mistakes well-intentioned people may make when thinking and talking about racial justice.”

- “Put Out Internalized Racism: Why Solidarity Between People of Color Matters”
August 22, 2013

www.everydayfeminism.com/2013/08/put-out-internalized-racism

Jarune Uwujaren writes about her personal experiences of racism and how society’s emphasis on privileging white people can lead people of color to hurting one another to get ahead in our racist system.

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*Additional Resources cont.***Watch**

- “White vs. Whiteness”
March 10, 2016

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlpY7LOKbmI

Portland Community College published this 2 minute video about the difference between the terms “white” which describes skin color and “whiteness” which is a system that divides people based on race and perpetuates racism today.

- “The Socialization and Comfortableness of Microaggressions”
November 14, 2017

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YR8jNtV4BE

In this 17-minute TED talk, Dr. Andrea Boyles explores the roots of macroaggressions, how they can come from people with “good intentions,” and their effects on people of color.

- How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race
November 15, 2011

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU

Jay Smooth discusses why it is so difficult to accept critique that you may have said something racist, how perfectionism makes it harder for us to become better at being anti-racist, and how we can keep this perfectionism from preventing us having conversations about race. This is a 12 minute TED talk.

Listen

- The Code Switch Podcast Episode 1: Can We Talk About Whiteness?
May 31, 2016

www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/05/31/479733094/the-code-switch-podcast-episode-1-can-we-talk-about-whiteness

Hosts Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji lead an interesting discussion on the concept of whiteness, speaking to guests who teach college courses on whiteness or talk about whiteness professionally. This podcast episode is 37 minutes long.

- On Being Podcast: Opening the Question of Race to the Question of Belonging
May 10, 2018

www.onbeing.org/programs/john-a-powell-opening-to-the-question-of-belonging-may2018/

Krista Tippett interviews John A. Powell, the Director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, at UC Berkeley. They talk about race, whiteness, building equity, and relationships with other humans and the earth for 52 minutes.

- On Being Podcast: Let’s Talk About Whiteness
January 19, 2017

www.onbeing.org/programs/eula-biss-lets-talk-about-whiteness/

Krista Tippett conducts a 52-minute interview with Eula Biss, who wrote an essay titled “White Debt” which was published in the New York Times. They discuss noticing disparate treatment in their communities and finding ways to work against racial discrimination.

CHAPTER 1

Establishing a Common Understanding of Racism and White Supremacy

In this guide, we will examine how society in the United States has been deliberately organized to advantage white people over people of color. This structural advantage occurs at all levels: the political, social, and individual. We will include both “big picture” analysis as well as particular instances where our society has been built on unfairness and racial injustice, from our founding through today. Our goal is to examine how racism is not just a matter of individual actions and attitudes, but a pervasive and predominant social order. This systemic injustice, in the end, harms all of us by preventing us from fully living out Jesus’s command to “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

Of course, we would be remiss not to recognize that despite institutional barriers and disadvantages, people of color have not only survived, but also positively contributed to our society. Too often, history books and public narratives minimize and erase the contributions of people of color. From Native American and indigenous people, to enslaved Africans and their descendants, to immigrants and refugees, communities of color have been integral to the success of our nation. It is impossible to live in our country and avoid benefitting from the contributions of people of color.

A frank and realistic look at racism and its impact on our nation will help us see the truth of our social sin. As Father Bryan Massingale writes in *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, “We will never adequately deal with the reality of racial injustice, and its generational effects, unless we name its causes and attack its sources.”¹ This is the process we hope to begin in this guide. Of course, there is more information, deeper knowledge, and additional understandings on all of the topics that we will touch on. Along with the additional resources provided at the end of each chapter, we encourage you to do your own learning and seek out other sources of information to continue your education about racism and white supremacy.

With the help of the Holy Spirit to guide our learning, we will be prepared to commit ourselves re-ordering our policies, systems, and actions to reflect the truth that we are all created in God’s likeness and deserving of God-given dignity and respect.

Focus on Race and Racism

Race affects every part of our lives. While this is at the forefront of the lived experiences of people of color, for white people there is no incentive to think critically, or even consciously, about the ways that race affects them as well. Therefore, for white people, it is critical to “pull back the veil,” or take time to reflect upon the lens out of which they have been socialized to see. This lens, which is shaped by our country’s dominant white culture, has unavoidably absorbed racist beliefs which influence how everyone experiences the world and acts. Writers and artists have termed this “the white gaze,” while sociologist Joe Feagin calls this “the white racial frame.”

It may be uncomfortable to acknowledge this. Indeed, Martin Luther King, Jr. declared his hope for his children to be judged “by the content of their character,” not the color of their skin. Most white people, who don’t intentionally hold racist beliefs, would like to believe that they do this. They refer to themselves as “colorblind” or say things like “I don’t

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Focus cont.

see race.” However, white people must confront the reality that their perceptions and their own lived experiences have been shaped by racism, just surely as the lived experiences of people of color are affected by racism.

Fr. Massingale characterizes the “soul” of white culture as “the presumption of dominance and entitlement, that is, the presumption of being the norm or standard that measures all other frames of reference and to which all ‘others’ should conform.”² Only by first grappling with their own socialization into a racist culture, can white people begin to engage in the ongoing work of racial justice authentically.

Talking about Race and Racism

Since it is the norm in white culture to avoid direct, authentic discussions about race, it may not be something that everyone is familiar or comfortable with, or even have a common language to use in these conversations. Therefore, let us begin by naming some terms and ideas that are important to understand. The definitions and explanations that follow were developed or taken from various sources cited at the conclusion of this chapter.

We at NETWORK use the word **race** to mean “an arbitrary socio-biological category created by Europeans (white men) in the 15th century and used to assign human worth and social status with themselves as the model of humanity, with the purpose of establishing white skin access to sources of power.”³

Next, is the familiar concept of **prejudice**: “the favorable or unfavorable opinion or feeling about a person or group, usually formed without knowledge, thought, or reason. It can be based on a single experience, which is then transferred to or assumed about all potential experiences.”⁴ Prejudice can exist in many different forms. **Power** is “the legitimate control of, or access to, institutions sanctioned by the state; the capacity to act.”

By putting the concepts of **prejudice** and **power** together, we can begin to generate an adequate definition of **racism**, which states that racism only exists when “racial prejudice and institutional power are joined to result in the misuse of institutional, systemic, and social power.”⁵

The second component of racism – institutional power – is what guarantees that “reverse racism” against white people does not exist in the United States. For the time being, and likely for the foreseeable future, our institutional power is controlled by white people (even in times when we have *political leaders* who are people of color). **Therefore, it is impossible for there to be racism against white people.** If this challenges you, reflect upon this: There could be *racial prejudice* against white people, but not racism, because our current society is structured to protect and preference white people over people of color.

Another concept critical to our examination of race and racism is **white supremacy**. We define white supremacy as “the ideology of racial hierarchy born out of historical European domination that drives the system of white superiority, power, and control in our country. This ideology is often unconscious and impacts class and social status for whites and people of color.”⁶

As you may notice, the most-recognized use of white supremacy – when an individual or association professes an ideology of white racial dominance – is of course included in this definition. White supremacy, however, is not limited to those instances. Instead, it extends

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Talking cont.

to the ideology that preserves systems of power and control that uphold whiteness in our country. White supremacy, then, is much more prevalent in the structures of our society than we are comfortable admitting. **White privilege** results from white supremacy, it is “the product of white supremacy that confers unearned societal benefits – tangible and intangible – on white people because of the color of their skin.”

Many people are familiar with the next term, **oppression**. Oppression can be based on various identities. We define oppression as “marginalization and domination of the psychological, emotional, and/or physical nature of a person or group by a person or group.” **Institutional oppression** is “the systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person’s membership in the social identity group.” One’s **identity** is straightforwardly defined as “belonging to or relating to the experience(s), tradition(s) of a single or multiple communities.” While **intersectionality** is “the understanding that our multiple identities must be recognized to fully understand our experiences with systems of power, privilege, and oppression.”⁷

Now that we have established these definitions and terms for the concepts that surround race and racism, we can begin to have a meaningful experience learning and reflecting on systemic racism in our nation.

Other Manifestations of Racism

As we develop comfortability using the definitions above to discuss race and racism, there are a few more terms that are important to be aware of, particularly for white readers. These terms are pertinent to understand and be conscious of in many instances: in personal and professional scenarios, in secular and religious settings, in one-on-one interactions or group encounters, and in one’s hometown or even outside of the United States.

Cultural appropriation occurs when “a member of a dominant culture takes elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed by that dominant group.”⁸ You may have heard of high-profile instances of artists or celebrities engaging in cultural appropriation, but cultural appropriation happens on a smaller-scale as well. One specific example is the idea that one might dress up for Halloween as an “Indian” (Native American) or even as a beloved Disney “character” like Pocahontas. Culture is not a costume for white people to put on. Cultural appropriation is harmful because it isolates a single part of culture from its full historical and contemporary expression, including oftentimes the oppression or violence that was imposed by the dominant group.

In many mainstream cases in our capitalist society, the person or company doing the cultural appropriation profits financially from what has been taken. This reality emphasizes the sense of entitlement that comes with power and privilege. Even if one is not profiting, it is still inappropriate and unjust to benefit from something that others developed, or that fails to communicate the full truth about another culture. It is important to put cultural appropriation in the correct context: Cultural appropriation is a manifestation of the white supremacy that dominates our society. We should see instances of cultural appropriation as an entry point to examine structural racism in our social and political systems.

Racial **microaggressions** receive their name as the counterpart to “macro-aggressions” which are the large, open acts of racism that are more blatant and more readily identified. Microaggressions are “the everyday verbal or nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults,
continued on next page

Words of Wisdom

In this country American means white.

Everybody else has to hyphenate.”

— Toni Morrison

Other Manifestations cont.

intentional or unintentional, to communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to members of a marginalized identity group.”⁹ Racial microaggressions often come from well-meaning white people who do not consciously realize the bias that they are communicating and its harmful effects. Despite not intending to offend – in some cases even intending to compliment – racial microaggressions do harm people of color by demeaning them or communicating that they do not fit in.

Some examples of racial microaggressions include: “You’re so articulate” and “Where are you *really* from?” which subtly communicate the idea that you expect people of color to be less educated or that a person of color’s ethnicity makes them belong in their community less. Microaggressions are also widely present in the workplace – even in the progressive or faith-based environments that pride themselves on being racially inclusive. Some examples of racial microaggressions in the workplace include imbalanced standards of professional dress (including how a Black woman must style her hair), and comments about alleged “colorblindness” or expressing lack of responsibility for hiring a diverse staff with comments such as “people of color just don’t apply to these jobs.”

Racial microaggressions must be identified and interrupted in order to limit their harm. Some ways to address a microaggression that you have heard or seen somebody else communicate to a person of color are: asking what they meant by that, reflecting what they said back to them, or telling them how you felt when you heard their words or saw their actions.¹⁰ If we do not identify and interrupt microaggressions, they will continue to reinforce existing racial power dynamics

The **white savior complex** refers to the dominant narrative that often shows up in Hollywood movies of a white person who single-handedly helps or saves people of color. For example, the Oscar winning movies *The Blind Side* and *The Help*. Because of the structural racism that pervades our culture and our political and economic systems, it is tempting for white people to fit stories and experiences into the white savior narrative. This is a problem in movies as well as everyday experiences, and the framing of volunteer projects and mission trips deserve special scrutiny. Not only is the white savior complex factually inaccurate, it is unjust and perpetuates the racial hierarchy.

The white savior complex works to conceal the structural inequality that exists and exaggerate the effects of one white person’s involvement while minimizing the agency, expertise, and accomplishments of people of color. All people of faith are called to work for justice and serve those in need. Additionally, white people of faith are called to resist narratives that glorify white people while oversimplifying the truth and obscuring systemic oppression against people of color.

The Catholic Church’s Response to Racism

Because NETWORK is an organization founded by Catholic Sisters to promote Catholic Social Justice, we wanted to briefly address the way race and racism manifest within the Catholic Church in the United States. Overwhelmingly, the predominant narrative of Catholics in the United States centers on European Catholic immigrants to the United States who were initially despised, but due to hard work and individual virtue eventually gained acceptance in white culture. Even today, when we look at Catholic leaders – from institutional leaders of the Church to the news and other media – the prevailing representation is white. This erases the existence of Black Catholics, Latinx Catholics, Native

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Church Response cont.

American Catholics, Asian Catholics and more. (It also avoids naming the role the Catholic Church played in colonialism around the world).

In late 2018, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops released a new pastoral letter on racism called “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love.” It follows an earlier pastoral letter from 1979, “Brothers and Sisters to Us,” and in many ways is more specific than its predecessor in naming the oppression of African-American, Native American, and Hispanic people in our society. Many praised the letter, however, other analysis found the document too focused on the personal nature of racism instead of the structural and institutional aspects. Other readers identified numerous places where the letter failed to hold colonizers and other white people who oppressed people of color accountable.

The process of writing the letter also identified some of the shortcomings in the leadership of the U.S. Catholic Church when it comes to dealing with race. The Bishops rejected an amendment to the letter that would condemn the display of the Confederate flag as a symbol of hate because some view it “as a sign of heritage.”¹¹ This process – and that particular vote – highlighted the reality that the Bishops placed the comfort and “heritage” of white, southern Catholics over the comfort and safety of Black Catholics – and Black Americans everywhere.

Looking at how the Church has worked to address racism, prompts several questions: For one, why are there so few letters spaced more than 50 years apart, on the topic of racism? What is the Church in the U.S. doing to ensure the issue is addressed in each individual church? And where is the urgency?

Encountering Race and Racism

There are no easy answers here. We are not going to “solve racism” or become perfect at discussing race by the time this journey concludes. There is no checkbox to mark for white people that says you’re not racist. In a racist society that has been structured to benefit white people and disadvantage people of color, the act of promoting racial justice must be a constant. White people must continuously choose to think and act in ways that oppose white supremacy in all its forms, even when not doing so would be to your benefit. In the following chapters, we will begin to examine some of these historical and contemporary structures that enforced and continue to perpetuate white supremacy.

Sources

1. Massingale (2010). *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. p. 41
2. Massingale (2010). *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. p. 24
3. Dr. Maluna Karenga
4. <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/illumination/documents/institutionalized-oppression-definitions.pdf>
5. http://www.euroamerican.org/Library/Resources/Occupy/White_Priv_Terms_Resources.pdf
6. Developed by NETWORK staff based on multiple sources.
7. http://lgbtq.unc.edu/sites/lgbtq.unc.edu/files/documents/intersectionality_en.pdf
8. <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/cultural-appropriation-wrong/>
9. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life>
10. <https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/gretakenney-interrupting-microaggressions.pdf>
11. <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/11/14/us-bishops-adopt-new-anti-racism-letter-first-almost-40-years>

You can find the USCCB pastoral letters on racism here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/>

We Pray

The Courage to Be Your Love

God of Justice, we give you thanks for your great glory. God of Love, we give you thanks for your great mercy. We pray that you will help us to see all your children veiled in the dignity of love.

God, we acknowledge the current times. The times of growing fears, growing violence, and growing hate. This world needs your love. Give us the courage to be your love.

God, we acknowledge the child who lost their mother because of our broken immigration system. Our children need your love. Give us the courage to be your love.

God, we acknowledge the parent who lost their child because of our broken criminal justice system. Our parents need your love. Give us the courage to be your love.

God, we acknowledge the youth who are left to bear the pain of our broken racial systems. Our youth need your love. Give us the courage to be your love.

God, we acknowledge the oppressors who have been given positions of power. They need your love. Give us the courage to be your love.

God, I acknowledge my responsibility to my sisters and brothers in the current times and in the future. I need your love. Give me the courage to be your love.

Amen.

Written by Edith Avila Olea, Justice and Peace Associate Director at the Diocese of Joliet in Illinois.

El Valor de Ser Tu Amor

Dios de Justicia, te damos gracias por tu gran gloria. Dios de Amor, te damos gracias por tu gran misericordia. Oramos para que nos ayudes a ver a todos tus hijos cubiertos en la dignidad de tu amor.

Dios, reconocemos los tiempos actuales. Los crecientes tiempos de miedo, violencia y odio. Este mundo necesita de tu amor. Danos el valor de ser tu amor.

Dios, reconocemos al niño que perdió a su madre debido a nuestro incierto sistema de inmigración. Nuestros hijos necesitan de tu amor. Danos el valor de ser tu amor.

Dios, reconocemos a los padres que perdieron a sus hijos debido a nuestro incierto sistema de justicia penal. Nuestros padres necesitan de tu amor. Danos el valor de ser tu amor.

Dios, reconocemos a los jóvenes que quedan para soportar el dolor de nuestros inciertos sistemas raciales. Nuestra juventud necesita de tu amor. Danos el valor de ser tu amor.

Dios, reconocemos a los opresores que han recibido posiciones de poder. Ellos necesitan de tu amor. Danos el valor de ser tu amor.

Dios, reconozco mi responsabilidad hacia mis hermanos y hermanas en los tiempos actuales y en los tiempos futuros. Necesito de tu amor. Dame el valor de ser tu amor.

Amén.

Por Edith Avila Olea, la Directora Asociada de Justicia y Paz en la Diócesis de Joliet en Illinois.

Reflection Questions

1. What are some ways that my attitudes or beliefs have been shaped by “whiteness”? How have I accepted/internalized those messages? Is it difficult for me to examine this impartially and why?
2. Which definition was the easiest to understand or agree with? Which one was the most challenging?
3. Think of when you witnessed cultural appropriation. What, if anything, alerted you to the damaging effects of cultural appropriation?
4. What do you think about the Catholic Church’s official responses to racism? What is one instance when the Church could have taken a stronger position or concrete action to oppose racism?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- *White Fragility*
June 26, 2018
www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/566247/white-fragility-by-robin-diangelo/9780807047415

Robin DiAngelo’s book explores the counterproductive reactions white people have when their assumptions about race are challenged, and how these reactions maintain racial inequality.

- “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
July/August, 1989
www.nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack

Peggy McIntosh’s much-cited article comes from her intention to identify some of the daily effects of white privilege in her life and describe these advantages.

- “American Racism in the ‘White Frame’”
July 27, 2015
www.opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/27/american-racism-in-the-white-frame

An interview conducted by George Yancy, professor of philosophy at Emory University, with Joe Feagin, sociologist and author of *The White Racial Frame*. The two discuss the extent and influence of the “white racial frame” on white people and people of color.

- “Dear White America”
December 24, 2015
www.opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/12/24/dear-white-america/

George Yancy, professor of philosophy at Emory University, wrote this column to summarize concepts that came up over 19 interviews he conducted on race (including the one linked above with Joe Feagin). In the incisive column, Yancy calls on white people to find the vulnerability to face their own racism and stop avoiding responsibility for their racism and its effects.

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Additional Resources cont.

- “What’s Wrong with Cultural Appropriation? These 9 Answers Reveal Its Harm”
December 24, 2015

www.everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/cultural-appropriation-wrong/

Maisha Z. Johnson defines cultural appropriation and describes the very real reasons why it is so harmful to people of color.

- “The Messiness of Microaggressions”
October 10, 2017

www.youngclergywomen.org/the-messiness-of-microaggressions

Shavon Starling-Louis introduces herself as a young(ish) clergy woman, African-American woman, mother, and pastor at Providence Presbyterian Church. Starling-Louis then goes on to describe the “messiness” of racial microaggressions in her ministry and experiences as a person of faith.

- “Did you really just say that?”
January 2017

www.apa.org/monitor/2017/01/microaggressions

Rebecca A. Clay provides advice on how to confront microaggressions, whether you’re a target, bystander or perpetrator.

- “Sister Antona Ebo’s lifelong struggle against white supremacy, inside and outside the Catholic Church”
November 22, 2017

www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/22/sister-antona-ebos-lifelong-struggle-against-white-supremacy-inside-and-outside

This profile of Sr. Antona Ebo demonstrates the racism she faced within the church during her life as a woman religious, as well as her dedication to her faith and to opposing racism.

- “The Bishops’ letter fails to recognize that racism is a white problem”
February 20, 2019

www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/faith-seeking-understanding/bishops-letter-fails-recognize-racism-white-problem

Father Daniel Horan critiques the USCCB’s letter on racism “Open Wide Our Hearts” for failing to openly acknowledge that racism is a white problem and that systemic racism benefits white folk to the disadvantage of people of color.

- “The History of Black Catholics in America”
June 7, 2018

www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-black-catholics-in-america-180969271

An in-depth look at the history of Black Catholics in the United States, read this piece from Smithsonian Magazine about the ways Black Catholics both challenged the Church’s racism and contributed much to the Church.

Watch

- “The Urgency of Intersectionality”
October 2016

www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

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Additional Resources cont.

Kimberlé Crenshaw is a civil rights advocate and a leading scholar of critical race theory, contributing foundational works to two fields of study that have come to be known by terms she coined: critical race theory and intersectionality. In this TED talk which lasts 19 minutes, Crenshaw explains the meaning of the term “intersectionality” which she developed to address the fact that many social justice problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice.

- “Why ‘I’m not racist’ is only half the story”
October 1, 2018
www.youtube.be/kzLT54QjclA

Robin DiAngelo, author of *White Fragility*, explains how the good/bad binary makes it impossible for white people to recognize and acknowledge their racial bias and leads to white defensiveness. She concludes the 6:30 minute video by saying that this defensiveness and unwillingness to acknowledge race preserves the current racial hierarchy.

- “White Savior: The Movie Trailer”
February 21, 2019
www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_RTnuJvg6U

The *Late Show with Seth Myers* created this six minute video satirizing how many movies have used the “white savior” narrative, and their commercial success.

Listen

- With Friends Like These Podcast: “White Fragility 101”
August 24, 2018
www.crooked.com/podcast/white-fragility-101

Ana Marie Cox talks with Robin DiAngelo, author of *White Fragility*, who shares white fragility is, and the impact that it has on all white people and white progressives in particular. During the 55 minute podcast episode, they also discuss how white women often fail to be allies for people of color.

CHAPTER 2

The Origins of the Racial Wealth and Income Gap

Our advocacy for policies that mend the gaps in income and wealth inequality would be incomplete if we did not examine the role of racism in our laws and its effects on our nation today. One striking result of racism in our policies is the racial wealth gap in our country.

The median wealth gap between Black and white families in the United States is significant – and still on the rise. In 2016, more than fifty years after the Civil Rights movement won the passage of the Civil Rights Act, white families had 10 times the wealth of Black families.¹ This massive difference in wealth is no accident, and it will continue if we do not actively work to dismantle these policies. That work begins by recognizing that generations of racist federal policies created and sustained the racial wealth gap.

By gaining an understanding about how federal policies strategically kept wealth and income from Black families and other families of color while funneling wealth to white families, we will begin to see how policies created this problem and how just, inclusive policies can fix it. In the pages ahead, we will study laws and programs that disproportionately benefitted white people – and harmed people of color – throughout our nation’s history. These policies and their descriptions come from NETWORK’s Racial Wealth and Income Gap workshop, which was created in collaboration with our partners Bread for the World (www.networkadvocates.org/RWIG).

The Difference between Wealth and Income

An obvious factor in financial well-being is a person or family’s ability to preserve and accumulate wealth in the long term. Historically, this ability has been tied closely to race in the United States and we can see the long-term effects of that legacy in our nation’s racial wealth gap today. As racial disparities in income continue to persist in our nation, the racial wealth gap between Black and white families has worsened over the last few decades. The difference between wealth and income is important to grasp here.

Income refers to one’s current earnings. Income contributes to the creation of wealth, but is not the same as wealth. **Wealth** is total assets accumulated over time (what you have) minus liabilities (what you owe).

Wealth has both a generative and a generational nature. Wealth helps to achieve larger financial gains, and therefore has the capacity to grow over time and pass along through generations. This makes it possible for people of color with high incomes today to still experience the racial wealth gap – because laws and society prohibited their ancestors from accumulating wealth and passing it on. For example, racist policies implemented throughout our nation’s history that did not allow Black people to own property blocked access to the largest driver of wealth: homeownership.

By seeing these policies laid out, we hope that you will be able to gain insight into how the racial wealth and income gap came to be – from the very laws that created these divides. The following federal policies implemented throughout our nation’s history legislated intentional lack of investment of Black families and communities. These policies created

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Difference cont.

and perpetuated white supremacy in the very fabric of our nation's laws and governance, much of which is still present to this day. By shining a light on these policies, we hope to reveal the compounded impact of these policies over time. Ultimately, we must undo the mindset of the traditional American Dream, that "if you work hard enough and play by the rules you will achieve success," and recognize that our history and current laws means that narrative does not apply to everyone.

Policies that Contributed to the Racial Wealth and Income Gap

1619–1860

SLAVE CODES, THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT, AND AMERICAN CHATTEL SLAVERY

Early on in our country's history, the implementation of several state and federal legal measures (such as slave codes and the Fugitive Slave Act) created a difference between racialized groups. The slave codes established "servitude for natural life" for enslaved African people. This – 250+ years of labor of millions of enslaved African and Black people – was the foundation for the U.S. economy and the global force that it eventually became. On the eve of the Civil War, the value of enslaved Black people was estimated at \$3.6 billion (not scaled for modern inflation).

1865–1880

ANDREW JOHNSON'S LAND POLICIES AND SHARECROPPING

After the Civil War, only 30,000 Black people owned small plots of land, compared to 4 million who did not because of the 1865 federal policy that rescinded the promise of 40 acres of land for slaves. These 4 million Black people largely resorted to renting farmland from their previous slave owner in exchange for a "share" of their crop. This system of "sharecropping" tied farmers to their former owners because they were legally obligated to BUY all farming materials (usually at higher prices) and SELL their farming crop solely to them (usually at lower prices).

1865–1960s

LAND SEIZURES

Black people were legally at risk of having their land seized for nearly a 100-year period from 1865 to the 1960s, in part due to the sharecropping debt that many Black farmers found themselves in. Additionally, white landowners could arbitrarily declare that Black farmers or business owners were in debt at any time, which would result in Black people losing their land. Black people could not contest these charges since they were legally unable to fight against white people in court.

1934

THE NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

This policy guaranteed loans to white people and legally refused loans to Black people and anyone who chose to live near Black neighborhoods. This practice, known as "redlining," targeted entire Black neighborhoods and labeled them "Grade D." This made it nearly impossible for appraisers in the private sector to do business in

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Using "Black" or "African-American" when talking about race:

You may notice that we tend to use the word "Black" more commonly than "African-American" when describing a group of people in our writing. While African-American has been used to highlight the origin of people who were forcibly brought to the United States through the slave trade, in today's society it is too narrow to encompass the experiences of all who are subject to structural disadvantages against Black people. Read more about this from the [Urban Institute](http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/say-african-american-or-black-first-acknowledge-persistence-structural-racism) at www.urban.org/urban-wire/say-african-american-or-black-first-acknowledge-persistence-structural-racism.

Words of Wisdom

At the onset of the Civil War, our stolen bodies were worth four billion dollars, more than all of American industry, all of American railroads, workshops, and factories combined, and the prime product rendered by our stolen bodies—cotton—was America's primary export."

— Ta-Nehisi Coates,
Between the World and Me, 2015

Policies cont.

these areas, because Black neighborhoods were considered “bad credit risks.” It was difficult, if not impossible, for Black prospective homeowners to purchase a home anywhere other than existing Black neighborhoods. This policy also sometimes resulted in Black people paying double or triple to buy a contract from a white person to pay the mortgage on a house that legally was not in their name. Meanwhile, Black people were making payments to secure their chances of being able to own their home, while still not receiving any equity on the payments toward that home.

1935 THE WAGNER ACT

The Wagner Act, officially known as the National Labor Relations Act, is regarded as the most important piece of U.S. labor legislation in the 20th century. The main purpose of the Act was to establish the legal right for workers to join labor unions, organize, and use collective bargaining power with their employers. It helped millions of white workers enter the middle class for decades to come. However, the Wagner Act intentionally excluded agricultural and domestic workers from the right to unionize and allowed unions to exclude people of color, thus denying people of color access to higher-wage jobs and union benefits like healthcare, retirement funds, and job security.

1935– present THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

Although Social Security was meant to help those adversely affected by the Great Depression, and Black people were twice as likely to experience hunger or poverty during this time, 65% of Black people were ineligible to receive this income support. Social Security was designed in such a way that excluded farmworkers and domestic workers—who were predominantly Black—from receiving “old-age” and “unemployment” insurance. All farmworkers and domestic workers were included in Social Security by 1954 through coverage expansions.

Looking Forward

These federal policies, from chattel slavery through to the present day, are just the beginning of how our laws created the racial wealth and income gap. We will continue examining structural racism in the present day that keeps Black families from opportunities for economic advancement, further exacerbating disparities in wealth and income along racial lines.

Sources

1. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/reports/2018/02/21/447051/systematic-inequality/#fn-447051-9>

Take Action

Be intentional about how you wield your economic power at any level. When purchasing goods or services, seek out Black-owned businesses to patronize. Exercise your economic activism!

We Pray

God, just and merciful, you alone are the Lord of Justice and Mercy. We turn to you.

Throughout time, your children have cried out to you when seeking mercy amidst injustice. We know the movement of your hand as it calms the waters, steadies the step, and illumines the path through difficult journeys.

God, just and merciful, we turn to you.
Clear our vision, Lord.

Your son, Jesus of Nazareth, stood before a cross knowing the assault of lies, the weight of shackles, the sting of scourging, the absence of respect, the pangs of exhaustion, the judgment of unjust systems, the apathy of others.

God, just and merciful, we turn to you.
Encourage our hearts, Lord.

For generations, your children of color have stood before crosses in this land nurtured by their blood and tears. Their descendants know the assault of health disparities, the weight of redlining, the sting of hiring discrimination, the absence of fair housing, the pangs of rights denied, the judgment of unjust wages, the apathy of many.

God, just and merciful, we turn to you.
Guide our steps, Lord.

Our nation's original sin is a complex web of crosses built on the idols of racism and white privilege. Until this painful and shameful past is reconciled, tomorrow will be as today.

God, just and merciful, we turn to you.
Inspire our actions, Lord.

Dismantling these idols requires the change of hearts, minds, laws, and practices. May this arduous task be rooted in your justice and mercy.

God, just and merciful, we turn to you.
Heal our nation, Lord.

Amen.

Written by Leslye Colvin, NETWORK Board Member

Reflection Questions

1. Had you heard of any of these policies before? Were any new to you? What surprised you reading about these laws?
2. Do any of these policies play a role in your own family story? Did your ancestors benefit or miss opportunities for economic advancement?
3. How did each of the policies described serve to benefit white families?
4. Think about the racial wealth gap around you. What Black-owned businesses do you know in your community? Do you shop at stores or websites owned by people of color? Is the easiest example for you to think of a restaurant? What about other types of businesses? What is challenging about this thought exercise?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- “Wealth inequality has widened along racial, ethnic lines since end of Great Recession”
December 12, 2014

www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gaps-great-recession

This report from the Pew Research Center summarizes how the housing and financial crises have continued to disproportionately impact people of color, even after economic recovery from the recession is well underway.

- “Extensive Data Shows Punishing Reach of Racism for Black Boys”
March 19, 2018

www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html

This *New York Times* article demonstrates the staggering discrepancy in income levels between Black men and white men who grew up in similar economic circumstances.

- “What We Get Wrong About Closing the Racial Wealth Gap”
April 2018

www.socialequity.duke.edu/sites/socialequity.duke.edu/files/site-images/FINAL%20COMPLETE%20REPORT_.pdf

Duke University and the Insight Center for Community Economic Development published this report which provides statistics on how the racial wealth and income gap has developed, and will continue to develop based on present policies.

- “Mapping the Lasting Effects of Redlining”
March 20, 2015

www.citylab.com/equity/2015/03/mapping-the-lasting-effects-of-redlining/388333/

By combining old federal maps and recent Census data, it is easy to see how today’s poverty rates align with racist 1930s mortgaging policies.

- “A second look at Social Security’s racist origins”
June 3, 2013

www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/06/03/a-second-look-at-social-securitys-racist-origins

While competing interpretations of history disagree on whether or not Southern legislators voted for the Social Security Act of 1935 on the condition that it did not cover farmworkers and domestic workers, the effect of the legislation was that it excluded those categories, which represented two-thirds of Black workers in the South at the time.

continued on next page

*Additional Resources cont.***Watch**

- 13th
September 30, 2016
www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/10/06/ava-duvernays-netflix-film-13th-reveals-how-mass-incarceration-is-an-extension-of-slavery/

**13th is available to watch with a Netflix subscription*

This full-length documentary directed by Ava DuVernay explores the intersection of race, justice, and mass incarceration in the United States. The film addresses many of the policies described in NETWORK's **Racial Wealth and Income Gap** workshop.

- Explained: “The Racial Wealth and Income Gap”
May 23, 2018
www.vox.com/2018/5/23/17377084/racial-wealth-gap-explained-netflix

**Vox Explained is also available to watch with a Netflix subscription*

This 16 minute video examines how “past [racial] injustices breed present suffering” — especially when it comes to wealth.

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CHAPTER 3

Perpetuating the Racial Wealth and Income Gap In Our Policies

Until the election of President Trump, many people seemed to believe that racist policies were only written into outdated laws that had been rightly overturned. History books tell us that after the Civil War, Black people earned more political and economic rights under the law and into the turn of the 20th century. But, structural racism didn't stop after the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s only to pick up again more than 50 years later. The reality tells a different story.

Now, we will now look at federal policies in place throughout the 20th century and into the present day that have exacerbated economic inequality between Black and white families. We'll learn more about the many institutional barriers that exacerbated the wealth and income gap in the modern age.

Many of the policies below were implemented in living memory – perhaps you, a family member, or a friend experienced their effects. In fact, many of these laws are touchstones that one might look at fondly, perhaps because their family benefitted or because on the surface the policy appeared to advance the common good unequivocally.

We are examining this legislation and how these laws have shaped society because people (white people in particular) are not always aware of structural racism and the ways policies benefit some at the expense of others. It is much easier to identify racism as a hateful act or physical violence. But structural racism is pervasive and continues to endure in our halls of power to this day. It is important to understand that it is not just about whether *people* harbor racist beliefs, but also how we can allow and uphold racist *policies* that have lasting negative effects. These who benefit cannot absolve themselves of the responsibility to dismantle policies that do harm and provide restitution for these injustices.

Additional Policies that Contributed to the Racial Wealth and Income Gap

1938

THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

This was enacted to help bolster the economy out of the Great Depression, but **excluded a number of tip-based professions predominantly held by Black workers** — including servers, shoe shiners, domestic workers, and Pullman porters — from the first minimum-wage protections. Even though both the Black unemployment and poverty rate were twice the rate of white people during the Great Depression, the **very policies meant to alleviate economic strain were often withheld from the Black community**, making it harder to build wealth in the future.

1944

THE G.I. BILL

After World War II, this bill was enacted to help veterans adjust to civilian life by providing low-cost home mortgages, low-interest business loans, tuition assistance, *continued on next page*

Policies cont.

and unemployment compensation. By virtue of the housing market being virtually closed to Black prospective homeowners, Black veterans could not benefit from one of the bill's greatest benefits. **On top of this, many of the benefits distributed were intentionally withheld from Black service members.**

1954– present

END OF THE SEPARATE BUT EQUAL DOCTRINE

Despite the “separate but equal” doctrine being overturned in 1954, **American schools are more racially segregated today than they have been in the past four decades.** Academic success is less probable in predominately low-income Black neighborhoods, since Black students are seven times more likely to live in areas of concentrated poverty, and attend underfunded, understaffed, and overcrowded schools. This leaves Black students with limited education and little choice but working minimum-wage jobs that have few opportunities for economic advancement.

1956

THE FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY ACT

Over three decades, 48,000 miles of road and highways were built in an attempt to connect suburbs and rural areas to the city for the purposes of commerce and jobs. This resulted in “white flight” to the suburbs, as workers did not have to rely on proximity or public transportation to get to work. Additionally, the locations chosen for the highways often caused the destruction of predominant Black neighborhoods and neighborhoods with other communities of color in the name of urban renewal.

1970s– present

SUBPRIME LOANS

Starting in the 1970's and continuing today, the private sector issued subprime loans almost exclusively to Black families, regardless of income, credit score, or financial history. As a result, Black families continued to unfairly pay more money for homes of the same value as their white counterparts, causing rates of foreclosure among Black families to increase.

1971– present

THE WAR ON DRUGS

The War on Drugs exacerbated the racial wealth gap with practices that inherently targeted Black and brown communities. Although rates of drug use and selling are similar across racial lines, Black men are up to 10 times as likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, prosecuted, convicted and incarcerated for drug law violations than white men. The lifelong penalties from having a drug conviction have prohibited millions from voting, gaining employment at well-paying jobs, and accessing public assistance amongst a multitude of other cultural, social, and institutional consequences.

“Law and Order” A Racist Dog Whistle:

When politicians or others use the phrase “law and order” it may be meant as a racist dog whistle. *Merriam Webster* defines **dog whistle** as “a coded message communicated through words or phrases commonly understood by a particular group of people, but not by others.”

In this case, when someone uses “law and order”, it is a way of signaling one’s support for harsh law enforcement that targets people of color. This meaning comes from understanding the history of Southern elected officials and law enforcement who opposed the Civil Rights movement’s nonviolent actions by calling them a “breakdown of law and order.” President Trump’s use of the phrase, following the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, is concerning to many people.

Words of Wisdom

We built highways and railways and airports that literally carved up communities, leaving bulldozed homes, broken dreams, and, in fact, sapping many families of the one asset they had: their home."

— Anthony Foxx,
former U.S. Secretary of Transportation

The Cost of These Policies

The racial wealth and income gap is real. Decades of laws formed structural racism in our economics, politics, and society. In order to progress as a society with moral values, we must support policies that mend the racial wealth and income gap.

The policies of the past have lasting effects on the present day. By implementing policies that inherently disadvantaged people of color, our federal government blocked millions of Black families' opportunities to build wealth and achieve financial stability.

Today, we see the lingering effects of these policies in our work to mend the gaps in wealth and income, as well as access to democracy, healthcare, citizenship, and wages.

Take Action

The 12 policies examined in this chapter and the previous one come from our Racial Wealth and Income Gap Workshop (www.networkadvocates.org/RWIG). We created this resource in tandem with our partners from Bread for the World to help others better understand the racist policies that created the racial wealth and income gap in the U.S. The information included in this resource is best experienced in a group setting in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how racist policies have affected people's income and wealth accumulation for hundreds of years in the United States.

Host NETWORK's Racial Wealth and Income Gap workshop for members of your community or invite a member of the NETWORK staff to facilitate the workshop. Visit www.networkadvocates.org/RWIG for more information.

Working to Heal the Racial Wealth and Income Gap in Chicago

Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III is Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois and a Senior Fellow in the Auburn Seminary Seniors Fellow Program. Rev. Dr. Moss has spent the last two decades practicing and preaching a Black theology that unapologetically calls attention to the problems of mass incarceration, environmental justice, and economic inequality.

In 2017, Trinity United Church of Christ dedicated Imani Village, a site designed for housing, healthcare, youth recreation, and a five-acre farm that will employ returning citizens. Through Imani Village, Rev. Moss and Trinity United Church of Christ are creating opportunities for health and economic security in their neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago.

Watch Rev. Otis Moss speak about the importance of understanding the African diaspora and honoring the ancestors who were enslaved: www.facebook.com/NowThisNews/videos/239382883533110.

We Pray

For Grace to Serve

It is Your joy to serve.
Thank you for Your service.
Show me where you want me to serve
Give me the ability to serve

Let me serve and make my heart pure to everyone.

It is Your joy to sacrifice
Thank you for Your sacrifice
Show me what you want me to sacrifice
Give me the ability to sacrifice
Let me sacrifice and make my heart pure to everyone.

It is Your joy to suffer
Thank you for Your suffering
Show me what you want me to suffer
Give me the ability to suffer
Let me suffer and make my heart pure to everyone.

Amen.

Written by Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL

Reflection Questions

1. Are there any places in your community where you can see the effects of any of these policies? Are there highways dividing neighborhoods, segregated school districts? Are there other ways these policies affect your life?
2. How have you witnessed or experience the difference in overt racist acts by individuals compared to the inherent racism in supporting policies that benefit the privileged over the many?
3. Can you identify any other policies that we did not address here that exacerbated the racial wealth and income gap?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- *The New Jim Crow*
January 5, 2010
www.newjimcrow.com

Michelle Alexander's book details the lasting impacts of segregation in United States race relations and culture, even after Jim Crow laws ceased to exist. Instead, Alexander describes how these impacts have continued to shape our society and further racial and economic stratification.

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Additional Resources cont.

- *Evicted*

March 1, 2016

www.evictedbook.com/books/evicted

Matthew Desmond writes about the frequency of evictions and the lack of affordable housing for low-income families. Desmond provides context of the history of housing policy in the U.S., impact of racist housing policies, and the relationship between access to homeownership and financial security.

- “The Racial Wealth Gap: Why Policy Matters”
2015

www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/RacialWealthGap_1.pdf

This report from Demos, a public policy organization, goes into extensive detail about how homeownership, education, and labor markets can contribute to the racial wealth and income gap that we’ve outlined above.

- “Implicit Bias tests”
2011

www.implicit.harvard.edu/implicit

These tests from Harvard help one to analyze how biased they may be on a variety of factors such as race, gender, sexuality, and other social indicators.

- “After the War: Blacks and the G.I. Bill”
February 2015

www.americanexperience.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/After-the-War-Blacks-and-the-GI-Bill.pdf

The Smithsonian American Art Museum explicitly illustrates the disparity in G.I. bill recipients along racial lines, thus impacting economic status.

- “How the GI Bill Left Out African Americans”
November 11, 2013

www.demos.org/blog/11/11/13/how-gi-bill-left-out-african-americans

This brief article from Demos summarizes how Black veterans were not able to use GI benefits available to other white veterans.

- “The Inequality Hidden Within the Race-Neutral G.I. Bill”
September 18, 2017

www.daily.jstor.org/the-inequality-hidden-within-the-race-neutral-g-i-bill

From JSTOR Daily, this article demonstrates the segregation that resulted after the implementation of the GI bill, bolstering economic success for white veterans while leaving Black ones behind.

- “The Role of Highways in American Poverty”
March 18, 2016

www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/03/role-of-highways-in-american-poverty/474282/

Alana Semuels catalogues how cities used federal funds available to not only build highways in their cities, but also demolish Black neighborhoods, and the negative consequences of those decisions.

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Additional Resources cont.

- “Race, Wealth and Taxes: How the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Supercharges the Racial Wealth Divide”
October 2018

www.prosperitynow.org/resources/race-wealth-and-taxes

The 2017 GOP Tax Law only enforces the racial wealth and income gap – this report provides statistics and information as to how.

- Poor People’s Campaign
2017

<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>

The Poor People’s Campaign is a “national call for moral revival” which organizes and educates about the effects of systemic racism in the United States, especially as it relates to poverty.

Watch

- “We need to talk about an injustice”
March 2012

www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice

Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, delivers this TED Talk about the importance and power of identity, especially with his family history of enslavement, and how history has impacted racial identity. As a lawyer who works in the criminal justice system, he discusses central legal questions of race and crime in his talk which is 23 minutes long.

- “We Must Talk About Race to Fix Economic Inequality”
March 12, 2016

www.youtube.com/watch?v=caarVAS40jQ&

This 4-minute video from Demos expresses how politics often uses coded language to reinforce racial stereotypes, and thus continue the racial wealth and income gap among those lines.

Listen

- On Being –Who We Want to Become: Beyond the New Jim Crow
April 12, 2016

<https://onbeing.org/programs/michelle-alexander-who-we-want-to-become-beyond-the-new-jim-crow/>

This episode of On Being features lawyer Michelle Alexander, the author of *The New Jim Crow*, and how we can realize our collective responsibility and capacity for bringing about racial justice.

CHAPTER 4

The Legacy of Injustices Against Native Americans

A Nation Built on Stolen Land

As we examine racism and recommit to racial justice this Lent, it is vital that we address the attempted systematic destruction of the Native peoples of North America by colonizers, both ancient and modern. The United States was built on a foundation of colonization, racism, and genocide. This is an original sin of our nation, but it is not just a sin of our past. Today, compared to the national population, Native Americans have significantly lower median incomes, lower homeownership, increasing health disparities, and twice the level of poverty. These outcomes are the effects of a system of white supremacy.

The Native experience is also one of rich tradition, faith, and resistance. Before colonizers landed on this continent, Native Americans organized themselves into tribal nations and powerful confederacies. The white reaction to the cultural and political power of Native Americans has been genocide legitimized by the creation of legal authority and institutional control. This system of white supremacy continues in the United States to this day.

From the first interactions with Native Americans to the modern day, white colonizers in North America have worked toward one thing: theft. Theft of land, theft of natural resources, theft of culture and identity. Racial justice demands that we recognize and remedy these thefts. This resource cannot comprehensively recount the entire history of Native Americans, but we hope that this will be a starting point to begin learning about the peoples our nation has attempted to make invisible.

White Supremacy Fuels the Destruction of Native Americans

Throughout history, white supremacy has demonstrated its power to reshape institutions and supersede legality. When President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, ordering the removal of all Native Americans from their tribal land to reservations, the Supreme Court initially attempted to side with the tribes, who had signed treaties that ensured their national sovereignty. President Jackson bypassed the courts, and bent the strength of federal institutions to further meet the needs of white supremacy. Between 1830 and 1850, President Jackson oversaw the forced relocation of 100,000 Native Americans at the hands of federal and local military forces, resulting in the loss of ancestral homelands and 15,000 deaths from exposure, disease, and starvation.¹ These death marches were white supremacy made manifest, and the legitimization of land theft was codified.

On December 26, 1862, six days before signing the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln ordered the hanging of 38 Dakota men – the largest mass execution in U.S. history. These men had taken part in a Native uprising in response to broken treaties. This is just one example of the racist legal system created to suppress and remove Native Americans. The United States created treaties promising to end the theft of Native land, allowed the treaties to be violated, and punished resistance, all while pushing Native Americans out of their homes and into smaller areas of land. White settlers desired gold, timber, buffalo, and land, so the legal systems and institutions adapted to steal it all from the tribes that depended on the land's resources for their survival.

White Supremacy Continues Harming Native Americans Today

Recently, NETWORK staff traveled to New Mexico and hosted a round table in Albuquerque to listen to Native American leaders and leaders in women's health, childcare, rural dental care, food security, and immigration sectors share their experience working to mend the gaps. New Mexico has a complex history of interactions between Native American tribes, European colonizers, and Spanish settlers which continues to shape the state today. New Mexicans also deal with a massive nuclear and uranium mining industry.

In the 20th Century, the U.S. government has repeatedly participated in and allowed the theft of Native land, resources, and identity. From the Manhattan Project through today, uranium is mined on or near tribal lands, often at the expense of the Navajo and Lakota peoples, leading to extensive uranium poisoning and land contamination.

New Mexico: Colonialism, the Nuclear Industry, and Hazardous Consequences

Today, New Mexico is the only state in the U.S. with what is considered a cradle-to-grave nuclear industry, meaning that every process of building nuclear weapons and sustaining nuclear energy occurs or has occurred in New Mexico. The New Mexico Environment Department lists 22 permitted hazardous waste sites in the state. This does not account for unpermitted sites, which also exist, including multiple hazardous waste sites related to uranium mining, milling, and processing. Many of the more recent siting decisions that have resulted in new sectors of the nuclear industrial complex in New Mexico have resulted because people in power have tempted poor communities overwhelmingly comprised of people of color with economic opportunities, many of which have resulted in death and disease, as was/is the case with uranium mining across indigenous communities in New Mexico. Eventually, New Mexicans, especially indigenous people, are blamed for this fate of willful participation, ultimately driving the status quo for expanding the nuclear industry in New Mexico, granting more federal funding to the state, thus making New Mexico more dependent on the federal government.

– Myrriah Gómez, Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium Steering Committee

Read Myrriah's full reflection online:

www.networkadvocates.org/recommittoracialjustice/downwinders

Legal and Cultural Destruction of Native Americans

After several successful Native uprisings led by warriors such as Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse, the federal government responded with a new method of legal theft. The Dawes Act of 1887 divided Native reservations into individual allotments and sold "excess" to white settlers. Tribes lost 90 million acres, nearly 2/3 of their land.² Native Americans were pressured to sell their land to white people, dividing community land into fragments. Later amendments to the law removed federal recognition of tribal governments. The legal destruction of Native tribes was complete, but white supremacy demanded the destruction of Native culture as well.

Boarding schools for Native children, often run by Christian organizations, were created to remove Native identities. At one such school, the motto was "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." Native children were required to cut their hair, wear uniforms, speak only English, and take Anglicized names. Until 1978, Native children could legally be kidnapped

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Words of Wisdom

Justice is not a flexible tool. Unless we all do our part to ensure that justice is applied equally to all human beings, we are a party to its abuse. We must stand together to protect the rights of others."

— Leonard Peltier, AIM Leader and Turtle Mountain Chippewa activist

Words of Wisdom

They claim this mother of ours, the earth, for their own and fence their neighbors away; they deface her with their buildings and their refuse. That nation is like a spring freshet that overruns its banks and destroys all who are in its path."

— Sitting Bull,
Hunkpapa Lakota leader

Destruction cont.

from their families by the U.S. government and forced to attend these boarding schools.³ During much of our nation's history, the federal government outlawed Native American religious practices as well. When Native Americans refused to have their culture stolen from them, the federal government responded with violence, exemplified by the Wounded Knee Massacre.

The Impact of Generations of Injustices

My name is Yvette Pino. I am a Native American woman. I have lived on the Laguna Pueblo almost my entire life. I am a part of the Mescalero Apache tribe. Because I have lived on the reservation my entire life, I have seen the issues that affect Native Americans first-hand. These issues involve alcohol, education, and foster care. I have seen these issues play out in those close to me, as well as in the community. I have seen the never-ending cycle of alcoholic use, the cycle of foster care, and education. People aren't challenged to pursue a higher education, because no one is there to do so. I love my community, it is a part of who I am but I cannot ignore these problems. I am an active participant in my parish community in Laguna, I have done volunteer work, I visited the nursing home often while my grandmother was alive and went to Mass with the residents. I feel the pain of my community, but I refuse to be a part of that cycle. I know God put me here for a reason. He has given me a strength to know that though these issues may seem like they cannot be overcome, that they will never go away, I know that with God, all things are possible.

I was put into foster care at a young age, for broken bones that could not easily be explained away. At sixteen months old I was put into my first, and only, foster home. I have been with the same family ever since, through the lows of court cases and lack of visits from my biological mom, to the highs of my graduating from a college preparatory high school and acceptance to Notre Dame. I know I am incredibly blessed to be where I am now, but though my story of being a foster kid is not a unique one, many children are not so lucky. They bounce from home to home, yearning for that love that every human being searches for. They do this until their parents are able to offer that support system, but if the parents make one mistake, back into foster care they go. They do this for years, sometimes until they come to the age of eighteen where they have very little resources to make the decision to go to college, and so the cycle continues. They may turn to alcohol to numb the pain and loneliness, have their own children but find because they were not shown love, they are unable to show love to their children. Then their children search for love outside of the home and may turn to drugs or alcohol.

Even though I am now going to college, and my brother is going to boarding school, my parents still struggle. This is all too common on the reservation and without the resources to send children to college, people on the reservation will remain here and feed the cycle of poverty.

- Yvette Pino, Mescalero Apache

Read Yvette's full reflection online:

www.networkadvocates.org/recommittoracialjustice/generations

Resistance and Hope

Native American resistance to the legal expression of white supremacy continues to this day. Much of modern Native resistance takes inspiration from the American Indian Move-

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Resistance cont.

ment of the 1970s, which temporarily repossessed the Native lands of Mount Rushmore, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and Alcatraz. In 2016, over 15,000 activists from the Standing Rock tribe and around the nation occupied tribal land that energy companies planned to use for the Dakota Access Pipeline. This group came together to protest the violation of treaties and the destruction of sacred land and resources. The federal government and corporate interests responded with beatings, attack dogs, and legal action. Once again, white supremacy overruled the concerns of Native peoples, but the #NoDAPL protest revitalized national focus on Native rights. The systems of white supremacy that damage Native Americans were revealed to the world.

In 2018, Representatives Deb Haaland (NM-01) and Sharice Davids (KS-03) became the first Native American women elected to Congress. While a sign of hope, this historic step toward representation is only the first. Racism against the Native peoples of our nation is not an issue of the past. The legal and institutional systems of white supremacy have had devastating impacts on Native American tribes, and those systems continue to this day. We must all recommit to racial justice for Native Americans and work to dismantle the systems of white supremacy.

A Historic Time to be Engaged

As one of two Native American Women ever elected to Congress, I know it is a historic time to be engaged in politics regardless of background. We have been elected to lead during a time of divisiveness; a time where white supremacy has been proliferated by the current administration, and, unfortunately, cited by some terrorists for their attacks. This has caused many issues, such as border security and those seeking asylum, to be blown out of proportion and grossly mischaracterized.

My colleagues and I took an oath on January 3rd and I did so solemnly with the understanding of what it means to stand up, speak out, and lead when others in elected office are abusing their power and not honoring their responsibilities to their constituents.

- Representative Deb Haaland (NM-01), Laguna Pueblo

Read Rep. Haaland's full reflection online:

www.networkadvocates.org/recommittoracialjustice/rephaaland

Sources

1. Prine Pauls, E. (1998). Trail of Tears. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Trail-of-Tears>
2. Picotte, T. (2017). The True Impact of The Dawes Act Of 1887. <http://blog.nativepartnership.org/the-true-impact-of-the-dawes-act-of-1887/>
3. Northern Plains Reservation Aid. (2019). Boarding Schools. http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/Page-Server?pagename=airc_hist_boardingschools

Take Action

Whose land are you on? Throughout our continent, before countries and states, vibrant and diverse tribes lived and cared for the land you are occupying. Learn more about the Native Land you are on at www.native-land.ca.

Think about how you might be able to incorporate this knowledge into your day-to-day life. Some ideas include incorporating into your personal or group prayer, or even beginning meetings with a description or a moment of silence to acknowledge the land you are occupying.

We Pray

Circle Dance of Oneness

Great Spirit, Our Creator,

Your Love flared forth in brilliant galaxies, stars, planets, Sun, Moon and Earth, where life was born. In time, a unique multi-species, multicultural community of life emerged, encircling our Earth home.

Blessed are You, God of all Creation.

In your goodness, you have made us aware of our interwoven oneness in the human family, and our kinship with all creatures in your Creation.

Yet in America, we witness deep historic wounds and divisions that continue to separate us as peoples, that alienate us from one another and all Creation. We are mindful of deep national wounds in our relations with the First Peoples who inhabited America for thousands of years before the arrival of European Conquistadors in the 1500s and Pilgrims in 1607.

We lament present day dominant racist structures that render “invisible” the Indigenous peoples of America.

We pray for conversion of our hearts and minds, that we may be open to learn from the wisdom, cultures, traditions and spirituality of Indigenous peoples, which have always been their strength, teaching them how to live in harmony.

We lament the “Doctrine of Discovery,” Papal Bulls and treaties that denied and assaulted the God-given human dignity, rights, traditions and lands of Indigenous peoples in America and beyond.

We pray for honest admission of historic sins as Christian Church that will lead to forgiveness, healing, restitution, and reconciliation within the institutional Church and with Indigenous peoples in this country.

We lament the colonization, slavery and genocide of Indigenous peoples in America carried out by agents of the sword and cross.

We pray for the grace to become true disciples of Christ in the midst of opposing forces, to help heal the wounds inflicted by our sinful infidelities, by our betrayal of Jesus Christ, His life, teachings and example. As people of faith, may we voice and advocate for the moral, ethical, spiritual and environmental justice imperatives in all government policy-making and legislation.

We lament the policies of Manifest Destiny and military-enforced removal of Indigenous peoples from traditional homelands and their relocation to detention camps in designated “Indian Territory,” where thousands died from disease, exposure, and starvation, in the Trail of Tears, and the Long Walk.

We pray for honesty and courage to confront and renounce white supremacist ideology, propaganda, hate speech and actions in our nation and communities, as we live out the vision of our essential oneness with all people as God’s family.

We lament the U.S. government’s failure to honor hundreds of peace treaties with Indigenous nations in America, while pursuing policies to destroy their basic economic survival and cultural identity, by killing off the buffalo, controlling all commodities and removing children from families into boarding schools.

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Prayer cont.

We pray for wisdom, guidance and perseverance to hold all elected officials accountable, to fulfill their responsibility to serve all people, especially the disadvantaged, to promote the common good in upholding democratic values, and to respect and care for God's Creation.

We lament modern day forms of colonization through corporate and government disregard for tribal sovereignty, appropriating tribal lands and rights for private profit-driven extraction of natural resources, impacting health and devastating indigenous lands, water, air, plants and animals, as seen at Standing Rock and the Keystone Pipeline.

We pray for wisdom and guidance for elected officials, local communities and concerned citizens to respect the sacred nature of water, land, wildlife and air as God's gifts to sustain all life, to enact strict national regulations and policies that protect all people's rights to clean water, air and land, to address challenges of climate change and promote transition to 100% renewable energy, while preventing corporate profiteering from commodification of water and extraction of natural resources.

Great Spirit, Your Love allures us into the Circle Dance of Oneness, as co-creators of the evolving future. In this Circle, may we learn to respect, honor and celebrate our diversity and differences as human family, with deepening awareness of our fundamental oneness. "Our circle is timeless, flowing. It is new life emerging from death – life winning out over death." (Lame Deer, Lakota)

Written by Sister Rose Marie Cecchini, MM, coordinator of the Office of Peace, Justice, and Creative Stewardship of the Gallup, NM diocese.

Reflection Questions

1. How often do you think about the impact that white supremacy has had on the Native American experience? Is this history or the continued struggle new to you?
2. How have you benefited from the attempted destruction of Native Americans by white colonizers, both ancient and modern?
3. How can you work for racial justice for Native Americans?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- "Tribal Nations and the United States"
January 15, 2015
http://www.ncai.org/tribalnations/introduction/Tribal_Nations_and_the_United_States_An_Introduction-web-.pdf

An introductory guide to the relationship between tribal governments and the U.S. released by the National Congress of American Indians. NCAI was founded in 1944 to represent the tribes and resist federal government pressure for termination of tribal rights and assimilation of their people.

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Additional Resources cont.

- “Disparities”

April 2018

<https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/>

A factsheet released by the Indian Health Service’s Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives detailing the current health disparities in Native American communities.

- “How Native Americans in the arts are preserving tradition in a changing world”

November 29, 2018

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/museums/la-et-cm-native-american-artists-20181129-htlstory.html>

A *Los Angeles Times* article that provides an overview of modern Native art from across the country. Features works from Eric Tippeconnic, Gerald Clarke Jr., Pamela J. Peters, and Bethany Yellowtail.

- *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*

January 22, 2019

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/316457/the-heartbeat-of-wounded-knee-by-david-treuer/9781594633157/>

Native history didn’t end after the massacre at Wounded Knee. Written by Ojibwe author David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* melds history and memoir to tell the story of an era of Native activism that informs the social justice movements of today.

Watch

- “America’s Native Prisoners of War”

September 2010

https://www.ted.com/talks/aaron_huey

Photojournalist Aaron Huey’s TED Talk on Native American history and his time on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Huey’s photos include material that may be disturbing to some.

- “Honor the Treaties: A film by Eric Becker”

August 6, 2012

<https://vimeo.com/47043218>

Short documentary about Arron Huey’s work at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, featuring artist Shepard Fairey.

- “Dig It If You Can”

April 20, 2018

<https://vimeo.com/265766082>

Kyle Bell’s documentary about Kiowa-Choctaw artist Steven Paul Judd.

- “Bunky Echo-Hawk”

June 27, 2016

<https://www.nativeartsandcultures.org/bunky-echo-hawk>

Profile of Pawnee-Yakama artist Bunky Echo-Hawk from Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. Includes video of Echo-Hawk’s live painting performance.

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Additional Resources cont.

- “Dakota 38”
September 28, 2012
<http://www.smoothfeather.com/dakota38>

This feature length documentary tells the story of the executed Dakota 38 and the yearly Reconciliation Ride that promotes reconciliation between Native Americans and white people. **This documentary has graphic violent historical imagery.*

Listen

- “American Indian Boarding Schools Haunt Many” and “American Indian School a Far Cry from the Past”
May 2008
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16516865>
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17645287>

A two-part series from NPR on the historical and modern impact of American Indian Boarding Schools.

CHAPTER 5

The Impact of Racism on U.S. Immigration Past and Present

Words of Wisdom

A broken immigration system means broken families and broken lives.”

— Jose Antonio Vargas

The history of migration and immigration in the United States is one of the dominant forces shaping our experience of race today. While immigration for “white” Europeans has, for the most part, led to a smooth welcome into dominant society, immigrants who are people of color face a more difficult path to acceptance, much less belonging, in our nation. It is common to refer to the United States as a nation of immigrants, but the reality is that immigrants in our nation have been scapegoated, exploited for cheap labor, and treated as second-class citizens for hundreds of years.

The inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric embraced by President Trump’s campaign was in many ways an echo of campaigns against various immigrant groups throughout history. In this chapter, you will learn about the numerous times our nation chose fear and hatred of immigrants over welcome and acceptance. Unfortunately, this has been a cycle that repeats itself time and time again.

Studying the history of immigration in the United States, as well as the laws and customs that changed over decades, illustrates how the concept of “whiteness” has been manipulated to serve those in power. Moreover, a survey of history demonstrates how “white” is less a racial identity, and instead more a privileged legal and economic status that needed to be protected and restricted to the few.

Immigration in the 1800s

Our nation’s very first immigration law passed in 1790, creating a process to grant naturalized citizenship to immigrants who had lived in the United States for at least two years. The more restrictive requirement, however, was that only “free white persons” qualified (for all intents and purposes, person meant “man”). This excluded Native Americans, indentured servants, and both enslaved and free Black people from access to citizenship. In 1795, Congress amended the law to increase the minimum residency requirement to five years, which remains today.¹ From then on, the nation continued to grow and receive immigrants looking to start their lives in the United States.

Throughout the 19th century, immigrants arrived in the United States from all over the world, particularly Northern and Western Europe and East Asia. Millions of individuals and families from Ireland and Germany arrived on the East Coast and settled in the East and Midwest. On the West Coast, Chinese immigrants arrived “first to work in the gold mines, but also to take agricultural jobs, and factory work” in the mid-1800s.²

Meanwhile, much of the land that currently makes up the Southwestern U.S. still belonged to Mexico, making the inhabitants there Mexican citizens or residents. In the 1840s and 1850s, due to President James Polk and the federal government’s actions, wars and treaties moved the border south. As a result, these families never “crossed the border,” the border crossed them. The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** in 1848 (following the U.S.-Mexico war) won much of the Southwest for the United States, including California, Texas, parts of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada. Six years later, in 1854, the Gadsden Purchase brought what is now southern Arizona and New Mexico into the United States.³

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History cont.

The provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo included safety and protection of: land ownership, language, and culture for Mexicans living in that territory, as well as access to U.S. citizenship. After the treaty was signed, however, many of those promises were broken, and it was difficult for U.S. citizens of Mexican ancestry to access their right to citizenship and retain their land. During this time, many Mexican and U.S. citizens freely traveled between the two countries for work and had friends and family on both sides of the border.

Near the end of the 1800s, the welcoming of Chinese immigrants to California abruptly stopped as fear grew that Chinese immigrants were taking over jobs and posed “a threat to society.” Congress passed several laws to exclude Chinese immigrants from the country and society. In 1882, Congress passed the first of three **Chinese Exclusion Acts**, banning additional Chinese immigration. It was not until 1943 when China and the United States became allies during World War II that the exclusion laws were finally repealed.⁴

Anti-Immigrant Policies in the Early 1900s

Immigration to the U.S. from all over the world continued into the 1900s, but two factors led to the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment across the country. First, European immigration shifted away from Protestant, Western European countries and increasingly came from Russia, Austria, and Italy, bringing a significant portion of Catholic and Jewish immigrants. Second, the Great Depression caused terrible damage to the economy and wages in the United States.

In response to the first development, Congress passed the National Origins Act in 1924 establishing a quota system to limit the number of immigrants entering the United States. To reduce the number of these “less-desirable” Italian, Eastern European, or Jewish immigrants, the law deliberately based the new quotas on census data from 1890, more than 20 years earlier when the majority of immigrants in the U.S. were white Protestants from Northern and Western Europe.⁵

A few years later, during the Great Depression, those in power turned against Mexican immigrants, blaming them for the nation’s economic troubles. President Herbert Hoover led a wide-ranging campaign with the slogan “*American Jobs for Real Americans*.” White people across the country supported this campaign, as there was near-universal consensus among white people that the category “real Americans” excluded Mexican immigrants. State and local governments not only in the Southwest, but all across the country, conducted the “**Mexican Repatriation**” efforts of the 1930s with support and funding from the federal government. The various agencies involved did not keep consistent records, but historians estimate that around 1 million, if not more, people of Mexican descent were forcibly deported.

The various deportation efforts failed to limit the euphemistically named “repatriation” to Mexican immigrants, and included many U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. Some research says that as many as 60% of those sent “home” to Mexico in the 1930s were U.S. citizens: U.S.-born children of Mexican-descent who had never before traveled south of the border.⁶ Thousands of people of Mexican descent were deported from Los Angeles, where local agencies conducted raids on the Mexican community, and other parts of the Southwest. In the Midwest also, Mexican immigrants were removed from jobs and deported, all to make the factory jobs they held “available for white people.” Major companies, includ-

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The hypocrisy of using the term “real Americans” to deport people of Mexican descent:

The United States of America is not the only geographic location with “America” in its name. Indeed, the continents of North and South America have an arguably stronger claim to the term. Many people from Central and South America consider themselves “American” and find it problematic when people from the United States refer to themselves as American to indicate their nationality instead of respecting the name of the continent. We at NETWORK often write out “people of the United States” to avoid the incongruity of calling some people “American” but not extending the term to others who also fit that category. In the case of forced deportations of Mexicans who are also residents of “the Americas,” the irony is doubly cruel. Read more at *Affinity Magazine*: <http://affinitymagazine.us/2016/11/02/reminder-the-united-states-is-not-america/>

Anti-Immigrant Policies cont.

ing Ford, U.S. Steel, and the Southern Pacific Railroad, colluded with the government by laying off thousands of Mexican workers.⁷

In 1935, a similar repatriation effort was instituted for Filipino immigrants after the Tydings-McDuffie Act set a plan for the Philippines to become an independent country. The Act also instituted a new immigration quota of only 50 Filipino immigrants per year. (Previously, when the Philippines was a United States colony, the U.S. government classified Filipino immigrants as “nationals” and immigration to the U.S. was unrestricted.) Facing much less coercion than the Mexican repatriation efforts, only about 2,000 immigrants voluntarily chose to return to the Philippines.⁸

Other policies, outside of immigration policy negatively affected the lives of immigrants and people of color. The Wagner Act of 1935, previously mentioned as a contributor to the racial wealth and income gap, excluded farm workers and domestic workers, many of whom were Latinx or Asian immigrants, as well as Black workers. This policy harmed Black workers and immigrant workers by preventing them from receiving the benefits of organizing and creating unions. Additionally, other policies that contributed to the racial wealth gap also disproportionately affected immigrant communities and the descendants of immigrants, including the National Housing Act, the Federal-Highway Act, subprime loans, and the war on drugs.

A Nation that Welcomes Immigrant Labor, But Not Immigrants

A noticeable pattern emerges throughout our nation’s history of immigration: when the economy needs immigrant labor, restrictions decline and immigrants are welcomed into the country. However, if circumstances change and immigrant labor is no longer needed, the U.S. position on immigration shifts to restriction, deportations, and xenophobic rhetoric.

Immigration to the East and West coasts was welcomed throughout the first century of the United States’ existence as it provided laborers and settlers to populate the vast states and territories contained in our new nation. During World War II, there was once again a labor shortage and immigrants were needed to fill the gap. In 1942, the “**Bracero**” program was created. Temporary workers were welcomed in, mainly from Mexico but also Barbados, the Bahamas, Canada, and Jamaica, to work in agriculture. Workers through this program were not eligible for permanent residency in the United States, and working conditions were awful for immigrants. These temporary workers were paid very little and their children were not allowed to attend public schools. Farmers used the program long after the war ended because farmworkers were not allowed to form unions or organize, allowing employers to pay their workers as little as they wanted. Congress ended the program in 1964, though other forms of temporary worker visas continue to this day.⁹

Finally, in 1965—in the midst of the Civil Rights movement—Congress passed immigration legislation ending the old quota system. The new **Immigration and Naturalization Act** replaced the previous quota system with “a preference system based on immigrants’ family relationships with U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and, to a lesser degree, their skills.”¹⁰ The framework of an immigration system laid out in this law is still the basis of our immigration system today. This 1965 immigration law did much to remedy the shortcomings of the racist quota system and usher in immigration based on family unification. However, our laws are still woefully outdated.

Challenges Facing Immigrants Today

Just by glancing at the front page of nearly any newspaper, it is clear that our current system fails to meet today's immigration reality. Despite the fact that the majority of visas are granted to family members of citizens and legal permanent residents, even those with family connections experience unreasonable wait times to immigrate to the United States. Immigrants from the four countries with the longest wait times (Mexico, India, China and the Philippines) can face wait times of more than 20 years depending on family relationships, employment status and other factors.

The issue of wait times is separate from the current crisis of asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border. Violence and instability in Central American countries, including Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, cause many to leave their homes without the time or resources to immigrate through family or employment-based immigration channels. Instead, they are making the difficult journey to the U.S.-Mexico border and presenting themselves to border officials as asylum-seekers. It is legal under U.S. and international law for families and individuals seeking asylum to come into the United States for a determination of eligibility. The Trump administration's recent policies to indiscriminately close the border or require asylum seekers to remain in Mexico contradicts our laws and puts people into very dangerous situations, which have led to deaths of migrants at the border.

While the majority of immigrants have legal residency in the United States or have become naturalized citizens, immigrants who are undocumented in the United States experience significant challenges to provide for themselves and their families. Undocumented individuals face uncertainty in every aspect of their lives and endure barriers to employment, healthcare, and other necessities. While the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans) programs proposed by the Obama administration raised hope of security for some undocumented individuals, those hopes were never fully realized. The Supreme Court declared that DAPA was unconstitutional and it never went into effect, while DACA has faced legal challenges and attacks from the Trump administration over the past few years.

Meanwhile, immigration enforcement in the United States has been responsible for cruelly separating immigrant families through detention and deportation. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, also known as "ICE" was created in 2003, as part of the national response to the September 11 attacks. Throughout President Obama's two terms, ICE conducted more than 2 million immigrant removals, more than any other president until that time. Now, President Trump's administration has implemented changes to ICE tactics, upping the number of raids and deportations and made them crueler. Under the Obama administration, undocumented immigrants in "high-priority categories," including gang members, people with felony convictions, and those who posed security threats were prioritized for deportation while law-abiding undocumented immigrants, especially long-time residents and relatives of U.S.-citizens were mostly exempt from deportation. It is now common for people who have lived in the U.S. for decades and parents of U.S.-citizen children to be separated from their families and deported.

The origin of this cruel immigration enforcement system was the 2003 decision to create ICE and move immigration under the purview of the new Department of Homeland Security. This shift was one of the factors that shaped a more critical view of immigrants and immigration and criminalized undocumented immigrants for the first time. This was

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Words of Wisdom

...no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land"

— Warsan Shire, "Home"

Challenges cont.

a marked difference than in the past when immigration had been overseen by the Department of Labor and immigrants were seen as positive contributors to our nation and economy.

Since the beginning of the Trump administration, verbal attacks against immigrants from other countries have frequently been broadcast from President Trump and other members of his administration. Whether disparaging the countries many immigrants come from, or arguing in favor of the Muslim ban, messages degrading immigrants who are people of color are coming from our nation's highest office. Overall, the majority of people in the United States disagree and believe that immigration is a good thing, and less than a quarter, only 24%, of people support cutting immigration. A survey by the Pew Research Center showed that "since 2001, the share of Americans who favor increased legal immigration into the U.S. has risen 22 percentage points (from 10% to 32%), while the share who support a decrease has declined 29 points (from 53% to 24%)." ¹¹

For more than a decade, Congress has talked about passing comprehensive immigration reform with no legislative success. It is past time for our immigration system to reflect and respond to the current realities of immigration in our world.

A Personal Encounter with Racism against Immigrants

At NETWORK, we are proud have immigrants and the descendants of immigrants in our Spirit-filled network of activists. We advocate for policies that welcome immigrants and fulfil our faith teaching to "love our neighbor" and support family unity, understanding, and appreciation of immigrant communities.

Because there have not been any reasonable updates to our immigration system over the past decades, today our system is broken. Millions of individuals face the struggle of being undocumented in the United States. Many undocumented people have lived in the United States for years, and have spouses, children, and extended family here. Approximately 16 million people in the U.S. live in mixed-immigration-status homes, and our nation's policies are not keeping up with that reality.¹² Instead, they punish the children and family members of undocumented immigrants, even if those family members are U.S. citizens themselves.

One such family, members of our Spirit-filled network, lives in Ohio. When Adriana (names changed for protection) went to the DMV to get her drivers' permit, she was unable to do so because of her mother's undocumented status. Not only that, but Adriana, who was born in the United States, was accused of faking her birth certificate, social security card, and other documents. Their story was chronicled by reporters from the local paper.

Read the full account, through Adriana's eyes, here:

<https://www.wcpo.com/longform/living-in-the-shadows-part-1>

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We Pray

Oramos, por un mundo sin violencia, por los que no tienen voz, oramos por que se respete la dignidad de las mujeres, para que los niños puedan compartir una comida digna con sus padres.

Oramos por los trabajadores del campo, para que sean tratados como seres humanos, para que puedan tener un sueldo justo, oramos por los que luchan cada día en la campaña por Comida Justa, por los aliados que marchan junto a los trabajadores y exigen justicia.

Oremos por aquellos que con su fe, creyeron en la voz de los trabajadores y sin dudarlo nos apoyaron, y nos vieron como hermanos y seres humanos, y siguen luchando para que las corporaciones tomen responsabilidad y respetar a los trabajadores.

Oramos por los líderes de fe conscientes, que con su fe nos dan esperanza a los trabajadores y juntos construir un mundo de justicia e igualdad, estamos agradecidos por su apoyo, y ayudarnos a mantener viva la fe, celebramos juntos las victoria que hemos tenido, y hemos creado el Programa de Comida Justa, la cual nos da a los trabajadores la oportunidad de reportar los abusos que antes enfrentábamos, que las mujeres por primera vez, no tenemos que cargar con el peso de la violencia sobre nuestras espaldas.

Seguimos orando para que la expansión del modelo del programa llegue a más trabajadores, ya que es una solución a los abusos que los trabajadores enfrentan diariamente.

Oramos para que la explotación laboral no siga afectando a las personas de color, a los migrantes, ni a los seres humanos en general, oramos para que la desigualdad no siga existiendo.

Oramos para que los que dirigen las corporaciones no tengan un corazón lleno de avaricia, y sean más tolerantes con la humanidad, que tengan conciencia y puedan ver como sus malas decisiones afectan a sus semejantes, a sus hermanos en Dios, que somos los trabajadores.

Amén.

Translated in English on next page

We pray for a world without violence and for those whose voices are not heard. We pray for the respect of the dignity of women. We pray that children can share a dignified meal with their parents.

We pray for farmworkers: that they be treated as human beings, that they receive a just wage. We pray for those who fight every day in the Campaign for Fair Food, for the allies who march together with farmworkers and demand justice.

Let us pray for those who, with their faith, believed in the voice of farmworkers and without doubting it, supported us. Let us pray for those who saw us as siblings and fellow human beings, and who keep pushing for corporations to take responsibility and respect farmworkers.

We pray for the conscious faith leaders, who with their faith give us hope as farmworkers that we can build a world of justice and equality. We are grateful for their support and the way they help us keep our faith alive. Together we celebrate the victories we've won. We celebrate the Fair Food Program, which gives us as farmworkers the opportunity to report abuses that we faced for years. For the first time, women don't have to carry the burden of violence on our backs.

We also pray for the expansion of the program to reach more workers, as a solution to the abuses workers face daily.

We pray that labor exploitation no longer affects people of color, migrants, or human beings in general. We pray that inequality no longer exists.

We pray that those leading corporations do not have hearts full of greed and that they are more tolerant of humanity, that they have a conscience and they can see how their bad decisions affect others, their siblings in God, who are the workers.

Amen.

Written by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers Women's Group

Reflection Questions

1. Which parts of the history of immigration in the United States were unfamiliar to you, if any? Had you been told a different story?
2. Do your ancestors have an immigration story? How is it similar or different to the history you read here?
3. How did "whiteness" shape the trajectory of different groups of immigrants in the United States?
4. Do you hear anti-immigrant rhetoric in your daily life? What argument against immigration is repeated most? Mindful of the "big picture" of the history of immigration in the United States, how could you respond?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- “How a shifting definition of ‘white’ helped shape U.S. immigration policy”
September 16, 2017

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/white-u-s-immigration-policy>

This article from PBS illustrates how tactics used by government officials to separate people by perceived “whiteness” has changed our notion of what it means to be white, and what that looks like for our immigration policies.

- “America’s Forgotten History of Illegal Deportations”
March 6, 2017

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/americas-brutal-forgotten-history-of-illegal-deportations/517971/>

In the 1920s and 1930s, the U.S. government conducted unconstitutional raids and deportations against Mexican immigrants, known as “Mexican repatriation.” This *Atlantic* article gives insight into that history, and what it means for immigration policy today.

Watch

- Infographic on the History of U.S. Immigration
July 4, 2017

<https://kathleenkoyal.com/2017/07/04/usimmigration/>

This infographic from Kathleen Koyal traces the history of immigration policy in the U.S., starting with colonialization and ending in the present day.

Listen

- “Fresh Air: America’s Forgotten History of Mexican-American ‘Repatriation’”
September 10, 2015

<https://www.npr.org/2015/09/10/439114563/americas-forgotten-history-of-mexican-american-repatriation>

This episode of NPR’s Fresh Air delves into the history surrounding Mexican “repatriation” — returning people to their native country. The impetus for these mass deportations was fear and racism, and the episode explains it in the context of 1920s and 1930s history.

CHAPTER 6

Health Equity Is a Racial Justice Imperative

As we examined in previous chapters, many forms of historical racism continue to harm individuals and communities of color. The legacy of past injustices, together with continued systemic racism, produce significant barriers for people of color while providing advantages to white people.

Health is another area where people of color experience worse outcomes than white people in the United States. People of color must not only contend with racism in their lives, which negatively affects their health, but also receive inferior healthcare because of racial bias within the medical field. The significant health disparities between people of color and white people in the United States are evidence of the consequences of white supremacy in our nation today.

Understanding Racial Health Disparities

Doctors and researchers have been aware of racial disparities in health for decades. Yet, it wasn't until 2011 that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released the first comprehensive report on health disparities and inequities. The report defined health disparities as “differences in health outcomes between groups that reflect social inequalities.”¹ The CDC has continued collecting data and reporting on health disparities since, and racial health disparities have increasingly played a role in the debate over health policy in the United States.

Overall, racial differences in health outcomes are most pronounced between white people and Black people in the United States. When controlling for income and education level, Black women and men have lower life expectancies than white women and men. Black mothers and children have much higher rates of maternal and infant mortality than white people and are more likely to have asthma.

However, other people of color also face significant disparities when compared to white people. Native American and Alaska Native people are twice as likely to be diabetic and twice as likely to be diagnosed with HIV as white people.² The Asian American & Pacific Islander community is more likely to contract Hepatitis A and more likely to never receive prenatal care or receive it late.³ Latinx individuals are more likely to be diabetic or diagnosed with HIV than white people, and Latinx children face much higher rates of depression, obesity, and asthma.⁴ And, while health outcomes between racial groups are significant, we must also look at the disparities within racial groups. Within the Latinx community, individuals who identify as Afro-Latinx have worse health than Latinx people who identify as white.⁵ Immigration status also influences access to healthcare and health services and is reflected in health outcomes.

The presence of racial health disparities in our nation's history and their continuation today are unjust and immoral. Throughout our nation's history, racial health disparities were the result of deliberate choices and policies that harmed people of color to advance white people's comfort. They were not accidental. We must be aware of both historic and present-day racial health disparities, find ways to alleviate them, and support health equity.

Social Determinants that Contribute to Health Disparities

Today, racial health inequities continue because both structural racism and racism within the medical field continue to exist. Despite civil rights protections against housing segregation, housing in our nation is still overwhelmingly divided based on race. Neighborhoods inhabited by people of color, especially Black people are more likely to have factors that contribute to poor health including: pollution, mold, lead, community violence, lack of access to healthy foods, and more. These factors will create persistent health disparities for as long as our racially segregated housing continues. Racism in employment, the racial wealth and income gaps, and unequal educational experiences are all social determinants that contribute to disparities in health. Addressing these social determinants of health is critical for improving health and reducing longstanding health disparities.

Racism and the History of Healthcare

Structural racism within the medical field and throughout society is the leading contributor to racial health inequities. Within the medical field, historically, people of color in the United States have been relegated to inferior healthcare providers and services. Today, our healthcare system continues to provide people of color lower quality, less frequent, and less-accessible healthcare services. This builds upon previous centuries of unjust, racist health policies.

During the era of legal segregation and Jim Crow laws, hospitals and other healthcare facilities were racially segregated. Often the only healthcare facilities and services available to people of color were under-funded, poorly staffed, or even harmful to the health of Black patients. In many places it was difficult, if not impossible, to find a qualified healthcare professional willing to treat a person of color who was ill or had suffered an accident.⁶ Black men and women faced significant barriers to accessing a medical education, creating the lack of professionals to provide healthcare for communities of color. The extreme difference between the number and quality of healthcare providers available to treat white people and those available for people of color continued beyond the Civil Rights movement, with neighborhoods remaining racially segregated and healthcare services remaining mostly the same.

How Health Policy and Race Intersect

Today, people of color have less access to healthcare than white people, and face medical racism when they do seek treatment. Because people of color are more likely to be employed in low-wage jobs that do not offer health coverage, they are more likely to be uninsured than white people. Before the Affordable Care Act became law, 44 million people were uninsured. Through the Affordable Care Act nearly 20 million people gained coverage, with people of color experiencing the largest coverage gains.⁷ Today, however, people of color remain more likely to be uninsured.

Medicaid expansion (decided by the states) plays a large role in improving coverage for people of color. Unfortunately, 14 states still have not expanded Medicaid. Additionally, some states are now proposing work requirements for Medicaid participants that would disproportionately take Medicaid benefits away from people of color.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, as of 2017, most communities of color remained significantly more likely to be uninsured than white people. American Indians

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The direct effect of racism on health:

Dr. David Williams, professor of Public Health and Sociology at Harvard University, and other doctors are studying the health impact of racism. They have found that experiencing racism is a serious stressor to the body that can lower one's life expectancy.

Stress triggers cortisol production that, when overproduced, has negative effects on physical health. Studies have shown that African-American and Latinx people in the U.S. have significantly higher rates of cortisol production than white people. The chronic stress people of color experience as a result of racism may contribute to health problems including lower birth weights, hypertension, diabetes, and mental illness.

Read more from Families USA:

<https://familiesusa.org/blog/2018/04/culture-racial-discrimination-incompatible-culture-health>

Words of Wisdom

Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman because it often results in physical death.”

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Intersect cont.

and Alaska Natives (AIANs) and Hispanics had the highest risk of being uninsured, with 22% of AIANs and 19% of Hispanics lacking coverage compared to 7% of white people.⁸ Without insurance, people are less likely to visit the doctor, resulting in worse health outcomes. One in five uninsured adults in 2017 went without needed medical care due to cost, and studies repeatedly demonstrate that uninsured people are less likely than those with insurance to receive preventive care and services for major health conditions and chronic diseases.⁹ When they do seek care, uninsured people may face unaffordable medical bills that could devastate a family or individual’s financial situation.

Racism within the Healthcare System

When a person of color does visit a healthcare provider, there is a reasonable chance that their experience will be negatively influenced by unconscious racial bias. This expresses itself in a healthcare provider not believing people of color’s symptoms, undervaluing their pain, or failing to provide appropriate customized treatment to patients.¹⁰

Research conducted by the University of Virginia found that more than half of the white medical students and residents questioned believed at least one false statement about fictional differences between Black people and white people. More concerning, those who held these false beliefs rated Black patients’ pain as lower than that of white patients and made less appropriate recommendations about how they should be treated.¹¹ Another study in *Circulation* medical journal found that when cardiologists treated patients with sudden, reduced blood flow to the heart (such as a heart attack), they provided more aggressive medical intervention to white patients than they did to patients who were people of color. This resulted in worse health outcomes for the patients of color.¹²

Cultural competency is also necessary for a successful healthcare visit, whether that means providing professional language interpretation or additional verbal instructions for a patient who lacks English literacy skills.

The Concerning Effect of Racism on Black Maternal Mortality

One of the starkest and most concerning instances of racial bias damaging health outcomes is the maternal mortality rate for Black women in the United States. Black mothers die from pregnancy-related complications at three to four times the rate of white women, one of the widest racial disparities in healthcare.¹³ This has been attributed to a combination of factors including the stress that Black women experience as a result of racism throughout their lives leading up to their pregnancy as well as deficient healthcare throughout their pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum care.

In 2017, Shalon Irving’s story was shared widely and raised our national consciousness on Black maternal mortality rates. Shalon Irving was a Black woman and a public health professional, an epidemiologist working for the Centers for Disease Control. Three weeks after her cesarean birth, Sharon Irving died of complications related to her delivery, postpartum condition, and high blood pressure.

Read more about Sharon Irving’s story:

<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why>

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Black Maternal Mortality cont.

Kira Johnson was a young Black mother who lost her life hours after delivering her second son. In 2018, Kira's husband Charles Johnson testified in front of Congress about reducing maternal mortality in the U.S. In his testimony he said: "This country deserves to know why our mothers are dying. Women and families who want to bear children should know what leads to maternal mortality, and 'near misses.'"

Watch Kira's husband, Charles Johnson's Congressional testimony:

<https://nowthisnews.com/videos/politics/black-women-die-from-childbirth-complications-at-alarming-rates>

Shalon Irving and Kira Johnson's stories and the many other stories of Black women who have lost their lives giving birth are a moral call for us to eradicate racism in our healthcare system and in our society.

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Take Action

Study the infographics from Families USA below about racial health disparities between people of color and white people. Consider the statistics in light of the content you read above. **Visit:** <https://familiesusa.org/health-inequities>

We Pray

Heal Us

Dear Lord,

The healthcare system in our country is ailing. Our hearts bleed as the Body of Christ is needlessly, and disparately, suffering. We regularly witness preferential access to healthcare and high rates of poor outcomes for people of color in healthcare. Forgive our conscious choices that harm the health of our sisters and brothers of color. Give us the strength and wisdom to cure our healthcare system of its racist practices and procedures.

Access to quality healthcare has been subject to privilege for centuries. At the Pool of Bethesda, privileged community members and their loved ones bathed in the healing waters while the underprivileged, sick man laid beside the pool for 38 years, waiting for

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Little-Known Medical History

Historical accounts show cesarean sections were performed successfully in Africa before the procedure was successful for both the mother and the child anywhere else in the world. African people who were captured and sold into slavery in the United States brought this knowledge with them.

The first recorded successful cesarean section in Colonial America was performed by Dr. Jesse Bennett in 1794. With the help and guidance of a person enslaved by Dr. Bennet, he performed the cesarean section successfully and saved the life of his child and his wife.

Read more from The History Engine: <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/6066>

We Pray cont.

access and restoration of health. Jesus, Your Son showed His opposition to the lack of access to healthcare and immediately cured the man. Dear Lord, convert the hearts of those who promote privilege and resist opportunities to increase access to quality healthcare for people of color.

We belong to each other. If one part of the Body of Christ is allowed to needlessly suffer or die, the entire body is infected and will perish. Lord, we see that unhealthy environmental factors, housing practices, and implicit bias impact the health of people of color disproportionately. Make us ever conscious of our relationship and duty to the Whole Body of Christ.

Send us Your healing touch and loving wisdom so that we may cure our health system that is so critically infected with racism.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

Written by Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, DC. Sister Mary Ellen has worked in healthcare and is former Nun on the Bus.

Reflection Questions

1. What preconceived thoughts or beliefs did you hold about race and health?
2. When have you or someone you know put off a doctor's visit that you needed? What were your reasons? Were there racial dynamics at play?
3. How do you understand both social determinants of health as well as racism within the medical field interacting? What has been your experience of race and health in social determinants of health and medical treatment?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- "How racism, segregation drive health disparities"
December 15, 2016

<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/patient-support-advocacy/how-racism-segregation-drive-health-disparities>

An introductory look at the intersection of racism and health, and explanation of Dr. David R. Williams's work finding evidence of racism's negative impact on health.

- "America's Health Segregation Problem"
May 18, 2016

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/americas-health-segregation-problem/483219/>

This article written by Vann R. Newkirk II examines the history of segregation in healthcare throughout our nation's history and its implications on our healthcare system today.

continued on next page

Additional Resources cont.

- “Fighting the subconscious biases that lead to health care disparities”
January 2016

<https://acphospitalist.org/archives/2016/01/bias-and-disparities.htm>

Some doctors are not aware of their own implicit bias as well as the gaps in access to healthcare that are accountable for racial health disparities. Steps to reduce doctors’ bias as well as other interventions should be taken to provide better healthcare to patients.

- “I Don’t Feel Your Pain: A failure of empathy perpetuates racial disparities”
June 27, 2013

<https://slate.com/technology/2013/06/racial-empathy-gap-people-dont-perceive-pain-in-other-races.html>

Researchers at the University of Milano-Bicocca studied the racial empathy gap by measuring whether people felt more empathy when they see white skin pierced than Black skin. The research showed that it’s not just that people disregard the pain of Black people, it’s worse - the problem is that the pain isn’t even felt.

- “Doctors Don’t Always Believe You When You’re a Black Woman”
February 2, 2018

https://tonic.vice.com/en_us/article/qvedxd/doctors-dont-always-believe-you-when-youre-a-black-woman

Six different Black women speak about their positive and negative experiences receiving medical care, and the extra care they take to ensure they are getting the healthcare they need.

- “For The Sake Of Our People, America Needs More Black Doctors”
November 2018

<https://blavity.com/for-the-sake-of-our-people-america-needs-more-black-doctors>

Tierra Maye writes about the many reasons why Black doctors are necessary to serve patients well in the United States, including cultural competency, empathy, building the collective voice of Black doctors.

- “Why America’s Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis”
April 11, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/11/magazine/black-mothers-babies-death-maternal-mortality.html>

This New York Times feature follows Simone Landry, a Black mother, through two pregnancies and explores how the lived experience of being a Black woman in the United States leads to the disparity in maternal mortality rates.

Watch

- *How Racism Makes Us Sick*
November 2016

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick

In this TED Talk, Dr. David R. Williams, one of the leading researchers into race and health, explains the multiple reasons why race matter so profoundly for health. Dr. Williams offers brief but concise explanations for higher levels of stress associated with racism, racism within medical care, and more factors that lead to racial health disparities in this 17 minute video.

continued on next page

Additional Resources cont.

- *How the Health Care System Has Racial Biases*

March 22, 2018

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1988265154538298>

In this 2 minute testimony from Dr. Rupa Marya, she tells the story of a time when she had to question her own implicit bias and challenge her fellow doctor to get their patient the care she needed.

- *A Recipe for Health Equity in the 21st Century*

October 29, 2012

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

Dr. Renaisa Anthony discusses the impact of race, gender, and background on her life and the lives of the people she serves.

Hope for Our LIBERATION



“He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.’

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:16-21

The founder of Black liberation theology, Rev. Dr. James Cone, points to this passage from the Gospel of Luke as the time when Jesus proclaims that His mission is to comfort those who are poor, liberate people held captive, and free the oppressed. Indeed, the story of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection is the story of a life lived on the margins of society, befriending and serving people who were outcasts, and a cruel, public execution at the hands of the state. There is also, however, unimaginable redemption and triumph over death. As people of faith then, particularly for Catholics and followers of Jesus, we cannot live out our faith without addressing and working for an end to racism.

Throughout life, Jesus chose to be in community with people who were harmed by the dominant systems of oppression in society. Today, we know that people of color have suffered from the structural racism that infects our nation. The effect of this systemic racism is apparent in our healthcare system, immigration policies, economic system, treatment of Native Americans, mass incarceration, and many more aspects of life.

Racism in our country and our failure to end it is social sin. If we are truly believers in the message of the Gospel—in Jesus choosing the marginalized over the powerful—then we must reject and act against racism wherever we experience it. Additionally, those with white privilege must recognize the benefits that their whiteness grants them and use it to act for racial justice.

Living and Acting for Racial Justice

Because everyone’s identities and lived experiences are unique, working for racial justice will look different for each person. Your race, immigration status, education level, income, physical ability, and other aspects of your identity will inform the ways you work and act to end racism. For people of color, resisting racism may sometimes look like self-care and building healthy community with other people of color. White people, on the other hand,

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Words of Wisdom

We should hope not for a colorblind society but instead for a world in which we can see each other fully, learn from each other, and do what we can to respond to each other with love. That was King's dream—a society that is capable of seeing each of us, as we are, with love. That is a goal worth fighting for."

— Michelle Alexander,
The New Jim Crow

Living cont.

are not forced to deal with the effects of racism every day and need to be more conscious of bringing race to the forefront and actively choosing actions that will dismantle white supremacy instead of uphold it.

Being aware of the ways that racism is still at work in our society today is crucial to begin addressing racism in the United States. As James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." For too long, white people have avoided the topic of race or chosen "colorblindness." This inaction, ignorance, and apathy has failed to reverse the effects of racism. People of color are still disproportionately impacted in our society, and white people must acknowledge this reality in order for us to address it together. The best way to gain this awareness and face the problem is by listening – and believing – when people of color share how structural racism has affected themselves and their families. People of color have been speaking out against racism that harms their communities for centuries, do you listen?

When speaking and acting for racial justice, it is important to listen and follow the lead of members of the most affected communities. Whatever the issue is, members of that community have first-hand experience and are the most knowledgeable about how to liberate themselves. And, members of multiple marginalized communities have the best understanding of how to make our work for justice intersectional. Do not neglect to listen to their wisdom.

Responding to Racism

As you become more conscious of the ways that racism works in our society, you will see and hear ways that systems or people around you are racist. You may also notice instances of cultural appropriation, microaggressions, or "white savior complex," which we discussed in the first chapter of this guide. When you do, it is important to speak up and register your disapproval. There are two different approaches you can take to do this, which activists have termed "**calling out**" or "**calling in**."

When there is little or no chance of receiving a response, then you would call someone or something **out**. If the situation is one in which you believe the other party is willing to have a conversation and possibly change their actions, then you may choose to call them **in**.

There are numerous examples of circumstances that call for the two different responses. For example, if the perpetrator is a celebrity (and you are unlikely to receive a response) or an avowed racist or nationalist (in which case they are unlikely to change their actions), then **call them out** publicly, by taking actions such as commenting on their social media or writing a letter to the editor. If you experience a coworker or friend say something racist or see something problematic happen within your faith community, then you should try to **call them in** with a personal conversation (if you have enough energy and emotional capacity). Understanding your social positioning is important in these contexts as well. If you have privilege, then being willing to be the person to call that person in could be a beneficial use of your privilege.

Calling Out

- Publicly pointing out that another person is being oppressive¹
- Issuing a direct challenge to something they've said or done, usually in public, with the intent of exposing the person's wrongdoing to others²
- Lets a person know they're being oppressive, and it lets others know that the person was being oppressive³
- Can be powerful at drawing attention to problematic behavior, particularly among high-profile individuals, businesses, or institutions as well as in more immediately dangerous situations⁴

Example: "President Trump's zero tolerance policy at the U.S.-Mexico border is racist and xenophobic ..."

Calling In

- "The act of checking your peers and getting them to change problematic behavior by explaining their misstep with compassion and patience"⁵
- Can be a useful way of addressing bigotry and oppressive behavior among people you know, trust, and want to continue associating with⁶
- Still holds people accountable, but is done with a little more compassion and patience⁷
- Not for everyone or every circumstance. It's not fair, for example, to insist that people hurt by cruel or careless language or actions be responsible for the personal growth of those who have injured them⁸
- For white people, helps to dismantle a culture of white guilt and shame and transform fear into positive actions that center on the white community calling each other in⁹

Example: "Mom, I don't agree with that stereotype you just used, can we talk about it?"

Whether you **call in** or **call out**, it is important (especially for white people) not to let racist acts pass without saying anything. When we choose to do nothing to address racism day after day, we are complicit in upholding white supremacy in our society.

Choosing to Be Anti-Racist

Being anti-racist is a daily choice. When white supremacy permeates the society, structures, and systems we encounter everyday, it is not enough to be passive – we must actively counter the presence of white supremacy in our lives. However, when you do join a conversation about racism, participate in an action, or just go about your daily life mindful of race, you may slip up. We all have racial biases that we are working to overcome, and sometimes there are things that you just haven't educated yourself on yet. The important thing is how you choose to react when you mess up.

It can be overwhelming when someone calls you out (or in). The first thing you should do, however, is resist the temptation to feel defensive and react. Instead, slow down. Don't respond with the first thing that comes to your mind. Listen and accept what you are being told. It may be uncomfortable, but try not to avoid the discomfort. Don't let your hurt feelings override the negative impact your action has had on a person or community of color.

Impact over Intent

"*Impact over intent*" may be a useful phrase to remember in the context of racial justice discussions. No one likes to admit that they've done something wrong, and other times you may not even have realized that something you said or did would be hurtful. It is easy for someone to deflect and say, "Well I didn't mean it that way." This does not negate the impact that your actions had.

When the impact of your actions brings further harm to people of color, that takes precedence over your own comfort, privilege, experience, or explanation. Instead of centering yourself and your experience, focus your attention on the harm that was done. If harm was done to a marginalized community, then harm was done. That's the most (and only) important thing.

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Words of Wisdom

We must dissent. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the hatred and from the mistrust. We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.”

— *Thurgood Marshall*

Choosing cont.

Try to look at the feedback someone has offered you “as an offering, not an attack.”¹⁰ It takes a great deal of courage and energy to discuss race with someone. The other person could have chosen to ignore it and let you continue making this mistake in the future, but instead they have taken their time to give you the opportunity to learn. Remember: we do this anti-racism work because people’s lives are at stake in our current system of white supremacy.

So, if you are called in on your words or actions, apologize sincerely, acknowledging the impact of your action. Do not put conditions on your apology, try to diminish the impact, or shift the focus to your intention by providing a lengthy explanation.¹¹ Take responsibility for the mistake. Finally, commit to changing your behavior, educating yourself further, remaining accountable to others, and/or taking any additional steps necessary to rectify the situation.¹² By following these steps, you can learn from this experience, build trust between yourself and others, and continue working together.

Working for Our Shared Liberation

Developing the skills and relationships to continue increasing our capacity to oppose racism is critical. For too long, white people have chosen to deny the full humanity and individual human dignity of people of color. This damages our relationships with one another, with our world, and with God. Our current systems – of unjust healthcare, the racial wealth and income gap, continued harm against Native Americans, harsh immigration policies, and more injustices—spreads undue harm throughout our communities and across our country.

As we renounce systemic racism then, we must recall that all systems are upheld by individuals. The systems that oppress people of color remain in place through the apathy of the many individuals that make up our society. By educating yourself and advocating for federal policies that mend the gaps with NETWORK, you can do your part to reject systemic racism and social sin in our country.

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We Pray

Take a deep breath in. Center yourself.

Open your heart to the call of Christ to live in love.

Listen to that call for 5 minutes in stillness.

Spirit of God, you brood over the waters of chaos in our lives.
 You call us to surrender any vestige of privilege and renounce all discrimination.
 Give us the strength to continue working for racial justice.
 Spirit of God you call us into community where we are one family, one in your Love.
 May we respond to this call and turn toward conversion.
 May we live in your inclusive love and trust in the promise that we will be healed!

Spirit of God, you brood over the waters of chaos in our nation and our world.
 You challenge us to dismantle white supremacy and create a nation and world of
 inclusion for all people.
 Spirit of God, free us to live without fear in the promise of our oneness in you.
 May we respond to your call and turn toward conversion.
 May we live in your inclusive love and trust in the promise that we will be healed!

Written by Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK.

Reflection Questions

1. What are some examples in your life where you could call people out? What about calling people in?
2. What aspects of your identity inform your work for racial justice? How can you, in your own life, acknowledge and understand instances of structural racism before addressing them?
3. Think of your entire Lenten journey with this resource. What are your biggest take-aways? What challenged you? What more do you want to learn about?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Read

- “Why James Cone Was the Most Important Theologian of His Time”
 May 2, 2018
<https://sojo.net/articles/why-james-cone-was-most-important-theologian-his-time>

Following the passing of Rev. Dr. James Hal Cone, known as the founder of Black liberation theology, this article honors his work and explains the context out of which Rev. Cone’s work came.

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Additional Resources cont.

- “Asking New Questions”

June 12, 2016

<https://collectyourpeople.com/asking-new-questions-ff57825ab126>

Writer Angus Maguire invites us to move beyond overly simplistic questions and instead ask better questions that lead to more consequential conversations of impact and action.

- “What can you do about racism? Call it out for a start...”

July 29, 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/jul/29/what-can-you-do-about-racism-call-it-out-for-a-start>

A personal story about a woman’s experience with a boss who would make racist comments and her coworkers’ silence demonstrates the importance of speaking up about racism, especially when it happens right in front of you.

- “Calling out racists is actually good for your health, according to science. Here’s how to do it”

January 16, 2018

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2018/01/16/calling-out-racists-is-good-for-your-health-according-to-science-heres-how-to-do-it>

This article highlights research that shows that when people speak up about racism or sexism, they generally feel better about themselves. When people don’t say something, they may feel guilty and frustrated.

- “Speaking Up Without Tearing Down”

Spring 2019

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2019/speaking-up-without-tearing-down>

Teaching Tolerance provides guidance for people, especially teachers in the classroom, about how to turn a mistake someone makes into an opportunity for that person, and everyone around them, to learn.

- “Nine Phrases Allies Can Say When Called Out Instead of Getting Defensive”

May 29, 2017

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/05/allies-say-this-instead-defensive/>

Helpful phrases to remember such as ‘I’m going to take some time to reflect on this’ or ‘I recognize that I have work to do’ to avoid defensiveness when you make a mistake and are called out, and how to use them to build relationships and continue your learning and progress.

- “Six charts showing race gaps within the American middle class”

October 21, 2016

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2016/10/21/6-charts-showing-race-gaps-within-the-american-middle-class/>

Six examples of ways that Black people are disadvantaged compared to white people—even when they have higher incomes and more education.

continued on next page

*Additional Resources cont.***Watch**

- What Happens When I Try to Talk Race with White People
November 30, 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SynR1NYcpo>

In this 3 minute video PBS NewsHour with Renni Eddo-Lodge, author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, she shares insight she has gained from talking about race and feminism with white people. While her identity as a woman of color makes it impossible to separate the two, white women can shut down conversations about race out of fear of being wrong. Eddo-Lodge shares her wisdom: "You can't ask me why I'm not invited to the party, you have to ask the host"

- Understanding My Privilege
December 9, 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIRxqC0Sze4>

Sue Borrego, a lifelong educator, shares her first-person account of "White Privilege" and "Black Lives Matter" to underscore the responsibility each one of us has to bring about change. This video is 13 minutes long.

- Getting Called Out: How to Apologize
March 31, 2008

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8xJXKYL8pU>

This video from Franchesca Ramsey explains how to apologize if you've been called out on something, with an example of an apology.

Listen

- Black Liberation Theology, in its Founder's Words
December 9, 2016

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89236116>

Rev. James Cone, the founder of Black liberation theology, explains the movement, its history, and its inspiration in an interview with Terry Gross. He describes Black liberation theology as "mainly a theology that sees God as concerned with the poor and the weak."

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NETWORK

NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

NETWORK educates, organizes, and lobbies for social and economic transformation. We are rooted in Catholic Social Justice and open to all who share our passion. We value women's leadership, welcome secular and religious backgrounds, affirm LGBTQ+ identities, and engage in ongoing racial justice work.

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