

*Truth and Wholeness:  
Replacing  
White Privilege with  
God's Promise*

**Leader's Guide**

Companion to the Truth and Wholeness DVD

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Developed by  
The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and  
The General Commission on Religion and Race  
The United Methodist Church  
2008

# *Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise*



## Leader's Guide: Companion to the DVD

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY A DVD ABOUT WHITE PRIVILEGE?	3
<b><u>PREPARATION FOR VIEWING THE DVD</u></b>	<b>5</b>
STEP ONE TOOLS FOR HEALTHY DISCUSSION	5
STEP TWO HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN THE UMC	7
STEP THREE HOLY SCRIPTURE FOR THE JOURNEY FROM PRIVILEGE TO PROMISE	8
STEP FOUR GROUP ACTIVITY: THE PRIVILEGE LINE	10
STEP FIVE A LITANY OF PREPARATION	12
<b><u>AFTER VIEWING THE DVD, WHAT NOW?</u></b>	<b>13</b>
STEP SIX THE NEED FOR SILENCE	13
STEP SEVEN SPEAKING FROM THE HEART	13
STEP EIGHT THE NEXT STEPS	14
STEP NINE CONTINUING THE JOURNEY	14
<b><u>RESOURCES &amp; SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS</u></b>	<b>15</b>
SELECTED SOURCES FOR READING AND VIEWING	15
STEP FOUR(ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE #1)	17
STEP FOUR(ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE #2)	19

## Why a DVD about White Privilege?

This DVD study is a bridge to more courageous, Christ-like relationships between United Methodists of all racial ethnic backgrounds. It transports us past the discrimination, racism and white privilege that sidetrack our journey towards full communion with each other as God's "beloved community." This project represents a desire for our full immersion into Christ's baptism and the healing and reconciliation available to us all. Together, we continue the spiritual journey of justice living. It is not easy or short-term work; but it is our calling through Christ.

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**The 2000 General Conference Act of Repentance Service**, sponsored jointly by The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, addressed historic acts of racism that prompted African Americans to leave the predominantly white Methodist Episcopal Church in the nineteenth century. Through witnessing, prayer and acts of penitence, the service also recognized acts of racism committed against those who stayed in the original denomination. At the close of the service, Bishop Clarence Carr of the African Methodist Episcopal Church challenged the gathering of more than 12,000 members and delegates with the reminder that a tree is known by its fruit. "I'm not going to be a judge," he stated, "but I want you to know we will be fruit inspectors." All but six of the sixty-three U.S. annual conferences held services of repentances in the following quadrennium.

The **2004 General Conference** followed with a **Service of Appreciation** to honor and celebrate those African Americans who remained members of the former Methodist Episcopal Church and other predecessor Methodist bodies for more than two centuries. The poignant service addressed the concern of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), a United Methodist caucus, that the 2000 Act of Repentance did not adequately recognize those who stayed and endured historic and present-day acts of racial indignity, including the creation of a segregated membership structure, the Central Jurisdiction.

"The roots of Methodism are in the African American community," said the Rev. Vincent Harris, then president of BMCR. "The roots are evident in the fruits of new church starts and other acts that not only benefit the church but also are new creations for the future...It is important to be clear that I would not be here if they had not stayed," Harris said. "As a third-generation Methodist, I believe in the church; I believe in what Jesus brought to us in the gospel; and, I believe that by staying, we not only make the church better, but we build a foundation for our future." In the press conference following the service, Harris stated that the Service of Appreciation will be in vain if United Methodists do not move outside their comfort zones and engage others through involvement in legislative processes that will address the systemic issues underpinning those who are economically marginalized in the American culture.

During the **2008 General Conference**, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and the General Commission on Religion and Race addressed the desire to bear fruit of healing and transformation by producing a new video on DVD, titled ***Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise***.

This DVD presents an invitation to awaken to new truths and step forth in hope. It is not about blame. It is about transformation through the power of the Holy Breath within each of us. It is about embracing God's grace and experiencing sacred wholeness. Bishop Timothy Whitaker, Vice-President of the General Commission of Religion and Race in 2005 to 2008, prayerfully reflects with the unseen viewer: "I think we ought to change because it's just the right thing to do...And when we really hear the gospel we know that we are called to be part of a community in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, but we're all one in Christ Jesus. That's a compelling invitation...from which we cannot escape."

### **Who should participate in the *Truth and Wholeness* study**

Annual Conference and Jurisdictional discussion circles  
Congregational discussion circles  
Small groups and classes  
Volunteers in Mission team preparation  
United Methodist Women retreats and study groups  
United Methodist Men's retreats and study groups  
Young Adult and Older Adult ministry groups  
Confirmation classes  
College student and faculty retreats  
Training for staff of churches, conferences, agencies, camps and institutions

**The possibilities are endless** as we discover people and places hungry for truth and wholeness in the racially charged discourse of our society today.

**The goals of this study** are best achieved by allowing break times from group discussions so that individuals can step aside and digest the impact of questions, answers and scenarios. Ideal settings include weekend retreats and adult classes in which the study can be explored over an extended period. It is structured for adaptation to diverse settings. We are attempting to transform the way we understand ourselves in relationship to others whose experiences are different from ours. Thus, imagine how we might include in our discussion circles the voices of the others who are too often absent from our usual or more intimate gatherings.

**Please know that this is a fluid resource.** Updates and modifications may occur as leaders and participants respond constructively to the presented framework and ideas. Such responses can enrich this resource as we remain faithful to the intent of the project: to challenge white Christians to see the truth of white privilege in our church and culture, and to act justly in our search for true wholeness and transformation as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## Preparation before viewing the DVD

From the writings of Dr. Howard Thurman...

*I seek courage to see the true thing. It is a fearful admission that courage is required to see the true thing. So much of my vision is blurred by my fears, my anxieties, my narrow self-vision interests, that I find difficulty sometimes in giving full range to a searching scrutiny. It may be that I suspect the effect on me of seeing things in their true light. Waiting in the quiet experience of worship I seek the courage, the push of God, to see the true thing in everything with which I am involved.*

*I seek courage to do the true thing. To see the true thing is not necessarily to do the true thing. It may be that it takes a heightened form of courage to do the true thing. The act carries with it its own commitment. The act of a person finally involves the person, and he (or she) is required at last to back his (or her) deed. Therefore, to do the true thing places a searching liability on the integrity of the person who does the deed. We want always to escape the full liability for the deed. The truer the deed, the more the responsibility involves all of a (person's) life. I seek courage to do the true thing that my own life may not be double talk. Here, in the quietness of worshipful waiting, I seek courage to do the true thing.*

From *Meditations of the Heart*, p. 166-167.

In 1953, Howard Thurman accepted the position of University Preacher and Professor of Spiritual Discipline and Resources at Boston University's School of Theology. He was the first African-American to hold a full-time university faculty post. Concurrently, he also served as Dean of Marsh Chapel and Minister-at-Large to the university. While at Boston University, he became a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr.

### Step One: Tools for healthy discussion

Invite the group to suggest what tools may be helpful for them. Examples:

#### 1. Taking time for personal introductions and responses.

Examples of questions for this opening:

- Why have you chosen to participate on this journey to truth and wholeness?
- What do you hope to gain by being fully present in listening to stories of unearned privilege in our past and our present?
- Where have been the most difficult moments for learning in your life?
- All participants bring insights to the journey. What insights from your learning and experiences might you offer to others?

#### 2. Noting how conflicts will be addressed personally and corporately. Examples:

- Honoring the experiences and feelings of others by not insisting that others see the truths of your life as the only truth in the room.
- Taking time for silent reflection upon conflicts.
- Acknowledging the power of forgiveness when we unintentionally hurt another with our words.

#### 3. Building a group covenant. Agree to the importance of faithfully returning to this discussion until the study is complete.

### Establish a center place for the group gathering and discussions.

Some may call this an altar on which we place our shared life stories on this journey. Others will see the center place as a table around which we gather to break open the truth of unearned privilege in white lives and the need for healing in all lives so that the realm of God might come.

The one who calls the group together for this journey will need to prepare the space and determine the simple rituals that will bind the group together each time the participants return to the circle. Bring resources of music, candles, water and prayers to the place. It is probable that all these resources will serve as tools on this journey. Using all the senses at different times in this study will be an aid to moving from white privilege to God's promise and presence.

**Establish desired outcomes after viewing and discussing this video**

**From the writings of Dr. Howard Thurman...**

*I will keep my heart open to light. There are times when the light burns, when it is too bright, or when it is too revealing. Somehow, I must accustom myself to the light and learn to look with steadiness at all that it discloses. I will not yield to the temptation to regard the light in me as being all the light there is. Always I will seek to let my steps be guided by such light as I have at any particular moment. Even in the darkness I will learn to wait for the light, confident that it will come to cast its shaft across my path at the point of my greatest and most tragic need. Because God is the God of the darkness as well as the light, I shall be unafraid of the darkness. I will keep my heart open to truth and light.*

From *Meditations of the Heart*, p. 190.

Outcomes will be determined by the community that shares the journey and by the leader. Here are outcomes suggested by the video:

**Understanding** that white privilege was not created by the white participants in the discussion circles. [However, these same participants are challenged to recognize their complicity in the unearned privilege of their lives.]

**Ability** to discern sites and evidences of white privilege every day.

**Acknowledgement** of how the social, political and economic histories of the United States are sites of white privilege.

**Tools** for helping others see how evidences of white privilege are embedded in our newspapers and televised news reports.

**Power** to move beyond shame and anger and into positive actions.

**Respect** for all who offer testimony of the impact of white privilege on their lives.

**Deeper commitment** to our Christian baptism and the promised transformation of one's heart and mind.

## Step Two: Historical Perspective: Institutional Racism in the UMC

Why did general agencies of The United Methodist Church create this DVD?

Provide a brief history on the institutionalized racism of our denomination. Selected historical moments:

- The Reverend Richard Allen led a walkout among black members of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in 1794. This action, prompted by white racism, contributed to the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) as an independent denomination in 1816. Allen was ordained a minister at the Methodist Church's first conference in North America, held in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784. At St. George's, black members were separated from whites, restricted in taking Holy Communion, denied burial in the church's cemetery and forced to hold their own services at 5 a.m. within a segregated section of the church. Allen's desire to build a place of free worship for African Americans brought only scorn from his white church and some African Americans in his community. Yet, he and others formed the Free African Society in 1787 and then left St. George's to start Bethel AME Church, which later joined black Methodist congregations in other cities to establish their own denomination.
- Peter Williams' break with John Street Methodist Episcopal Church in 1795, which led to formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church in 1821.
- Creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1844, when disagreement over the right of pastors to hold slaves, contrary to Methodist rules, could not be resolved.
- Establishment of the Colored (later "Christian") Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church from within the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1870. After the emancipation of blacks from slavery, the desire of many freed persons to have and control their own churches became primary. This desire led formerly enslaved members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South to start their own independent religious organization. The CME Church came into existence as a result of the movement from slavery to freedom.
- Creation of the Central Jurisdiction in 1939, which segregated black Methodists into their own racially constituted jurisdiction. It was a concession to white members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South to persuade them to merge with the northern church and the Methodist Protestant Church in establishing The Methodist Church. Separate black annual conferences, which had begun forming in 1864, were part of the Central Jurisdiction for nearly three decades, until they began merging with predominantly white annual conferences in 1964. The last annual conference merger, in Mississippi, was not completed until 1973. Merger negotiations were assisted and monitored by the General Commission on Religion and Race.
- Dismantling of the Central Jurisdiction in 1967, prior to establishment of The United Methodist Church in 1968.

Listen to the voices within the 2000 General Conference's Service of Acts of Repentance for Racism in the Church."

Read and use *Steps Toward Wholeness: Learning and Repentance*, a booklet resource published by the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns. (Order at [www.gccuic-umc.org](http://www.gccuic-umc.org).)

Read selected prayers from the 2004 General Conference's "A Service of Appreciation for Those Who Stayed."

Read and listen to Bishop Violet Fisher's sermon delivered during worship at the 2008 General Conference. See "Reflections on Religion and Race" Archives at [www.gcorr.org](http://www.gcorr.org). (Note: During this worship service, a brief segment of *Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise* was shown, and the DVD was given to each annual conference delegation, inviting them to make copies to distribute to all their congregations.)

## **Step Three: Holy Scripture for the Journey from Privilege to Promise**

In this journey to truth and wholeness, participants can embrace the importance of seeking new life in Christ and knowing that God's grace abounds. When anyone in our global community experiences racial injustice, we all suffer. This study is about all-embracing wholeness and healing.

**Take time now to explore how Holy Scripture leads us to justice-filled living.**

How does the Holy Bible address racial/ethnic difference in biblical times?

Who was privileged in the Old and New Testaments?

How did the Old Testament prophets respond to power and privilege?

What teachings of Jesus might be helpful to recall as we begin our discussion of white privilege?

**Selection of scriptures that can be read by participants in the study circle:**

### **2 Kings 5:1-14**

### **The Journey of Healing**

Naaman suffered from leprosy until he obeyed Elisha's promise that his flesh would be restored once he washed in the Jordan seven times. Similarly white Americans suffer from an inability to recognize the truth of white privilege in the American Culture. White privilege must be stripped away from our way of being in the North American culture if we desire to be in restored relationship with all who are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We must re-enter the waters of our baptisms and experience the promise of God.

What do we leave behind on the banks of the river? Can we accept that the process will be an ongoing encounter with truth and seeking of wholeness?

### **Micah 6:6-8**

### **What Does the Lord Require of You?**

Facing the truth of white privilege underpinning the social, economic and political institutions of the North American culture, how shall we do justice?

Knowing the truth of white privilege, how do we divest from an institutionalized, unearned privilege and embrace a generous nature of equity for all in all that we do?

Understanding the truth of white privilege, how shall we bow our heads before God and our racial/ethnic neighbors and ask for forgiveness?

### **Matthew 15:21-28**

### **Jesus and the Canaanite Woman**

Let this scripture knock you out. Even Jesus seems at first to send the woman away. Then her persistence is heard and her faith penetrates the wall of exclusion. Jesus heals "the other."

Think about the moments you failed to listen to the fullness within the story of "the other" who suddenly appears on your path.

How is privilege challenged in this story? Have you nearly walked away from another in need due to immediate discernment of that person as not one of the chosen people?

**Mark 12:28-34**                      **Entering the Kingdom of God**

Can you imagine being not far from the Kingdom of God?! It is not our offerings, no matter how lavish, but rather the loving of our neighbors that brings us to the entrance of God's Holy City. Loving God and loving our neighbor are intimately connected in Christ's teachings. This is the bottom line. Even the scribes dared not ask any more questions after Jesus' response to the question of the greatest commandment.

Why does the answer make us uncomfortable? Where have we failed in loving our neighbors? Where are signs of hope as we begin to recognize the presence of God and our very selves in those whom we have, in the past, denied equal access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

**Luke 10: 30-37**                      **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

This parable is packed with invisible truths of our lives. How do we identify the neighbor in our own lives? How do prejudices or cultural norms determine actions taken? Can you identify similar stories in our North American culture? How can we encourage a response of hospitality to all in our social networks?

**Luke 15:1-10**                              **Lost Sheep and Lost Coin**

In these parables, listeners are invited to examine what is lost for white persons when they fail to awaken from the stupor of white privilege. Consider such things as greater experience of the human community, implicit truth and/or spiritual wholeness.

**John 8:31-32**                              **Truth Will Make You Free**

If we bear hearing the truth of the invisible nature of white privilege in the American culture and its unjust nature, we will be freed from our inability to understand our own complicity in the injustice of this white privilege. If we dare to step into the sacred waters of self-examination and self-monitoring, we will be freed from our inability to step into the *kin-dom* of God.

Remember times in your lives when you fought against the truth of white privilege because you were not ready to be freed from the unjust circumstances of your lives that brought racial privilege and power to your lives. Share with others what impact the acknowledgment of white privilege can have upon your spirit and the spirit of the North American culture.

**1 Corinthians 12:12-26**      **Baptized into One Body**

Assume the voices of the body, and speak to one another. Remember the times you have heard, read or witnessed these same voices in the body of the Church and the North American culture. How is white privilege embedded in these voices?

**Galatians 4:19**                              **Christ in Us**

James Perkinson writes about a baptismal plunge in which one is remade/formed in Christ. One rises from this baptismal plunge "in a new form, not controlled by oneself, not beholden to one's own position, not mapped by one's own social programming" (*White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity*, p. 244). He continues to state that such a "baptismal" reprogramming is lifelong self-discipline and self-confrontation (p. 245). It is an outing of white privilege in the name of the Christ, who understood baptism as a plunge into the deep end of personal and institutional pools of power and privilege, and then rising soaking wet from the waves of truth upon which we will stand on the sacred mountain of righteousness. It is the Christ in us we seek to embody with each step into our new life.

How will you move beyond tiptoeing into your Christian baptism?

## Step Four: Group Activity - The Privilege Line

### Activity: “Move Forward, Move Back”

[Source: “Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation,” developed and produced by The Studies Circles Resource Center (SCRC), 2006. See [www.studycircles.org](http://www.studycircles.org). Used by permission.]

#### Section A

Section A of this activity shows some of the advantages and disadvantages related to skin color or ethnic background. Section B will help participants talk about where there has been progress.

Jayne Moynahan Thorne, staff member at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, notes, “I’ve learned from facilitating that it is very important to do Section B of the exercise which brings everyone back together.”

#### This activity works best when:

- The group has interacted and built some understanding and trust.
- The group is racially and ethnically mixed, and most participants have a family history in this country for several generations. It may not work as well if you have a majority of youth or recent immigrants.
- The facilitator is experienced with group processes and race work.
- The facilitator has the skills to manage strong emotions that participants may feel and/or express.
- The facilitator has been trained to introduce and debrief this exercise.

#### Section A statements

1. If you were ever called names because of your race or ethnic culture, take one step back.
2. If your relatives (or ancestors) could not go to college or university because of their race, take one step back.
3. If you expect an inheritance from a family member (property, cash), take one step forward.
4. If your relatives (or ancestors) were detained and held during WWII, take one step back.
5. If you often see people of your race or ethnic group playing heroes or heroines on TV or in movies, take one step forward.
6. If you often see people of your race or ethnic group in negative roles on TV or in the movies, take one step back.
7. If you have at least one parent who earned a Master’s or Ph.D. degree, take one step forward.
8. If you had a relative or family member who was beaten because of their race, take one step back.
9. If U.S. laws prevented members of your race from voting, take one step back.
10. If most of your teachers were from the same racial or ethnic background as you, take one step forward.
11. If you come from racial groups that have ever been considered by scientists as “inferior,” take one step back.
12. If you see people from your racial or ethnic group as CEOs in most Fortune 500 companies, take one step forward.
13. If your relatives (or ancestors) were forced to come to the U.S., take one step back.
14. If you believe you have been harassed by the police because of your skin color, take one step back.
15. If your parents spoke English as a first language, take one step forward.
16. If you believe you have been treated with distrust – for example, followed by police or a clerk in a store – because of your skin color, take one step back.
17. If a relative (or ancestor) was lynched, take one step back.
18. If you had a parent who inherited wealth, take one step forward.
19. If you, or a relative, have been questioned or detained since the September 11th attacks, take one step back.
20. If your school textbooks strongly reflected your racial or ethnic group, take one step forward.
21. If your ancestors’ land was made part of the U.S., take one step back.

### **Debriefing Section A**

Stand in place where you are. Look around and see where others are.

Turn to two or three others who are closest to you and talk a little about how you are feeling.

As a whole group, discuss the following questions:

- What patterns, if any, did you notice about where everyone ended up in the room?
- At what point did you stop touching shoulders, or have to let go of your connection with your neighbors?
- Why did people end up where they are?
- When you think about where everyone ended, what does this say about our country?
- What might this mean for your community?

### **Section B**

For section B the Facilitator asks the group to form a large circle and individuals to take steps forward when appropriate.

1. If you have spoken up to defend the rights of people who are not from your own background, take one step forward.
2. If you have access to opportunities that were not available to your parents, take one step forward.
3. If you live in a racially or ethnically diverse community, take one step forward.
4. If you have worked to defend your racial or ethnic group, take one step forward.
5. If you or your parents supported the civil rights movement, take one step forward.
6. If you attended a college or university noted for its diversity, take one step forward.
7. If you have adopted, married or provided care to others who are not from your own racial or ethnic background, take one step forward.
8. If you have participated in programs or activities that deal with issues of racism or inequities, take one step forward.

### **Debriefing Section B**

Invite all to be seated before beginning this section.

What did you notice about where people ended after the second part of this activity?

How does it feel to have gone through this exercise?

## Step Five: A Litany of Preparation

### The Invitation to See, Hear and Reflect

Ask participants to read aloud this litany with you:

- Leader:** Step into the journey of new spiritual awakenings for most of us in the pew and pulpit.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Reader:** Pray for spiritual illumination throughout your participation in this discussion.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader:** Remain open to a new warming of our Wesleyan hearts so that we live out faith and works in our journey to spiritual perfection and justice-bound living.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reader:** Recognize this is not a momentary new birth of Spirit, but rather an ongoing embrace of new revelations and great spiritual wholeness in Christ's Spirit.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Embrace the understanding that the journey is both solitary and communal.
- ALL:** Celebrate how we all are enriched by the presence of those who take the journey with us.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Acknowledge that the experience of white privilege is different due to diverse family, community, and Christian church histories and experiences.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Hear the challenge for white participants: What we are doing and what must we do in order to understand and continue the journey to justice and wholeness?
- 7<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Honor the presence of our racial/ethnic brothers and sisters beside us on this journey.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Give thanks for these brothers and sisters in Christ who hold us accountable for this necessary work around white privilege.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Reader:** Understand there are times when only white participants will engage in this work, and there are times when whites will need their racial/ethnic brothers and sisters on the journey to clarify the fullness of pain experienced by those who are not white in a culture.
- Leader:** Commit to challenging our denomination when it speaks and leads only from a white lens.

Note what to look for before viewing:

- Naming and awakening to the concept of white privilege [Minutes 0 – 6:50]
- Confronting truths of institutionalized racism in our denomination's history [Minutes 6:50 – 8:45]
- Truth telling: white privilege is still a problem today [Minutes 8:46 – 11:23]
- Calling forth the living of holy lives through the empowerment of our baptism in Christ [Minutes 11:24 – END]

**After Viewing the DVD**  
**Step Six: The Need for Silence**

This is a deeper plunge into the pool of truth: white participants intimately grappling with the concept of white privilege as they reflect upon the voices and expressions within *Truth and Wholeness*. These participants will be asked to name this invisible privilege in their personal journals. Racial/Ethnic participants will be asked to name their consciousness of white privilege in the culture and in the church.

**Step Seven: Speaking from the Heart**

**Questions shared once participants have gathered in groups of three. [Suggestion: Allow minimally 30 minutes for this exchange]:**

1. Which voices seem to be your voice in this video? Why?  
Please share an example from your own life experiences.
2. What feelings arose in you as you viewed this video? How would you like to address these feelings?
3. If you were to lift up one moment from this video in order to draw another person into the conversation, what moment would you select?

**Responses shared in the full group**

Invite participants to respond to the impact of the six questions below by returning to their journal entries. (Quickly note that all participants are invited, but not expected to respond to all of these questions.)

In the Appendix are the writings of racial/ethnic clergy and laity members of our denomination responding to these same questions. The leader may choose to have these voices read to the group after each question. These writings provide a threshold for entering into these painful truths, and they help us start the journey to healing and wholeness.

1. **“Can I be promoted in my profession without my co-workers thinking it is because of my race?”**  
Minute 2:36  
Where does this happen in the appointment system of our denomination?
2. **“Can I choose housing, receive medical care or shop freely without my race being considered?”**  
Minute 5:55  
Listen carefully to the personal and cultural history of the participants’ responses.
3. **“If you are successful, are you labeled a credit to your race?”**  
Minute 6:53  
Where do you hear forms of this question in public discourse?
4. **“Are you ever told you are oversensitive about your race?”**  
Minute 7:52  
This question will most likely invoke confession and pain.
5. **“Does the congregation at my church reflect America’s diversity?”**  
Minute 10:55  
For whom is this important, and why?
6. **“Are you asked to speak as a representative of your entire ethnic group?”**  
Minute 13:56  
Listen carefully to the different responses of racial/ethnic participants and white participants.

## **Step Eight: The Next Steps**

As you continue your journey toward justice, consider studying ways that racism and white privilege are complicit parts of systems and institutions in which we live. Invite participants to bring illustrations from newspapers, newsletters and magazines that address the following realms of our lives. [The group facilitator will need to have a large selection of newspapers, newsletters and magazines on hand, if such items cannot be brought by participants from home.]

- a. Economic
- b. Judicial
- c. Educational
- d. Political
- e. Religious
- f. Cultural
- g. Environmental

## **Step Nine: Continuing the Journey**

Invite participants to share the hopes and grace discovered on this journey to truth and wholeness. Perhaps participants might be willing to share new steps for their particular journeys on the path to racial justice in The United Methodist Church and the North American culture. On the altar or center place of the journey provide a special bowl in which can be placed written notes for continued healing and extended forgiveness. Ask the group to join you in prayer over this sacred seeking.

## Selected Sources for reading and viewing

### Books

- Akers Chacon, Justin and Mike Davis. *No One is Illegal: Fighting violence and State Repression on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2006). Contact information: Tel: 773-583-7884. Website: [www.haymarketbooks.org](http://www.haymarketbooks.org).
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#### DVD Resources

*Crossing Arizona*. Produced by Joseph Mathew and Dan Devivo; directed by Joseph Mathew and Dan Devivo. Distributed by Rainlake Publications. Website: [www.crossingaz.com](http://www.crossingaz.com).

*Crash*. Produced by Don Cheadle; directed by Paul Haggis; screenplay by Paul Haggis; 2004; 112 minutes. Distributed by Lion Gate Films. Website: [www.crashfilm.com](http://www.crashfilm.com).

*Dying to Live*. Produced by Rev. Daniel Groody and Bill Groody; directed by Gerri Groody. Distributed by the University of Notre Dame. Website: [www.dyingtolive.nd.edu](http://www.dyingtolive.nd.edu).

*Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*. Produced by Shakti Butler; directed by Shakti Butler. Distributed by World Trust Educational Services, Inc. [worldtrust@earthlink.net](mailto:worldtrust@earthlink.net).

*Then There Were None*. Distributed by Pacific Islanders in Communications. Website: [www.piccom.org/shop/then-there-were-none](http://www.piccom.org/shop/then-there-were-none)

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#### California Newsreel Selected Resources

Contact information: Tel: 877-811-7495, Email: [contact@newsreel.org](mailto:contact@newsreel.org), Website: [www.newsreel.org](http://www.newsreel.org)

##### *Race – The Power of an Illusion*

Three-part documentary series: "Difference Between Us;" "Story We Tell;" and "House We Live In."

##### *Shattering the Silences*

Eight professors of color discuss the special pressures minority faculty face in majority white institutions.

##### *Skin Deep*

A multi-racial group of college students in a weekend racial sensitivity workshop discuss affirmative action, self-segregation, internalized racism and cultural identity.

##### *Unnatural Causes*

This film sounds the alarm about how our socio-economic and racial inequities in health and social conditions in which we are born, live and work profoundly affect our well-being and longevity.

#### Media Education Foundation (mef) Selected Resources

Contact information: Email: [info@mediaed.org](mailto:info@mediaed.org), Website: [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)

##### *cultural criticism & transformation* (bell hooks video presentation)

##### *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power*

##### *Racism, White Denial & the Costs of Inequality* (Tim Wise lecture on White Privilege)

#### Racial Justice Study Guides

##### *Troubling the Waters for Healing the Church: A Journey for White Christians from Privilege to Partnership.*

Produced by the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2004).

##### *United Methodist Women Resources for Racial Justice: Tools for UMW Leaders* (2006).

Compiled by Carol Barton and Elmira Nazombe, staff, Racial Justice Program, Section of Christian Social Responsibility, Women's Division - General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church  
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1502, New York, NY 10115, Tel: 212-870-3732, Website: [www.gb-gm-umc.org/umw](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/umw)

#### Contact Lists

Everyday Democracy (formerly the Study Circles Resource Center) [info@everyday-democracy.org](mailto:info@everyday-democracy.org)

Visions Inc. <http://www.visions-inc.org/>

"Create an environment where differences are recognized, understood, appreciated, leveraged, and where all can perform to their full potential.

## Step Four Alternative Exercise #1: Circle of Privilege

Participating in a “Circle of Privilege” created by Adrienne Maree Brown

[Source: Tools for Activists: Turning Privilege Disparities into Just and Sustainable Action]

Website: [www.wiretapmag.org/movement/43496/](http://www.wiretapmag.org/movement/43496/) By Adrienne Maree Brown, April 6, 2008

*Many of us have done a "Privilege Walk" at some point in our lives, or in our work as activists. The purpose of the walk is to expose the lifelong impact of privileges and 'normality' that we were either born into or born without. The exercise can very powerfully help identify all of the factors that were in place before we began making our own choices in life, factors that reinforce and widen gaps in resources and access to opportunities. The walk can be an especially useful exercise for illustrating the abstract concept of social justice for newcomers to political work, who may not always see how social and economic inequalities stifle personal success.*

*For those who haven't done the exercise, its rules are simple. Everyone gathers behind a long horizontal line. When the facilitator reads a statement that applies to you, such as, "If your family owned the house where you grew up, or land of any description," you step forward; if it doesn't, you step back. Afterward, participants get to hear and process together the personal stories about how race, class, gender, and ability affected the opportunities of individuals in the room.*

*The traditional "Privilege Walk" exercise helps unveil the distance between those who have privilege and those who don't. That visible gap shows the work that must be done within the privileged group, but often still keeps the focus on privilege, relegating those who have less to the back. It can work well within a group whose goal is to center attention on privilege and begin to unpack the guilt of having been born with those advantages. The downside is that those without privilege, as in life, can end up coming in second.*

*Reversing the Privilege Walk I wanted to reconfigure this exercise to help groups center their work and energy on community building, and illustrate that everyone has a role in social change work. In this new exercise – "Circle of Privilege" – everyone starts in a large circle, instead of behind a horizontal line, and those with the least access to power will take steps forward and end up at the center of the circle.*

*Those who are in the center at the end of this exercise are those who have been most impacted by inequality; and they should be on the frontlines of the work we do to create a better society and a safe and healthy planet. When it comes to human rights, or environmental and economic justice, these are the experts. Those further back may have more societal decision-making power and material resources, but they need the earned wisdom of those in the center to guide the work itself, and to determine where those resources should flow to promote deep, sustainable change. Both experiences are necessary, but currently the more privileged folks have a bigger influence over nonprofit work.*

*Next time your organization, campaign, or group of volunteers is looking for ways to not only understand the concept of privilege, but also find ways to turn that understanding into just and sustainable action, consider using this exercise.*

### Exercise: Circle of Privilege

#### Goals

- To create an experiential map of oppression and privilege for the group as a reference point for our work together, and to be more effective as trainers in the future.
- To give participants the experience of re-centering the impact of privilege in an effort to encourage new relationships of power and community in their work and training styles.

## Running the Exercise -- A Step-by-Step Guide for Facilitators

Have everyone form a wide circle facing the center of the room. Read the following statement: "I will read a series of sentences. If the sentence applies to you, step in the direction indicated."

Read the following sentences.

### 1. Birth Privilege:

- If your ancestors were forced to come to the U.S., not by choice, take one step forward.
- If your primary ethnic identity is American, take one step back.
- If your parents did not grow up in the U.S., take one step forward.

### 2. Childhood Home:

- If you've ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step forward.
- If you've ever had to skip a meal, or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food while you were growing up, take one step forward.
- If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step forward.
- If your parents were white-collar professionals – doctors, lawyers, etc. – take one step back.
- If there were people of a different race or class working in your household as servants, gardeners, etc., while you were growing up, take one step back.
- If your family owned the house where you grew up or land of any description, take one step back.
- If you were raised in a two-parent household, take one step back.

### 3. Childhood Community:

- If you lived in an area where you were able to play safely and unsupervised outside, take one step back.
- If you had to rely primarily on public transportation, take one step forward.
- If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity or regular violence, take one step forward.

### 4. Learning Experience:

- If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step back.
- If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step back.
- If you were told that you were beautiful, smart and capable by your parents, take one step back.
- If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step back.
- If you had access to an inspiring natural area, take one step back.
- If you saw members of your race, class, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, take one step forward.

### 5. Beginning Work:

- If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step back.
- If you were given the confidence or teaching to know how to work with your hands, take one step back.
- If you were paid less, treated unfairly or denied employment because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step forward.

### 6. Beyond Work:

- If you were ever afraid of, or the victim of, violence because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step forward.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step forward.
- If a chronic health issue has limited your opportunities, take one step forward.

### Follow-Up for the Exercise:

Instruct the room: Take a moment to look around the room, notice where you are, notice who is around you, notice how you feel right now standing in this place. None of these questions concerned things within your personal control. As we stand now, we are a map of the social, political, economic and environmental circumstances into which we were born and reared.

Have people partner up with someone who is standing near them. Ask them to reflect on the following:

#### General reactions:

How did it feel to go through the process? Any surprises? Anything exactly as you expected?

Do you often feel like you are in spaces where your access to resources and opportunity is honestly assessed and appropriately acknowledged?

What would be different in your personal life, and in the work you are engaged in, if impacted communities were seen as the center of, or as experts on, their communities' needs and situations?

How does this concept relate to being a trainer/facilitator/leader?

Though we did not create the circumstances of our birth, once we are aware of them, we gain wisdom and responsibility about how we use our privilege and our experience in this work for justice.

### Step Four Alternative Exercise #2

#### Daily effects of white privilege

[Source: Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," *Independent School*, 1990]

Website: <http://mmcisaac.faculty.asu.edu/emc598ge/Unpacking.html>

"I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think, in my case, attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions."

#### Selections from Peggy McIntosh's list could be used in a white privilege line exercise.

1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people who I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group of which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, or into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious to the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them; but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader, I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social