

Next Steps on the Journey - Supporting Congregations in Anti-racism and Justice Making Work

Prepared for the UUA Board, April 2003

Introduction

Last April President Bill Sinkford reported to this Board on UUA support for congregations in anti racism and justice making work. In conclusion he noted that “we have imaginative and relational work to do as we re-shape our anti racism and justice making work. We’ve been on this path for ten years now. We need one year to chart next steps on the journey.”

At that same meeting you received a report from the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Committee. One of their recommendations – that the UUA “develop a consultation based program for congregations that includes introductory anti racism curriculum and experiential workshops that incorporate identity, spirit and justice making” - has guided our work in charting next steps. We have been guided, as well, by feedback from congregations gathered from the Committee’s Common Ground gatherings and from leaders gathered in consultation.

We need to honor and support the work congregations are already doing. We need to support more than one path on the journey. Our resources need to be accessible and flexible. We need to reach out to our ministers as leaders in this work.

With these things in mind, we have taken time to chart next steps.

We will continue to offer the Social Justice Empowerment Program to assist congregations in developing healthy structures for doing their justice making work.

We will continue to offer the Jubilee Path resources to congregations and others as they engage in anti racism work. (These resources include Jubilee One, Jubilee Two, and Transformation Team resources.)

We will continue to offer the Welcoming Congregation resources to congregations to engage in work on homophobia and heterosexism.

Our next step - add anti oppression consulting to our repertoire

In an essay entitled “There Is No Hierarchy of Oppression,” Audre Lorde writes “I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that people cannot profit from the oppression of any other group . . . I know that I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only.”

This new consultancy

- is a joint effort of the Congregational Services and Identity Based Ministries Staff Groups
- is an opportunity to build on and develop our work in linked oppressions

- will allow us to work with a congregation "where they are" in their justice work
- will allow us to support congregations in developing their capacity to address racism
- will provide opportunities for guiding and coaching them in the transformative work of developing anti racist and anti oppressive institutional identity and practice.

By centering our consulting on anti oppression work we will be able to offer support that is flexible, agile, tailored to fit, and able to meet congregations where they are. Our consultancy work will be grounded in institutional/ power analysis of racism, linked oppressions and wisdom about congregational change/transformation

We know that

- approximately 150 congregations have experienced a Jubilee One workshop in the past 8 years
- 34 congregations have experienced a Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop in 2002-2003
- more than 275 have participated in BCT in the past.
- we have some 370 Welcoming Congregations.

Each of these represents an opportunity – an open door, a time of readiness, a time of need. With anti oppression consulting in our repertoire, we can reach out to congregations and offer to work with them to identify their next steps, to support them in expanding their capacity to engage the work of justice.

Getting us there

Informed by the mission and ministry of the Identity Based Ministries Staff Group, we will create structures of accountability with historically marginalized groups. One possibility is an advisory group of persons who are recognized by historically marginalized communities as speaking with some authority about particular oppressions, anti-oppression, identity, and working with historically marginalized communities. We can ask our UUA affiliates to identify persons and also look to non-UUA sources for acknowledged "authorities" and resources.

Knowing that anti oppression work is both internal (to the congregation) and external (with the neighborhood/community), we will work with Advocacy and Witness staff, especially Susan Leslie in her role as Director for Congregational Advocacy and Witness.

Knowing that justice work is soul work, that anti oppression work is in part educational work we will work with Life Span Faith Development Staff.

Our own research has told us that ministers and religious educators need to be leaders in this work in our congregations. Knowing that, we will collaborate with Ministry and Professional Leadership staff in support of our religious professionals.

Times of transition are times to inquire and to listen. In the spirit of the Common Ground events we will seek out stakeholders for conversation. These include the senior ministers of our large congregations (GA), the UUMA (through their anti racism anti oppression multiculturalism committee), LREDA (through their Integrity Team), District Staff and leaders, DRUUMM, and the

JTWTC as well as leaders from congregations/districts. The question is simple – what two things could the UUA offer to our congregations in this consultancy that would be most effective in creating the congregational/institutional transformation we seek?

A sense of the timing

A consultancy planning team (including Taquiena Boston, Keith Kron, Bill Gardiner, Josh Pawelek, Paula Cole Jones and Tracey Robinson-Harris and others) will meet (before GA 03) to develop a strategic map to get us from here to anti oppression consultancy.

In the Fall/Winter of 2003, following stakeholder conversations, we will design and launch a consultancy pilot.

In the summer of 2004 we will assess the pilot and design the consultancy.

By early 2005 we will launch our anti oppression consultancy.

In addition

In 2003-04, Keith Kron, Taquiena Boston and Tracey Robinson-Harris are organizing for the development of a “Welcoming Congregation” style resource in anti racism for congregations - a self administered, user friendly, clearly defined process to help congregations begin anti racism work.

We will continue to develop resources and consultancy support specifically for anti racism work and transformation teams. (see attached module outlines developed by Josh Pawelek and tested in 2002-03) This part of our work is an adaptation of the Educators and Organizers Training developed by Crossroads Ministry, and we are currently in conversation with Crossroads regarding accountability and partnership.

We are testing an evaluation instrument to help us assess the extent to which what we offer by way of trainings and workshops actually leads to transformation. (see attached draft)

We used a recent Congregational Mailing to reach congregations with news of Soul Work, encouraging them to use this resource, to connect our theologies to our justice making. (see attached letter)

We are gathering staff from several staff groups to begin work on a PR/ communications plan focusing on more effective use of readily available UU media (Interconnections, The Religious Leaders, the web and more). Our goal is to get useful information into the hands of the congregational leaders who can use it about our anti racism and justice making resources and the Journey Toward Wholeness.

Anti-Racist Identity, Practice, and Strategy For Unitarian Universalist Anti-Racism Transformation Teams

Five Module Outlines

Module I. Anti-Racist Team Practice and Internal Structures (1 Day)

The goal of this day is to focus on and solidify the team's internal processes, practices, and accountability. On the anti-racist multicultural congregation continuum, this day helps the team solidify its place in stage 4 and begin focusing on its internal movement from stage 4 to stage 5.

- Establishing processes and structures. Team members will discuss each of the following areas of team life and design structures, processes, or plans to institutionalize them:

Purpose/Mission
Covenant
Accountability Structures
Funding/Budgeting
Meeting Skills
Team Roles
Spiritual Care/Theological Reflection
Racial Caucusing
Analysis Review
Fellowship
Continuing Education
New Members
Conflict Management

- Assignment: Prepare for the training/consulting skills module. Team-members individually or as a collective should create a two-hour introductory anti-racism workshop. If you had a two-hour opportunity to introduce your board of trustees to anti-racism and to the work of your team, what would you do? How would you introduce anti-racism?

Module II. Training/Consulting Skills (1 & ½ Days)

The goal of this workshop is to equip team members with two models of introductory anti-racism workshops (their own and the Jubilee I), as well as the skills and the confidence to present these workshops in their institutional context.

General Outline

8:30 to 9:00 Gathering and Refreshments
9:00 to 9:05 Worship
9:05 to 9:10 Agenda, Goals, Logistics
9:10 to 9:30 Framing Concepts for Anti-Racism Trainers/Consultants
9:30 to 10:00 Input on Liberation Education
10:00 to 10:30 Consulting Skills: opening up the conversation about race, racism, and anti-racism
10:30 to 10:45 Break
10:45 to 11:15 Practice one-on-ones: opening up the conversation about race, racism, and anti-racism
11:15 to 11:30 Debriefing one-on-ones
11:30 to Noon General Training Technique

Noon to 12:30 Dialogue on Public Speaking, with members of the teams making on-spot presentations.

12:30 to 1:30 Lunch

1:30 to 3:30 Presentation of Team Modules and/or discussion of the necessary components in a 90 minute introductory anti-racism workshop.

3:30 to 3:45 Break

3:45 to 4:15 Critique of Modules and further dialogue

4:15 to 5:30 Presentation of the Jubilee I model and the Crossroads 90-minute module.

5:30 to 6:30 Dinner

6:30 to 7:00 Working with a co-trainer

7:00 to 7:30 Identifying the Outcome

7:30 to 9:00 Dealing with Resistance

Assignments:

- Continue internal development of the team (from first module)
- Continue history and analysis application work (from Analysis and Team-Building Day)
- Finish Team Mission Statements
- Be familiar with latest version of congregation's strategic plan, mission, or vision statement.

Module III. Strategic Planning (1 Day)

The goal of this module is to facilitate the team's drafting of a challenging but realistic strategic plan for the first three to five years of anti-racist transformation in their congregation.

General Outline

8:30 to 9:00 Gathering and Refreshments

9:00 to 9:05 Opening Worship

9:05 to 9:45 Review copies of congregation's mission statement, vision, and/or current strategic plan. Compare to team's mission statement. Ask: How does the congregation's mission statement, vision, and/or current strategic plan support the work of the team?

9:45 to 10:30 Creating a 20-year vision. Ask: If your work is successful, what will your congregation look like in 20 years with respect to its identity, mission, purpose, structure, policies, practices, membership, and relationship to the larger community?

10:30 to 10:45 Break

10:45 to 11:30 Creating Five-Year Goals: What will be happening as a result of the team's work in the congregation in five years? To answer this question realistically, invite team members to reflect on 1) the movement from stages 3 to 4 on the anti-racist multicultural congregation continuum; 2) the first organizing task (claiming an anti-racist institutional identity); and 3) the lowest level of the Crossroads Levels Chart (institutional identity, mission, purpose).

11:30 to Noon Restate responses as specific goals.

Noon to 12:30 Prioritize goals

12:30 to 1:30 Lunch

1:30 to 4:30 Create One Year Objectives. For each goal, what specific tasks must be completed in the first year of the team's work? Use Crossroads document, "Organizing Goals and Strategic

Outcomes on Stages 3-5 of the Continuum of Institutional Change” as a reference.
4:30 to 5:00 Dialogue on implementing the plan and taking action

Assignment: Create a final draft of the strategic plan.

Module IV. Racial Identity Development and Life-Span Anti-Racism Resources (1/2 Day)

This module has two goals. First, it provides input and dialogue on theories of racial identity development. This input and dialogue provides a framework for the second goal, the introduction of a comprehensive set of resources available to UU congregations engaged in anti-racist institutional transformation: videos, films, curricula, organizations, speakers, workshops, networks, websites, racism audits, racism assessments, case studies, dialogue groups, etc.

General Outline

8:30 to 9:00 Gathering and Refreshments
9:00 to 9:05 Worship
9:05 to 9:10 Agenda, Goals, Logistics
9:10 to 9:50 Input and Exercises on Adult Identity Development
9:50 to 10:30 Input on Racial Identity Development.
10:30 to 10:45 Break
10:45 to 11:30 Exercises on Racial Identity Development
11:30 to 12:30 Presentation of Anti-Racism Resources

Module V. Proclaiming Anti-Oppression Beyond the Congregation (1/2 Day):

The goal of this module is to help transformation teams begin thinking about their congregation’s external justice work. In particular, it provides input and dialogue on how to maintain and proclaim an anti-racist and anti-oppressive approach to justice work in the context of community partnerships and justice coalitions.

8:30 to 9:00 Gathering and Refreshments
9:00 to 9:05 Worship
9:05 to 9:25 Review of Congregation’s current justice work.
9:25 to 10:00 Explanation of faith-based community organizing models (Alinsky, IAF, Gamaliel, etc.), including input and dialogue on basic principles of organizing beyond institutional walls, i.e. one-on-ones, relationship building, identifying allies, developing coalitions, building organizations, cutting issues. Distinguishing between issue-based, community-based, and institutionally-based organizing.
10:00 to 10:30 Using Jubilee II analysis of racism to assess 1) congregation’s current justice work, and 2) community-based organizing efforts and other coalitions in which the congregation is involved.
10:30 to 10:45 Break
10:45 to 11:15 Dialogue on a) participation in coalitions that are not explicitly or intentionally anti-racist; b) participating in anti-racist coalitions that are not anti-oppressive (i.e., fail to embrace gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender people, people with disabilities, women, and poor people); and c) participating in coalitions with theological conservatives and religious fundamentalists.

11:15 to 11:45 Dialogue and input on developing accountable partnerships

11:45 to 12:05 Review of Freire's Action/Reflection model. Dialogue on ways to establish an Action/Reflection process for the team.

12:05 to 12:30 Final input on anti-oppression models. (Linda Stout, bell hooks, Elias Farajaje-Jones, William Jones)

Evaluation and Closing Ceremony

Assessing Transformation

Dear workshop participant: Thank you for taking a few moments to carefully respond to the following questions. Your critical feedback on the quality and effectiveness of this workshop is important to the long-term success of the Unitarian Universalist Association's anti-racism/anti-oppression initiative.

Transformation

A) Self Awareness — What impact has this workshop had on you personally? Can you identify any changes in your personal understanding of race/racism/oppression as a result of this workshop? How has this workshop contributed to your personal spiritual growth?

B) Interactions — How were your interpersonal, cross-racial and cross-cultural skills strengthened and/or improved as a result of this workshop?

C) Congregational Culture — Did the workshop help you understand congregational change processes with regard to dismantling institutional racism/oppression? What impact is this workshop likely to have on your congregational culture? What impact, if any, is this workshop likely to have on the collective spiritual life of your congregation?

D) Community Outreach/Relationships—What insights did you gain with regard to your congregation's external relationships and outreach programs, especially those associated with communities of color/historically marginalized groups? How might this workshop lead to changes in the way your congregation thinks about and relates to people of color communities/historically marginalized groups beyond its walls?

E) Continuing Education—What resources will you and your congregation need to implement, maintain, and sustain any changes that occur as a result of this workshop? What do you see as the next steps for working to dismantle racism/oppression in the context of your congregation?

Trainers

Please comment on the skills and/or limitations of the trainers.

Participant's Handbook

Please comment on the usefulness of the participant's handbook.

Other Comments

Please provide any other comments you may have about the workshop, including things you liked

or disliked, changes you would make, environment and accommodations, emotional vs. intellectual content, etc.

Name and congregation _____ (optional)

Thanks!

To: Lay Leaders, Ministers, Religious Educators

**From: Tracey Robinson-Harris
Director, Congregational Services**

Date: February 14, 2003

Subject: Imagining a new future together

I want to inform you of a new resource that I think will begin to shape our future together as a community committed to spiritual development and social justice. *Soul Work: Anti-Racist Theologies in Dialogue* edited by Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones is what many of us have been waiting for.

The book is a major milestone with implications far beyond the UUA. It will be an important resource in helping congregations to realize their potential in doing social justice work and strengthen relationships between congregations and their communities.

Soul Work brings together some of our best thinkers (Unitarian Universalist and others) who challenge us to connect theology to social justice as a critical dimension of reclaiming our full humanity. You may recognize some of the authors, who represent a multiplicity of perspectives:

Rosemary Bray McNatt
Gary Smith
Thandeka
Rebecca Parker
Paul Rasor
William R. Jones
Patricia Jimenez

James Cone and George Tinker offer insightful essays and reflections that take us beyond the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

We hope you will take advantage of this new resource. [Soul Work is available from the UUA bookstore](#) (1-800-215-9076). It may also be available through your church bookstore.

We can imagine a new future together! If we can imagine it, we can create it!

Ways to Use Soul Work: Anti-Racist Theologies in Dialogue

We hope that this volume inspires readers to become more fully engaged in antiracism work as part of the task of justice-making—from reconsidering their deepest beliefs to becoming more fully engaged in ever-deepening theological reflection and action. Readers may wish to use this book in any of the following ways:

- Individual reflection and study
- As a text (perhaps a chapter at a time) for:
 - Book discussion groups;
 - A resource for church leadership discussions regarding your congregation’s vision and/or mission, or its engagement in the wider community;
 - Youth, young adult or other affinity groups to stimulate ideas on how to connect values with the kind of world we hope to create;
 - Social Justice/Social Action, Anti-Racism, or Journey Toward Wholeness committees;
 - Adult enrichment/education classes;
 - Theological schools classes and libraries;
 - Minister’s study groups or retreat;
- Sunday programs, including inspiration for sermons;
- Inspiration for congregants sharing their own stories connecting antiracism as a spiritual task;
- To create or supplement antiracism workshops;
- As a source of for beginning the task of remedial education (see Rebecca Parker essay).