

Ministry Manual:

Equipping Consistories and Lay Leaders to Combat
Racism

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Introduction:

As a soon to be pastor, I often wonder about how to equip the leaders of the church. I wonder about what to do with the consistory, and how I can equip them to lead along side of me. I firmly believe that the speed of the leader determines the speed of the team. In this case, the speed of the pastor in conjunction with speed of the leaders of the church (consistory as well as other lay leaders), determines the speed of the congregation. I cannot expect my congregation to participate in anything that my key leaders, or I as the pastor, am not willing to do.

The church I am currently a member of, and where my husband is the pastor, is a completely white church. We are situated in the middle of a neighborhood, which has begun to change and is no longer all white. However, our church has stayed homogeneous, and I often wonder why. What are we doing wrong that we are not a place where people who aren't white feel comfortable worshipping at? My first realization came when I understood that members of my congregation do not think racism still exists. If asked, they would respond that they aren't racist, and it isn't their problem that non-white people don't want to come to our church. They just don't come, is the answer I receive. This provides a hurdle in training the leaders of my church—education. The leaders cannot be ignorant about racism and prejudice; they need to know that racism still runs rampant in our country. The Belhar confession study guide would be the first resource I would use with leaders. I would go through the study guide as devotions before consistory meetings and educate the consistory about one of the confessions the RCA believes. This study guide is a good way to ease into the topic of racism, as well as a guided discussion, and ideas for action. After going through the study guide, it would need to be determined how to proceed. One key thing I learned in all of my reading and study of training and educating about racism is that you must be intentional. In an all white church, the topic of racism isn't going to just come up. We need to be intentional about our conversations and actions in order to become less naive. In being intentional, I would have to decide if the consistory would do some kind of weekend workshop on racism, perhaps using Katz' model as a guide, or if I would teach a class that the consistory would be required to attend once a month using Derman-Sparks class as a guide, or if I would continue to use the devotional time before consistory meetings as a place to read short articles, reflect discuss, and pray.

In all of my reading and research, it has become clear that racism is a much bigger issue that I ever thought it was. I have come to understand that teaching leaders and educating them cannot be an isolated event. In order to equip the leaders of the church, a complete shift in how we view the world has to take place. We cannot view unity as something we talk about during devotions, or Sunday school hour and then forget about. Unity and reconciliation need to be at the forefront of our minds, it needs to become a way of living as members of the body of Christ. This project has given me a great place to start teaching our leaders about racism, but it can only be the beginning. In order for effective change to take place, we need to teach others so they can teach others. It does no good to teach the parent something half way, because

then they will not be able to teach their children. You must teach and educate about racism for the rest of your life, only then will people begin to understand and be able to teach those around them.

What follows is information that I have found helpful as I think about working with my consistory and other lay leaders. First, there is a summary of two interviews with African American church leaders (p. 3). Second, there is a list of written resources (p. 6). Some of the sources are books, some articles. Some of the sources are actual training programs and classes I found that could be adapted to a particular setting, and other sources are informational. The leaders I am working with have little, if any, knowledge about racism, so I found it important to include some of these kinds of educational resources as well. Third, there is a list of organizations dealing with racism that I have found helpful (p. 10). Some are from the RCA website, which has been very useful. Other organizations are from around the country. Some would travel to work with a congregation, while others won't, but I still found their information useful. Again, some of the organizations offer workshops and programs to assist in training leaders, while other organizations are included purely for information purposes and for uncovering underlying biases.

The journey is long, and it can seem overwhelming to me to begin educating church leaders about racism. The key is to begin the task. Hopefully these resources will be helpful to others as we work to bring about reconciliation and unity.

Interview Summaries:

For this ministry manual project, I am interested in discussing how mainly white churches can begin training and educating their leaders on the topic of racism. With that topic in mind, I choose to talk with two people who are in leadership positions at their church or ministry. I wanted to hear straight from people in ministry their suggestions and experiences. Just as I, as a woman, want to give input on how as a church we can have more gender equality; I wanted the voice of leaders in the church on how we can begin training our leaders to become more aware of racial differences and work towards being a welcoming place for all people.

I asked both of the people I talked with roughly the same questions. I asked about their experience in the church, and then I asked what ideas they have for my husband (Dave) and I as we work with educating and training the consistory and staff. I choose two people who work in leadership positions in their ministries. I figured that leaders know how to train other leaders and know first-hand what information would be most helpful for Dave and I. I also choose the one individual because he has been to our church one time before. He did a pulpit supply for us one Sunday morning. He has been to our church only this one time, and will have a completely different perspective on our church than we do. Since he is African American, I was interested to see how welcoming he thought our church was to him. The other individual I choose to interview was a bit more random, but a tribute to answered prayer. I will begin my summary with him.

Dave and I have been praying for our church ever since we arrived, and even before that. We want it to be a welcoming place for all people. Both of us have a heart for outreach and people who have walked away from church. This class has been one answer to our prayers. The other answer came in the form of Joe¹. I'm in preaching this semester, and there are several non-white students in this class. I feel strange just going up to them and saying, hey, you're not white, can you answer some questions for me? So I began praying about this. One class period, I sat next to Joe. Joe is a pastor up in Muskegon. There were three or four of us early to class and we were having a lively discussion about our ministries. Joe and I talked again later and what follows are the high points of our discussion. His first point to me was that there is a racial gap. White he and I may know this, most of the people in my church do not, while most of the people in his church do! All things must begin here. There is some kind of awareness that needs to be created in our congregation. While our church isn't made up of economically upper class people, everyone is

¹ Name changed.

middle class and white. The majority do not realize that this makes them part of the dominate group. So the first part of our discussion focused on awareness. We both felt a good place to start was with the leadership of the church. If you don't have your staff and consistory on board, it's going to be more challenging to filter the awareness to the entire congregation. Joe gave me two very helpful websites to facilitate this process. We also talked about getting someone who isn't white on staff. While this is a bit more of a long term answer for our church, I believe it is important. Right now the staff is made up of men. Our head pastor (my husband) is a white male, our youth pastor is a white male, and our music director is a white male. The only females we have on staff are both white; one is the secretary, and the other is a part-time Americorps volunteer. At present, our consistory is made up of entirely white males. Our church is not opposed to having women serve as elders or deacons, but none were nominated this time around. Joe and I discussed that it seems like a step in the right direction to have women on staff and serving on consistory, but to carefully consider the positions they are in. The women on staff aren't in "main" positions of leadership. They are working in stereotypical women's roles, secretarial and children's ministries (our Americorps person works with kids) Joe encouraged us to pray about getting someone on staff who is a minority. This alone will convey a powerful message to our congregation. Joe and I ended our discussion talking about being intentional in this entire process. Becoming more racially aware and sensitive isn't something that just happens because we have an education time with our consistory. While time didn't allow us to get into specific details, Joe suggested that we need to be intentional about making other races feel a part of our community, and connecting with them on a personal level. He encouraged me that he knows it can be done (referring to a white congregation becoming more racially aware) but it takes sincerity, and the people of the congregation wanting to get outside our comfort zones. He encouraged us to pray a lot!

The second person I talked with is Sam². I have been in classes with Sam before, and we share a love of the Pistons! Sam preached at our church one Sunday morning, and I thought he might have something unique to say based on his experience of our church. We first talked about his experience of race in the church, specifically the RCA/CRC. He told me that the worst problem he has experienced and continues to experience is the fact that people have no idea how racist they are. He gets comments like, "he is a young African American man but he is really well spoken" or "you were really articulate." While Sam realizes these people mean well and are trying to

² Name changed

compliment him, it really shows how unaware and racist people really are. He went on to talk about how he believes most people in the RCA/CRC (because he grew up in these denominations) mean well, but have had so little (or no) contact with people outside of their own circles and cultures. Because of the lack of contact with a variety of people, Sam believes that ignorance is the main contributing factor to the racial gap. This was a theme that both Sam and Joe emphasized again and again. People just don't know, and aren't aware of their actions and the implications their actions have on other people. Sam also commented that because the people in our congregation are the people of power and influence in the city (as part of the dominate group) they have no reason to desire or want contact outside their circles unless they're actively involved in their churches. He and Joe both agreed that most people in our church probably have never heard of institutional racism and don't even know that they might be contributing to it. Both Sam and Joe said awareness is the biggest issue and the place to begin.

Sam suggested that our church find some way to get our people around other cultures in a "non-church" arena where there is nothing at stake other than enjoying each other's company. While Sunday morning is a place we want to strive to become more welcoming, it is a high energy, tense situation. Sa suggested grilling out with some music might be a place to start, especially since our immediate neighborhood isn't as homogeneous as our Sunday morning worship is. Another suggestion Sam had was to go to "their turf." While part of our goal is to become a more hospitable place, a bigger part of our goal is to help our people become more welcoming. It would be a huge step for people in our congregation to leave their comfort zone and show they are a welcoming group by going to "their turf." Sam suggested that partnering with a Hispanic or Black church would be one way of helping our people become welcoming and give parishioners from both congregations the opportunity to get to the other people's turf. Sam shared that he has seen racism from Hispanic and Black churches too, with comments like "he's white, but really cool." Partnerships are a unique way to help benefit everyone.

Both of my conversations with Joe and Sam were very helpful. Both emphasized that right now the main problem is ignorance. While this seems like a daunting topic to educate people about, it can be done. Both men also said this is a life-long process that needs to be bathed in prayer. Racial issues are touchy for a lot of people, and many of the people in our congregation have family stories of racism, and have a completely different view of non-white people than the younger generation does. At one time it was acceptable to be racist, now it is not. We are asking

people to change some of the ideas they may have grown up with, and that is challenging, but nothing God can't accomplish!

Annotated Bibliography: Written Sources

Belhar Confession Study Guide

As one of the confessions that the RCA holds as true, the Belhar should be used in any church leadership training on racism and unity. Rev. Wes Granberg-Michaelson states, "if the church is to grow in faithful and fruitful ministries, and if we are to have missional credibility and influence in the N. American context, we will need to engage the challenges of racial reconciliation and the biblical imperative of a multicultural community that bears witness in the church to God's intention in Christ for all humanity." The RCA web site (www.rca.org, under the beliefs tab) provides a downloadable study guide for the Belhar that would be useful for consistory devotions, leadership training events, retreats, Sunday school classes or a sermon series. At the completion of the study of the Belhar, participants will be familiar with the confession, and be able to articulate God's desire for unity and reconciliation among the church. The study guide also provides space for discussion and what each person can do to work for reconciliation in their lives.

Burrow, Rufus. "Racism, white privilege, and a seminary's pro-reconciliation initiative." *Encounter*. 68.1 (Wint 2007): 1-17.

Rufus Burrow Jr. is Indiana Professor of Christian Thought and Professor of Theological ethics at Christian Theological Seminary. Burrow clearly explains white privilege, and shifts the conversation from a discussion about how African Americans experience and feel and experience racism to emphasizing what white people think about their privilege, how they see themselves and privileged and what they intend to do about it. The article is a case study of Burrow's experience at Christian Theological Seminary as the first black person to be granted tenure. His experience gives leaders a concrete example of white privilege and an African American's experience in a white privileged world. His study also points out, like the McConnell piece, that there has to be intentionality on the part of the leaders of an institution or church for racial reconciliation and diversification to work. It was only after the seminary made a conscious decision to become more diverse that Burrow was offered and took the job.

Chamberlain, Gary L. "Model to combat racism." *Theology Today*. 32.4 (Ja 1976): 353-364.

Gary Chamberlain is assistant professor of religion at Webster College in Missouri, and suggests a model for developing a community of people equipped with the tools to deal with personal, institutional and cultural racism. The first premise of his model is that racism is viewed as a substitute religion. His second premise is that Christianity has the theological and organizational tools to deal with racism at its roots. An effective model will allow individuals to understand his or her racism and to change racist attitudes. Chamberlain's model has been used extensively since March 1970. The model consists of three phases; the first is centered around team building, problem definition, and racism analysis. During the second phase, the team is equipped to research and analyze their institution. They learn how to discover structure policies and practices that result in racism. The team also evaluates the areas of the institution where resistance to change is strong and where flexibility and openness to change are located. In the final phase the information and analysis gathering is used as a basis for developing goals, strategies and tactics for change. This model has been tested by its successes and failures and emerges as an effective strategy for personal and institutional change. This model hinges on finding persons who hold significant positions of power and control within the institution and who are committed to social change at least on the personal level. These people are hopefully the ones who are in leadership positions within the church and provide an ideal place to implement Chamberlain's model.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and Carol Brunson Phillips. Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

Derma-Sparks is the director of the Culturally Relevant/Anti-Bias Education Leadership Project at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, where she has been on the faculty for several years. Phillips is executive director of the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington D.C. The book is organized into three parts: (1) conceptual framework for anti-racism and the premises underlying their pedagogy, (2) describes a course the authors co-taught for years, (3) describes how you can make the class your own. The first section of the book is more useful background information on racism. However, the heart of the book lies with the second and third sections. The premise of the author's is that you must provoke cognitive and emotional disequilibrium before participants in the class can be guided into a new paradigm about society and self. There are interactive exercises as well as discussions. The goal of the class is for participants to become self-motivated activists, able to apply their new consciousness to work behavior and personal lives. This class would be very useful in a consistory type setting, or a Sunday school class. You do not have to re-invent an entire class, you can adapt this outline to your needs. Once the leaders of the church have gone through this class, it would be useful to have one of the leaders lead others through the material.

Feagin, Joe R. and Hern, Vera. White Racism: the Basics. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Feagin is a graduate professor of Sociology at the University of FL and Vera is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of FL. They have put together a book that uncovers racism as a fundamental social practice embedded in cherished cultural and political institutions. The book deals with well known racial incidents such as the Rodney King beatings, Charles Stuart murder in Boston, but also deals with racism in lesser known venues; at a small college, in a family restaurant, and on the job. This book is again very useful for people who are unaware that racism still exists. It should be read in conjunction with some of the other articles and books, and would be a great background resource in training and educating leaders in conjunction with Katz' or Derman-Sparks' programs.

Johnson, Wayne G. "Religion, racism and self-image: the significance of beliefs." Religious Education. 68.5 (S-O 1973): 620-630.

The author, Wayne G. Johnson, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside gives insight as to why the church is so racist. The question is not whether the church is racist, it is, the question is not whether racism is immoral, it is. The question is why church members seem to reject their own clear moral standards? If the church would become what it can be, a fellowship that finds the center of its identity in Christ, the church would become void of racist categories. Johnson argues that what we believe about the world has a great deal to do with how we act in the world. He cites the main conclusion of a Stark and Glock study says that theological notions and convictions play an important role in religious and racial prejudice. Beliefs considerably influence prejudice, quite independently of the effects of class, education etc., which had preoccupied social scientists. Our beliefs lead to actions. Johnson concludes his article with the statement that the church has taken on the identity structures of the culture. Church-goers ask other people to come to their church who are like them, thus saying they belong. Church-goers are unable to ask someone of a different race to come to their church. This isn't a biblical factor, the church is finding their identity is cultural structures—you look like me, so you belong. The next step is to train church leaders to use the Gospel and Christian doctrine as defining categories of existence, not the societal structures. This article would be extremely beneficial for the elders of the church to read and study, as the elders are responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church.

Katz, Judith H. White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

Katz has put together a useful training program for teaching people about racism, and helping them change their racist attitudes and behaviors. Similar to Derman-Sparks book, Katz' book begins with an introduction to racism, and what follows is the heart of the book-the training program Katz has developed. The training program consists of six stages of development and appropriate exercises to work through each stage. By the completion of the workshop, participants should be able to; clearly define racism, bias, bigotry, prejudice, institutional racism, cultural racism, individual racism, identify personal feelings and fears around racism while defining ways in which one's own attitudes and behaviors are representative of racism in the US. Finally, they will develop and act on specific strategies designed to combat racism on an institutional and individual level. Katz draws attention to the fact that this program is a beginning for white people, a place where they can get an in-depth view of racism and help participants explore and understand white racism. From this point, participants can explore more ways racism affects their lives and work to develop ways to combat it. The program would be ideal for training a group of people that have no idea they are racist. The exercises are thought provoking, and Katz provides numerous extra resources and materials if needed. The training program would work well in a one hour a week group, an intense retreat, or pieces of the training can be taken and put together for a 3 hour workshop.

Kinoshita, Glenn. "On Earth as it is in Heaven" *Prism Magazine*, Sept/Oct 2006: 8-13.

Prism Magazine interviewed Adam Edgerly and Ken Fong, pastors of churches that uphold racial reconciliation as a core value and Brad Christerson, the co-author of *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations*. They were asked to share their thoughts and reflect on their experiences and research. The interviewees emphasized that intentionality on the part of the leaders of the church is key, as is integrating the leadership teams. Continuing dialogue is also necessary, as diversity begins to increase, conversations must also continue. Racial issues need to be addressed as a central theological issue not just a side issue. A unique part of this article compared to the others cited here, was the point the interviewees brought up about celebration. Leadership can get very involved in the tuff issues of racism and prejudice and forget to celebrate. It is energizing and fun to come together from different backgrounds and learn from one another. While the tuff issues need to be addressed, it is important to remember to celebrate! It is important for leaders to read what other leaders are saying and how things are working in their churches, this piece is very useful!

McConnell, C Douglas. "Confronting Racism and Prejudice in Our Kind of People." *Missiology*. 25.4 (O 1997): 387-404.

McConnell served for 15 years in Papua New Guinea and Australia as a missionary with Asian Pacific Christian mission. He now teaches, and chairs two departments at Wheaton College in Illinois. McConnell's observations have led him to conclude that homogeneous churches do not appear to be moving toward racial reconciliation as they mature, which is not for lack of opportunity. The main problem is the lack of intentionality in confronting prejudice as part of the formation process, this in turn leads to perpetuating racism and prejudice. McConnell discusses the homogeneous unity principle (HUP) which states that people like to become Christians with out crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers. This has been useful as an evangelistic tool, but as a church growth principle, it is not intended to mirror the final state of the church. The principle is that once people become Christians they will apply the biblical principles they learned and lose their inclination towards racism and prejudice. The formation of homogeneous units is self-perpetuating, people become more alike by choosing people like themselves and restricting interaction with people who are different. The studies discussed in this article by McConnell show that there are few examples of the maturity hoped for and the lessening of racism and prejudice. Unconfronted racism and prejudice remain a subtle, but intrinsic part of the interpretive framework of the church

members. McConnell's research states that clergy indicated a concern for the issues of racism and prejudice; but do nothing about it in their churches. With this conclusion in mind, it is essential that we *intentionally* equip our church leaders to confront racism and prejudices, or the cycle will continue. Church leaders have the position to be able to speak about unity and the HUP, but also speak out about differences being beautiful, and each person being part of the body of Christ. This kind of shift in thought has to be taught by the leaders of the church.

Shriver, Donald W. "The churches and the future of racism." *Theology Today*. 38.2 (JI 1981): 152-159.

Donald W Shriver is the president and professor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary in NY. He argues for a new moral reading of American history, claiming that Church historians, theologians and ethicists will not serve the American church or people if they systematically ignore the possibility that there is something good, as well as something evil, hidden, or revealed in American history. In working toward new moral readings of American history, Shriver says we must preach and teach the faith in the context of a wider range of "ordinary" experiences that is customary in most white churches. Shriver concludes that we must: study the details of strange world cultures until we no longer subject them to our ignorance or our ill-formed prejudices, cultivate the art of empathy so we feel a little of what the stranger feels, and we have to let our ideals of right and wrong be subject to the criticism of the foreigner. If we practice a new reading of American history, work towards a wider range of ordinary experiences as well as implement Shriver's recommendations in his concluding remarks, we will be much closer to real church unity than ever before. Implementing some of Shriver's ideas with church leadership may come in the form of studying a world culture at each consistory meeting or working together at a weekend retreat on non-violent communication and empathy training. Church leaders become more educated, and lead by example to the rest of the congregation.

Annotated Bibliography: Organizations

Challenging White Supremacy Workshop: www.cwsworkshop.org/about.html

Challenging White Supremacy (CWS) workshop organizers believe that the most effective way to create fundamental social change in the U.S. is by building mass-based, multi-racial grassroots movements led by radical activists of color. They also believe that the major barrier to creating these movements is racism or white supremacy. One way to challenge white supremacy is to do anti-racist training workshops in our own communities. CWS has worked in the broad-based radical, multi-racial community of the Bay Area since 1993. CWS workshops have been designed by a group of white anti-racist organizers. We believe our special responsibility is to help white social justice activists become principled and effective anti-racist organizers -- both to challenge our white privilege and to work for racial justice in all our social justice work.

This organization is very aggressive, and I could not determine if they would travel from CA to MI for a workshop. Even if they would not, I would still recommend the web site. Many people in our leadership positions in churches are unfamiliar with white supremacy and have few resources for addressing the issue. This web site gives good resources (downloadable) and gives good guidelines for workshops and communication skills, even if a church organizes a workshop on their own (there were also e-mail addresses, so I'm certain the people of CWS would be willing to help on individual levels). If they would travel and offer workshops in our area, the workshop on "Becoming an Anti-Racist Activist" seemed the best place to get the conversation started around white supremacy issues.

Crossroads: www.crossroadsantiracism.org

The mission statement of Crossroads is: to dismantle systemic racism and build anti-racist multicultural diversity within institutions and communities. This mission is implemented primarily by training institutional transformation teams, and is guided by the following principles: (1)The work of Crossroads is based upon a systemic analysis of racism and its individual, institutional and cultural manifestations; (2)The work of Crossroads is faith-based while at the same time non-sectarian, seeking to honor all expressions of spirituality that support and empower anti-racism; (3)Crossroads seeks to be accountable in its work to those who share a common analysis of racism, and especially to communities of color; (4)Crossroads understands its anti-racism work to be part of a national and global movement for racial justice and social equality; (5)Crossroads recognizes that resistance to racism also requires resistance to all other forms of social inequality and oppression.

This organization was found on the RCA website and is very useful. Crossroads offers workshops, leadership training, many resources, and a secure discussion forum. At the very least this is a great place for leaders of a congregation to get started learning about anti-racism, and gives a number of useful resources.

Mosaic Alliance: www.mosaicalliance.com

The Mosaic Alliance is a global network committed to create the future by unleashing a culture of entrepreneurship, activism, innovation, authenticity, and creativity within the local church. The Alliance seeks to empower and equip churches and leaders to maximize the creative potential in the communities in which they serve. We partner with leaders from around the globe in effort to catalyze the movement of Jesus Christ. The Mosaic Alliance provides resources, training, and ongoing dialogue in effort to serve leaders and churches worldwide. One of our focus areas involves serving church planters, but the Alliance is not limited to church planters. Join us in creating the future together!

While at first glance this site seems to have nothing to do with racism or anti-racism training, it is a wonderful place to start to form some networks for church leaders. They are committed to activism and innovation, which is exactly what will be needed for churches wanting to combat racism and prejudice. Mosaic Alliance offers different events focused on unleashing creativity, living into your strengths etc. The site has endless information that would be helpful in developing leaders who want to reach out to diverse communities.

PBS: http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

This is perhaps my favorite site I found concerning race issues. The web-site is very interactive and answers a plethora of questions about race and racism. This is a great web-site to answer a lot of questions that most people are afraid to ask such as; is race for real, why is it hard to talk about race, where did the idea of race come from, is race in our genes or is it just in our heads? The site offers wonderful background readings on genetics, human variations, evolution, slavery, the origins of race, ancient views of difference, laws, immigration, etc. The site uses very simple language that anyone can understand, is extremely non-threatening, and makes you want to learn more. I would recommend this site to a middle school age student or my grandma!

Project Implicit: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html>

Psychologists understand that people may not say what's on their minds either because they are unwilling or because they are unable to do so. The unwilling-unable distinction is like the difference between purposely hiding something from others and unconsciously hiding something from yourself. The Implicit Association Test makes it possible to penetrate both of these types of hiding. The IAT measures implicit attitudes and beliefs that people are either unwilling or unable to report.

The site offers many IAT's, but the relevant ones are on Race and Skin Tone. This test provides immediate results of the test-takers preferences. The results can be surprising and are great for educating people about their unconscious beliefs towards people of different races. One of the first steps in training our leaders is to help them acknowledge what kind of beliefs and biases they really have. Once acknowledged, that provides a place to start. Often in my setting I hear things like, "it's their (people of different races) problem, we are very welcoming" and similar phrases. This simple test provides a good place to be honest about our feelings. I think most people would be shocked to see the results of their IAT, I know I was!

RCA Website: www.rca.org (click on multicultural ministries on the left)

The RCA has just hired Earl James as the coordinator of multicultural initiatives and social justice. He has provided some good resources on the RCA web page for congregations interested in transforming their homogeneous group into a multiracial body of believers. Chicago Urban Reconciliation Enterprise (CURE) is a cross-racial program that pairs people of different races together for a year. Pairs meet monthly for discussions that focus on race, faith and personal journeys. Congregations Organizing for Racial Reconciliation (CORR) exists to empower and equip churches and other Christian organizations in West Michigan to organize and disciple their members to become agents of institutional and individual racial reconciliation. CORR collaborates with interested congregations and other Christian organizations connecting people. CORR would be a great place to get connected on the journey of racial reconciliation in the West Michigan area. On the path to reconciliation we need people to walk with us, and CORR, as well as Mosaic are great organizations to connect people. Earl is also very willing to talk with people one on one and help get some conversations and ideas going!