

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

## **Leader's Study Guide**

Developed by

The United Methodist Church  
General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns  
and the General Commission on Religion and Race

## **Background of DVD Project**

**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 historical acts of racism that prompted African Americans to leave the predominantly white denomination and acts of racism against those who stayed, through witness, prayer and acts of penitence. 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.

In the **Service of Appreciation**, honoring and celebrating those African Americans who remained as members of the former Methodist Episcopal Church and other predecessor Methodist bodies, the **2004 General Conference** addressed the concern of Black Methodists for Church Renewal for the omission to acknowledge during the 2000 Act of Repentance those who stayed in the Methodist family and endured historical and present acts of racial indignities, including the creation of a segregated structure. "The roots of Methodism are in the African American community," said the Rev. Vincent Harris, president of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. "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, Rev. 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 & the General Commission on Religion and Race addressed the desire to bear fruit of healing and transformation by launching a new DVD entitled "**Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise.**"

This DVD presents the 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, former Vice President of the General Commission of Religion and Race Board of Directors and Episcopal leader of the Florida Annual Conference, 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 a 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."

### **Introduction by co-creators of this study**

This study is our bridge for the steps members of The United Methodist Church have taken and will take to reveal the new fruit on our denominational vine and our desire for full immersion into Christ's baptism. Together we continue the spiritual journey of justice living. It is neither easy work nor short term work. It is our calling through Christ.

Dr. Barbara Isaacs, Associate General Secretary for Training and Resource Development, General Commission on Religion and Race, and Dr. Blenda Smith, Board Member of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and Lay Leader of the Wyoming Annual Conference

### **Sampling of Suggested sites for use of *Truth and Wholeness***

All-Conference discussion circles  
All-Church discussion circles  
Small group Bible study  
Volunteers In Mission preparation  
UMW study  
UMMen's retreat  
Confirmation class  
College retreat  
Camp staff training

The possibilities are endless as we explore sites hungry for truth and wholeness in the racially charged discourse of the American society today.

This study is best completed by allowing break out time from group discussion so that individuals can step aside and digest the impact of questions and scenarios within the study. It can be completed under such venues as a weekend retreat, a one-month study to be inserted within a confirmation journey, or two months of an Adult Sunday School class. It is structured for adaptation to diverse settings. Since we are attempting to transform the way we understand ourselves in relationship to others whose experiences are different from ours, imagine how we might include in our discussion circles the voices of the others who are too often absent from our more intimate sharing circles.

Know that this is a fluid frame: updates will occur as leaders and participants respond to the framework for enhancing the *Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise* DVD intent to challenge White Christians to see the truth of white privilege in our denomination and in the North American culture and to act justly.

## Preparation before viewing this DVD

### Step One: Build a sense of community for the Journey.

#### 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 (she) is required at last to back his (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.

*Meditations of the Heart*, 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 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.

### Tools for healthy discussion circles

Invite the group to suggest what tools will 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 were the most difficult moments for learning in your life?

All participants bring insights to the journey, what do you imagine offering to others?

**2. Noting how conflict will be addressed personally and corporately.** Examples: Honoring the experiences and feelings of another by not insisting others see the truths of your life as the only truth in the room; taking time for silent reflection upon the conflict; and, 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 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 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 site. It is probable that all will serve as a tool 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.

### **Step Two: Establish desired outcomes after viewing and discussing this DVD.**

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.

Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*, 190.

Outcomes will be determined by the community on the journey and the leader.

Here are outcomes suggested by the DVD:

**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 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 white privilege is embedded in our newspapers and televised news reports;

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

**Respect** for all who take the steps to give testimony of the impact of white privilege on their lives; and,

**Deeper commitment** to our Christian baptism.

**Step Three: Vocabulary Tools for the Journey**  
**WHAT YOU SAY MATTER**

<b>Terms to Use:</b>	<b>Instead of:</b>
<b>Woman, Women</b>	Girls, gals, females, ladies
<b>African Americans;</b> or use country of national origin, e.g., Angolans, Jamaicans, Haitians, Liberians, South Africans, etc.; black people, people of color	Negroes, minorities, colored people
<b>Asian Americans;</b> or use specific “sub ethnic group” Cambodians, Chinese, East Indians, Filipinos, Formosans (or Taiwanese), Hmong’s, Indonesians, Japanese, Koreans, Laotians, Malaysians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Thais, Vietnamese, etc.; differentiate between foreign nationals and American born; people of color	Orientals, minorities, don’t assume that all Asian people are Chinese or Japanese
<b>Pacific Islanders,</b> Polynesians, etc.; or use specific island name, e.g., Chamorro, Cook Islanders, Fijians, Guamanians, Hawaiians, Maoris, Marshallese, Melanesians, Micronesians, Samoans, Tahitians, Tongans, people of color	Orientals, minorities
<b>Native Americans,</b> American Indians; or use specific tribe or band name, e.g.; Choctaws, Chumash, Comanche’s, Lakotas, Muscogees, Navajos, Oneidas, Poncas, etc.; people of color	Indians, minorities
<b>Hispanic/Latinos (as),</b> Latinos (as), Mexican Americans or Chicanos (as), Latin Americans; use country of origin, e.g., Argentineans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, Brazilians; people of color (Note: Latina refers to women and Latino to men)	Spanish, Spanish-speaking, minorities
<b>European Americans;</b> use country of origin, e.g., Irish Americans, Polish Americans; White people	Anglos, WASPS, Caucasians (unless referring to someone from the Caucasus. We do not use the related anthropological terms Negro or Mongol, so why use “Caucasian?”)
<b>Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgendered</b>	Homosexuals
<b>Differently-abled,</b> physically challenged, developmentally or physically disabled	Handicapped, crippled
<b>Older adults, senior citizens, elderly, younger people, young adults</b>	Geriatrics, kids, yuppies, buppies

Adapted from E-Library Publications Diversity Toolkit; Revised by GCORR (2/11/03)

## GLOSSARY

The General Commission on Religion and Race prepared this glossary in 2006 for its study guide on viewing *CRASH*. Leaders of the *Truth and Wholeness* DVD study are invited to expand this tool for their particular context.

Term	Definition
<b>Bigotry</b>	Intolerant prejudice which glorifies ones own group, but, denigrates members of other groups. <i>Source: NCCJ – St. Louis Region – Dismantling Racism Institute program. 1996.</i>
<b>Classism</b>	Prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people because of their real or perceived economic status or background. <i>Source: www.soaw.org</i>
<b>Culture</b>	A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication. <i>Source: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder’s Tool Kit. Claremont Graduate University, 2001.</i>
<b>Discrimination</b>	Unequal treatment of people based on their membership in a group. In contrast to prejudice, discrimination is <i>behavior</i> . To discriminate is to treat a person, not on the basis of their intrinsic individual qualities, but on the basis of prejudgment about a group. Discrimination can be either <i>de jure</i> (legal as in segregation laws) or <i>de facto</i> (discrimination in fact without legal sanction.) <i>Source: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. (See above)</i>
<b>Internalized Racism</b>	Internalized racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that under gird the dominating group’s power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements: <b>Decision-making:</b> Due to racism, people of color do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other’s authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of color who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not. <b>Resources</b> (e.g. money, time, etc.), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalized racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of color to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving “everybody.” <b>Standards:</b> With internalized racism, the standards for what is appropriate or “normal” that people of color accept are white people’s Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them. <b>Naming the problem:</b> There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of color and blames the disease – emotional, economic, and political, etc. – on people of color. With internalized racism, people of color might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support. <i>Source: Donna Bivens, “Internalized Racism: A Definition,” Women’s Theological Center, 1995.</i>
<b>Oppression</b>	The systematic exploitation of one social group by another for its own benefit; it involves institutional control, ideological domination, and the imposition of the dominant group’s culture on the oppressed group. Oppression is different from discrimination, bias, prejudice, or bigotry because: <b>It is pervasive</b> – woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. <b>It is restricting</b> – structural limits significantly shape a person’s life chances and sense of possibility in ways beyond the individual’s control. <b>It is hierarchical</b> – the dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted group. <b>The dominant group</b> has the power to define and name reality and determine what is “normal,” “real,” or “correct.” <i>Source: www.uark.edu/~pride/archives/definitions</i>

<b>Prejudice</b>	<p>A positive or negative attitude toward a person or group, formed without just grounds or sufficient knowledge – will not be likely to change in spite of new evidence or contrary argument. Prejudice is an <i>attitude</i>.</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.uark.edu/~pride/archives/definitions">www.uark.edu/~pride/archives/definitions</a></p>
<b>Privilege</b>	<p>A right that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group memberships (dominants.) Because hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, people who are part of the group in power (White people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexual with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children, and rich people with respect to poor people) often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious.</p> <p>Source: <i>NCCJ– St. Louis Region – Dismantling Racism Institute program. 1996.</i></p>
<b>Racism</b>	<p>Racial and cultural prejudice and discrimination, supported intentionally or unintentionally by institutional power and authority, used to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of other races. The critical element that differentiates racism from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support prejudices and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systemic ways with far-reaching outcomes and effects.</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.uark.edu/~pride/archives/definitions">www.uark.edu/~pride/archives/definitions</a></p>
<b>Sexism</b>	<p>The oppression and/or exploitation of women based on gender.</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.awid.org/ywl/glossary/index">www.awid.org/ywl/glossary/index</a> (<i>Association for Women’s Rights Development</i>)</p>
<b>Social Power</b>	<p>Access to resources that enhance one’s chances of getting what one needs or influencing others in order to lead a safe, productive, fulfilling life.</p> <p>Source: <i>Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: Sourcebook. New York: Routledge, 1997.</i></p>
<b>Stereotypes</b>	<p>Fixed impressions, exaggerated or preconceived ideas about particular social groups, usually based solely on physical appearance.</p> <p>The danger in relying on stereotypes to guide our thoughts and actions stems from their being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplified ideas, whether negative or positive in nature</li> <li>• Overgeneralizations that do not represent all, or perhaps even most individuals within a group</li> <li>• Designed to enhance our own self-identity</li> <li>• The foundation for prejudice and discrimination</li> <li>• Obstacles in getting to know others for whom they are versus who we think they might be</li> </ul> <p>Stereotypes are unfortunately learned at a young age, and they remain, as most mental models do – untested, unchallenged, confused with reality. Common sources of stereotypes include parents, other family members, educators, peers, media, etc. Even “positive” stereotypes are harmful to those they target. They, like negative stereotypes, result in negative self-image, stress, mental illness, pressure to conform, and ineffective intercultural interactions.</p> <p>Source: <i>Susan Pizarro-Eckert, “Your Guide to Race Relations” – <a href="http://www.about.com/od">www.about.com/od</a></i></p>
<b>White Privilege</b>	<p>The unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.</p> <p>Source: <i>Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies.”</i></p>

## Step Four: Discuss the 21st Century actions of General Conference to dismantle racism

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:

- Richard Allen's walkout from St. George's Methodist Church at turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Philadelphia (Leading to formation of African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816). Allen was ordained as a minister at the 1st conference of the Methodist church in North America, in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784. Allen was only allowed to hold services at 5 a.m. in the morning and only within a segregated section built for their purpose. Allen's desire to build a place of worship for African Americans brought only scorn from his white church and the established African Americans of his community. Rev. Absalom Jones, along with few others however supported the move. In 1787 they formed the "Free African Society" and left St. George's Methodist Church.
- Peter Williams' break with John Street Methodist Church in 1795 (Leading to formation of African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1821);
- Creation of Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1844 when disagreement over the abolition of slavery could not be resolved.
- Origination of Christian Methodist Episcopal 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 church became primary. This desire led formerly enslaved persons who had been 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; and,
- Dismantling of the Central Jurisdiction in 1968.

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

See General Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns [www.gccuic-umc.org](http://www.gccuic-umc.org) resource: Steps Toward Wholeness: Learning and Repentance DVD & booklet.

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

Listen to Bishop Violet Fisher's sermon delivered at the 2008 General Conference. [www.gcorr.org](http://www.gcorr.org)

It was during this worship service that a 6-minute clip of the *Truth and Wholeness: Replacing White Privilege with God's Promise* DVD was shared with the gathered delegates and a copy of the DVD given to every annual conference with the hope that copies would be made available for all local churches.

## **Step Five: Explore Holy Scriptures to accompany this journey from Privilege to Promise**

In this journey to truth and wholeness, the participant will embrace the importance of seeking new life in Christ and knowing 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 today?

### **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. 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 on-going 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 in 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 to at first send the other 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 the other not one of the chosen people?

**Mark 12:28-34**

**Entering the Kingdom of God**

Can you imagine not being 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 entry of the 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 who 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 such 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 kingdom of God.

Remember times in your lives when you fought back 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 were 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, 244). He continues to state that such a “baptismal” reprogramming is lifelong self-discipline and self-confrontation (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 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 Six The Privilege Line Exercise**

#### **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.]

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

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.

#### **This activity works best when:**

The group has 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 when 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**

If you were ever called names because of your race or ethnic culture, take one step back.

If your relatives (or ancestors) could not go to college or university because of their race, take one step back.

If you expect an inheritance from a family member (property, cash), take one step forward.

If your relatives (or ancestors) were detained and held during WWII, take one step back.

If you often see people of your race or ethnic group playing heroes or heroines on TV or in movies, take one step forward.

If you often see people of your race or ethnic group in negative roles on TV, or in the movies, take one step back.

If you have at least one parent who earned a Master’s or Ph.D. degree, take one step forward.

If you had a relative or family member who was beaten because of their race, take one step back.

If U.S. laws prevented members of your race from voting, take one step back.

If most of your teachers were from the same racial or ethnic background as you, take one step forward.

If you come from racial groups that have ever been considered by scientists as “inferior,” take one step back.  
If you see people from your racial or ethnic group as CEOs in most Fortune 500 companies, take one step forward.  
If your relatives (or ancestors) were forced to come to the U.S., take one step back.  
If you believe you have been harassed by the police because of your skin color, take one step back.  
If your parents spoke English as a first language, take one step forward.  
If you believe you have been treated with distrust---followed by the police or a clerk in a store---because of your skin color, take one step back.  
If a relative (or ancestor) was lynched, take one step back.  
If you had a parent who inherited wealth, take one step forward.  
If you, or a relative, have been questioned or detained since the September 11th attacks, take one step back.  
If your school textbooks strongly reflected your racial or ethnic group, take one step forward.  
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 up, 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.

If you have spoken up to defend the rights of people who are not from your own background, take one step forward.  
If you have access to opportunities that were not available to your parents, take one step forward.  
If you live in a racially or ethnically diverse community, take one step forward.  
If you have worked to defend your racial or ethnic group, take one step forward.  
If you or your parents supported the civil rights moment, take one step forward.  
If you attended a college or university noted for its diversity, take one step forward.  
If you have adopted, married or provided care of others who are not from your own racial or ethnic background, take one step forward.  
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 up after the second part of this activity?

How does it feel to have gone through this exercise?

## Viewing the DVD

### Step Seven: The Invitation to See, Hear and Reflect

#### A Litany of Preparation

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 on-going 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 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 must 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 the truth of the institutionalized racism in our denominational 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]  |

## **Step Eight: Silence and Journaling immediately in the room or at home**

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 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 Nine: 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 DVD? Why?  
Please share an example from your own life experiences.
2. What feelings arose in you as you viewed this DVD? How would you like to address these feelings?
3. If you were to lift up one moment from this DVD 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 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 Ten: Taking the next steps**

As you continue your journey toward justice, consider studying ways that racism and white privilege are complicit parts of systems/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 are not available to participants at home.]:

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

## **Step Eleven: Closing the Journey on the shared, sacred path to God's kindom on earth**

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/center site 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) Haymarket Books, P. O. Box 180165, Chicago, IL 60618, Tel: 773-583-7884. Website: haymarketbooks.org.

Avalos, Hector. *Introduction to the U.S. Latina and Latino Religious Experience*. (Boston: Brill Academic, 2004)

Barndt, Joseph. *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-first Century Challenge to White America*. (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2007)

Brown, Cherie R., George J. Mazza and the National Coalition Building Institute. *Leading Diverse Communities: A How-To Guide for Moving from Healing into Action* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005)

Bush, Melanie E. L. *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004)

Cho, Eunice Hyunhye, Francisco Arguelles Paz y Puente, Mirian Ching Yoon Louie, and Shasha Khokha. *Bridge Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy: A popular Education Resource for Immigrant and Refugee and Community Organizers*. (Oakland: National Network of Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2007) Contact Information: NNIRR, 310 Eighth Street, Suite 303, Oakland, CA 94607. Tel: 510-465-1984. E-Mail: [nnirr@nnirr.org](mailto:nnirr@nnirr.org). Website: [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org). Also order Spanish language and Korean language supplements.

Current, Angella. *Breaking Barriers: An African-American Family and the Methodist Story*. (TN: Abingdon, 2001)

De La Torre, Miguel. *Rethinking Latino/a Religion and Ethnicity*. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006)

Feagin, Joe and Eileen O'Brien. *White Men on Race: Power, Privilege, and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003)

Harvey, Jennifer, Karin Cass, and Robin Hawley Gorsline, eds., *Disrupting White Supremacy From Within: White People on What We Need to Do*. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004)

Hobgood, Mary Elizabeth. *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability*. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000)

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Johnson, Allan. *Privilege, Power and Difference*. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000)

Kidwell, Clara, Homer Noley, and George Tinker. *A Native American Theology*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2001)

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Justice* (Canada: New Society Publishers, 2002)

Law, Eric. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993)

Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998)

Lyght, Ernest S. Dharmaraj, Glory E., and Jacob S. Dharmaraj. *Many Faces One Church*. (TN: Abingdon, 2006)

McSpadden, Lucia Ann. *Meeting God at the Boundaries*. (Nashville: GBHEM, 2003)

Mankiller, Wilma, Ed. *Everyday is a Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004) Contact information: Fulcrum Publishing, 16100 Table Mountain parkway, Suite 300, Golden Colorado 80403. Tel: 800-992-2908 or 303-277-1623. Website [www.fulcrum-books.com](http://www.fulcrum-books.com).

Matsuoka, Fumitaka and Eleazar S. Fernandez, eds. *Realizing the America of Our Hearts: Theological Voices of Asian Americans*. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003)

Noyes, Martha. *Then There were None*. Honolulu: Bess Press, 2003. ISBN1-57306-155-7 (Bess Press, 3565 Harding Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96816, Tel: 800-910-2377, e-mail: [info@besspress.com](mailto:info@besspress.com), website: [www.besspress.com](http://www.besspress.com).)

PACTS. *Unfaithing U.S. Colonialism*. (Berkeley: Dharma Cloud Publishers, 1999) (Order from PANA Institute at Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709. Tel: 510-849-8244.)

Pak, Su Yon, Unzu Lee, Jung Ha Kim, and Myung Ji Cho. *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005)

Perkins, James W. *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Rothenburg, Paula. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. (New York: William Patterson University of New Jersey, 2002)

Ruether, Rosemary Radford, ed. *Gender, Ethnicity and Religion: Views from the Other Side*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002)

Spikard, Paul, Joanne K. Rondilla, and Debbie Hippolite Wright, eds. *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. (Paper, cost \$27.00. Order from University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolulwalu Street, Honolulu, HI 96822-1888. Tel: 1-808-956-8255.)

Stern-LaRosa, Caryl and Ellen Hofheimer Bettman. *Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice*. (New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000) Anti-Defamation League Copyright

Tamez, Elsa. *Jesus and Courageous Women*. (New York: GBGM Publication, 2001)

Thomas, Linda, Ed. *Living Stones in the Household of God*. (Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 2004) Read Jim Perkinson's essay "Black Theology and the White Church in the Third Millennium: Like a Thief in the Night."

Weaver, Jace, ed. *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environment Justice*. (Orbis, 1996) Thom White Wolf Fassett wrote Afterword.

West, Traci. *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006)

White, Woodie W. *Confessions of a Prairie Pilgrim*. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1988)

Williams, Linda Faye. *The Constraint of Race: Legacies of White Skin Privilege in America*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003)

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. (Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press, 2005)

## DVD Resources

Butler, Shakti, Producer/Director. *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* (World Trust Educational Services, Inc. [worldtrust@earthlink.net](mailto:worldtrust@earthlink.net)).

### California Newsreel Selected Resources

#### ***Race the power of an illusion* 2003**

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 our socio-economic and racial inequities in health. The social conditions in which we are born, live and work profoundly affect our well-being and longevity.

e-mail: [contact@newsreel.org](mailto:contact@newsreel.org) web: [www.newsreel.org](http://www.newsreel.org) P.O. Box 2284 South Burlington, VT 05407  
phone: 877-811-7495 fax: 802-846-1850

**CRASH**... This film received six academy award nominations in 2005 and two golden globe nominations.

“The first half of the film stirs the melting pot, with racist assumptions spilling out fast and furious. We see sexual harassment, a broken health-care system, the purchase of firearms. In the second half, isolated moments suggest the possibility of transcendence...The film operates as a fable arguing that we are connected to each other, like it or not. Crash works best as polemic, raising hot-button issues. Is prejudice primarily a question of color? How do differences of language and culture play into our misunderstandings? How much hell must be navigated before we get to reconciliation? So many well-intentioned films about race deal with color but not class, prejudice but not economics. One of the film’s most poignant exchanges takes place when a white cop begs a black woman to extend health benefits to his ailing father. Economic hardship only heightens his racism. Haggis dramatizes the tensions inherent in our fragile American experiment, and leaves the solutions up to us.”

*Cultural Collisions*. By Craig Detweiler. Sojourners Magazine. December 2005 (Vol 34, No. 11, pp. 45-46). Reviews.

Kathleen Thomas-Sano and Suanne Ware-Diaz, Associate General Secretaries of the UMC General Commission on Religion and Race, have created facilitator’s notes as a guide for leading a large group discussion.

*Dying to Live*. University of Notre Dame Publication ([www.dyingtolive.com](http://www.dyingtolive.com))

Mathew, Joseph and Dan Devivo. *Crossing Arizona* Rainlake Publications

### Media Education Foundation (mef) Selected Resources

bell Hooks video presentation: *cultural criticism & transformation*

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

Tim Wise lecture on White Privilege: *Racism, White Denial & the Costs of Inequality*

Contact information: mef 26 Center Street, Northampton, MA 01060 Tel: 800.897.0089 or 413.584.8500

Email: [info@mediaed.org](mailto:info@mediaed.org)

*Then There Were None*. Pacific Islanders in Communications ([www.piccom.org/thentherewerenone](http://www.piccom.org/thentherewerenone)).

## **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 212-870-3732, <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw>

## **Web Links/Articles**

<http://www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Article.579.aspx>

“Neighborhoods and people of faith power dialogue and action in Indianapolis”

by Julie Fanselow

July 12, 2007 | Indianapolis, Indiana

“So You Think You're an Anti-Racist? 6 Critical Paradigm Shifts for Well-Intentioned White Folks” Compiled by Paul Gorski [http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/resources/paradigmshifts/\\_race.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/resources/paradigmshifts/_race.html)

## **Contact Lists**

**Everyday Democracy** (formerly the Study Circles Resource Center)

111 Founders Plaza, Suite 1403 | East Hartford, CT 06108

860.928.2616 | Fax 860.928.3713

[info@everyday-democracy.org](mailto:info@everyday-democracy.org)

## Step Six Alternative One: 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]

By Adrienne Maree Brown, April 6, 2008

<http://www.wiretapmag.org/movement/43496/>

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 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 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.A., 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 United States, 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 raised.

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

#### **General reaction:**

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 Six Alternative Two**

#### **Daily effects of white privilege (Peggy McIntosh)**

[www.lilithgallery.com/feminist/modern/WhitePrivilege-MalePrivilege.html](http://www.lilithgallery.com/feminist/modern/WhitePrivilege-MalePrivilege.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 whom 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 in 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, 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 of 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.