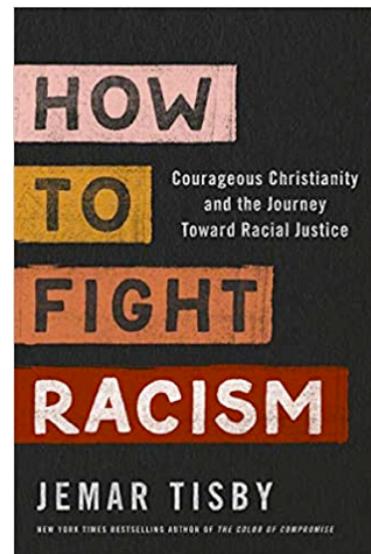


A BUMC Participant's Guide
by Katy Attanasi Barker with Eliza Love
Summer 2021



How to Fight Racism:
Courageous Christianity and the Journey toward Racial Justice
Summer 2021 Growth Group
Broadway United Methodist Church
Tuesdays, 12 noon (Zoom)
Wednesdays, 6:30 pm (Zoom)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

BUMC is on a journey to be a positive force for racial reconciliation in our broken world. This class equips regular people to talk about the difficult topic of race. We will develop a vocabulary for understanding racism and be equipped to act in anti-racist ways. We will begin our time as a large group in prayer, Bible Study, and teaching before breaking into smaller groups for discussion.

Course Learning Goals

1. Learn the importance of hearing and privileging the voices of people of color in conversations about race.
2. Understand a biblical theology of race based on *Imago Dei* (the notion that humans are created in the image of God) and cultivate spiritual and ethical resources that are grounded in love of God, neighbor, and justice.
3. Discuss the opportunities and challenges of using the ARC framework (Awareness, Relationships, Commitment) to fight racism.
4. Discern the ways racism involves systems of power that often reinforce prejudice.
5. Reflect on our own inescapable involvement in prejudicial systems.

Introduction

Sometimes when we hear about race, we think we are talking about politics...and that we already know what we think. But when we bring our Christian faith into these conversations, we find ourselves talking about what it means to love our neighbor well, how we can create a community and a city in which all people can flourish, and what it means to experience healing and reconciliation in our most broken places.

As Christians, we are called to honor God's image in our fellow humans and to love our neighbors. As Americans, we are caught up in a history and culture that privileges whiteness, not only by violently enslaving African people in the past but also by discriminating against people of color in the present. This six-week class asks participants to engage with Jemar Tisby's new book and/or video series *How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey toward Racial Justice*, as he develops his biblical theology of race and the image of God and outlines a three-part framework that can guide a fight against racism: cultivating **a**wareness, building **r**elationships, and **c**ommitting to action (ARC). This timely study builds vocabulary and confidence so that we can engage in effective dialogue and so that we can participate in God's ongoing work of reconciliation and healing.

Ways to participate:

- Facilitate groups independently using this six-week Participant's Guide that features reading questions for each Chapter/Episode and discussion questions for each week
- Join us over Zoom for our weekly sessions, which will begin with a devotion and introduction to the chapters/episodes before getting into the discussion questions.

How to use this guide:

This guide is meant to help both readers and viewers. The book contains more material than the videos, but we have used the videos to identify the main points of each chapter. The Chapters and Videos are numbered identically. The book follows the structure of the chapters, each of which covers introductory material, "essential understandings," and "racial justice practices." If the book has extra "essential understandings" or "racial justice practices" not covered in the videos, we have included them here in the Participant's Guide.

How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey toward Racial Justice
Class Schedule

Week 1 (week of June 13) The ARC of Justice, Grounded in the Image of God
Chapter/Episode 1-How to Fight Racism
Chapter/Episode 2-How to Explain Race and the Image of God

Week 2 (Week of June 20) Racial identity: personal, community, and nationally
Chapter/Episode 3-How to Explore Your Racial Identity
Chapter/Episode 4-How to Study the History of Race

Week 3 (Week of June 27)
Chapter/Episode 5-How to do Reconciliation Right
Chapter/Episode 6-How to Make Friends

Week 4 (Week of July 4)
Chapter/Episode 7-How to Build Diverse Communities
Chapter/Episode 8-How to Work for Racial Justice

Week 5 (Week of July 11)
Chapter/Episode 9-How to Fight Systemic Racism

Week 6 (Week of July 18)
Chapter/Episode 10-How to Orient Your Life to Racial Justice
Conclusion

Week 1: The ARC of Justice, Grounded in the Image of God

(Week of June 13, Chapters/Episodes 1 & 2)

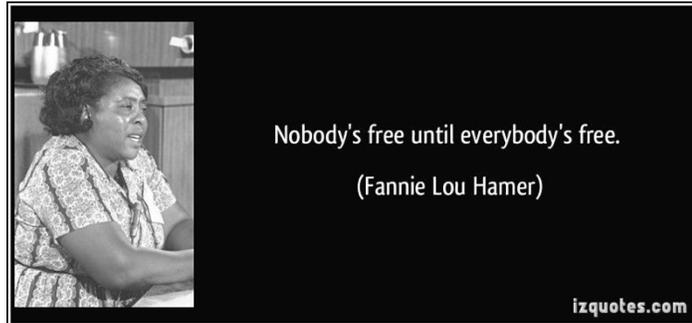
After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9

Chapter/Episode 1: How to Fight Racism

Tisby begins *How to Fight Racism* by situating his text in the historical moment of 2020; he explains that racial progress requires the long-term commitment and actions of dedicated people who will fight racism in its many forms (p. 3). Tisby frames his book around a three-part ARC of Racial Justice: **A**wareness, that is, reflecting on personal history, reading/researching history, learning to identify racism; **R**elationships, i.e., forming genuine authentic relationships with different people; and **C**ommitment to dismantling and rewriting racist laws, structures, and policies in order to work toward equity. Tisby sees racial justice as a journey, and he notes that we all move at various speeds and have different starting points, but together we can make progress in the right direction.

Tisby invites us to dream of a world in which racism does not hold such power, and where we can learn to appreciate and respect our differences. Christians courageously participate in this journey as a way to respond to their past, which has included racist practices and actions; Tisby discusses this in another of his books, *The Color of Compromise*. Christians contribute the following to

conversations about racial justice (1) their well-developed theology of the Image of God, as well as (2) their spiritual and moral resources that are grounded in love of God, neighbor, and justice.



Some readers may not find the book's racial justice strategies all that new or innovative. But Tisby responds that progress relies on *sustained* action—not just on innovation. Although some political parties have created a divide between seeing racism as individual or systemic, Tisby finds both approaches to be essential. Racism leads to hurtful individual actions, and racism also exists in systems and institutions where it limits the range of opportunities people have available to them (p. 13).

Action commitment:

Pray. As we start this reading journey together, ask God to open your hearts and minds and allow you to see the racism around you, maybe even within you. Ask God to give you hope and passion in your pursuit of racial justice.

Chapter/Episode 1 Content Questions:

1. What is the difference between viewing racism as individual versus systemic? Why are both important?
2. Which aspect of ARC feels easiest and which aspect feels most challenging to you?

3. How does viewing racial justice as a journey move us beyond the binary of racist/not racist? (p. 8)?
4. What would you identify as your sphere of influence, the relationships and contexts in which your position can influence some degree of change?

Chapter/Episode 1 Additional Resources:

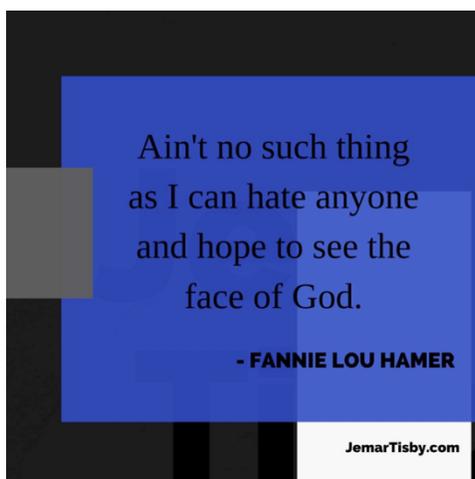
- United Methodist Church Social Principles: Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons
<https://www.umc.org/en/content/social-principles-the-social-community#racial-ethnic>
- United Methodist Church Book of Resolutions: Responsibilities for Eradication of Racism
<https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-resolutions-responsibilities-for-eradication-of-racism>
- Being Anti-racist, National Museum of African American History and Culture
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>
- What does it mean to be anti-racist? (10:41)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwjuL4jNTNg>

**RESISTING
EVIL, INJUSTICE,
& OPPRESSION
IN WHATEVER
FORMS THEY
PRESENT
THEMSELVES**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BAPTISMAL COVENANT**

Chapter/Episode 2: How to Explain Race and the Image of God

Tisby defines race as “a socially constructed category that offers certain privileges and advantages to one group...to the detriment of all those who are excluded from that group” (p. 20). White people are the advantaged group in the United States. Race is elastic and not static. Society, not biology or spirituality, determines who fits into which group. White supremacy gives people of white European ancestry the most privileged and important place; society has determined Black is the opposite of White and should be marginalized (p. 22).



The Bible does not use the terms Black and White; it uses the word “race” to refer to humans in general. People groups are designated based on cultural and ethnic differences. Tisby outlines several biblical trajectories that are helpful for understanding race. The Old Testament says God’s salvation is not limited to a particular ethnic group (Genesis 3:15). God tells Abram that all families of the earth will be blessed through him (Gen 12:3). Other passages highlight the global nature of God’s salvation and work in the world. Simeon recognizes that the baby Jesus will provide salvation for all nations, and before he ascended, Jesus told the disciples that they would go to “the ends of the earth” (p. 26). *The salvation Jesus provides was always meant to be for all people.* In fact, the

book of Revelation culminates in a picture of a “multihued, multilingual, multinational, multi-ethnic fellowship” in never-ending worship of God (p. 26).

Expressions like the Memphis Garbage Collectors, “I am a man,” or the more recent “Black Lives Matter,” highlight that all people have dignity and equality: “Human beings do not simply *have* the image of God; we *are* the image of God, thoroughly and holistically” (p. 29). Indeed, the task of reflecting the glory of God requires participation by all people groups and nations and can never be done by one group. Mass incarceration and police brutality disproportionately affect people of color., These are just two of the ways that racism has been institutionalized in policy and practice. Given this reality, we know it takes “sustained and intentional action” to treat all people as bearing the image of God (p. 31).

Tisby closes the chapter with three practices for racial justice:

- 1) teach the biblical content about race and ethnicity;
- 2) learn theology from people at the margins (i.e., the disinherited);
- 3) treat racism as it should be treated—as a sin.

Chapter/Episode 2 Content Questions:

1. Why does the statement “Black lives matter” feel so controversial? What is wrong with responding “All lives matter”? (see the article in the additional resources below)
2. Which aspect of the biblical teaching was most helpful to your thinking about race and racism?
3. How do you plan to broaden or diversify your bookshelf or learn from marginalized/oppressed groups of people? See <https://thewitnessbcc.com/black-theologians/> for ideas.



Chapter/Episode 2 Additional Resources:

- What Black Lives Matter Means (and Why It’s Problematic to Say “All Lives Matter”) <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a32745051/what-black-lives-matter-means/>
- Do Black Lives Matter to White Christians? (1 minute) <https://sojo.net/media/do-black-lives-matter-white-christians>
- Dismantling Racism: Devotion by UMC Bishop LaTrelle Easterling (13:16) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vik80fgK-ig>
- Bryan Stevenson sermon at Washington Cathedral (23:41) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0N3g-HdEUw>

Week 1 Discussion Questions

1. Which element of the ARC structure seems most natural and which one feels most difficult for you?
2. How would you explain to a family member or friend how your faith informs your view of racial justice?
3. What is your sphere of influence? Where in your life do you exert influence?
4. How have Christians been both part of the problem and part of the solution for racial justice? How do you see this play out in your local context?

Week 2: Building Awareness of Racial Identity and Racial History

(Week of June 20, Chapters/Episodes 3 & 4)

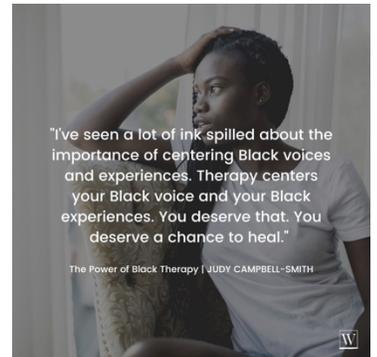
Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. John 8:32

Chapter/Episode 3: How to Explore Your Racial Identity

This chapter explains racial identity development and how understanding our racial identity helps people of all races grow in self-awareness and empathy (p. 41). Tisby includes a chart that shows the progression in identity formation from conformity to dissonance/appreciating; resistance/immersion to introspection; ultimately arriving at integrative awareness, at which point white people are able to become partners with and advocates alongside people of color.

Racial Justice Practices:

- 1) Identify your location in your racial/cultural identity development. White people have culture, too. Ideally, everyone can hold a positive view of their own identity at the same time they value others' identity and refuse either to co-opt or to denounce other cultural elements (51).
- 2) Write your racial autobiography. Tisby provides a helpful set of questions to guide the project. Participants are challenged that telling the truth about ourselves to ourselves can lead to truth-telling in community (p. 53).
- 3) Explore your family's racial identity and come to terms with any racism and activism that may be part of your family's history (p. 55).
- 4) Teach kids about race (although Tisby reminds readers that we must first teach ourselves). Also, we must remember that it's better to risk saying the wrong thing about race than to be afraid not to talk about race at all. While pushing through our fears, conversations should take place early and often and include "showing," not just telling.
- 5) Create a pipeline of mental health therapists of color through encouragement, creating funding, and providing mentoring or professional opportunities. Developing, supporting, and learning from these professionals gives voice to the unique challenges faced by ethnic minorities and provides safe places to do the important work of care.



Chapter/Episode 3 Content Questions:

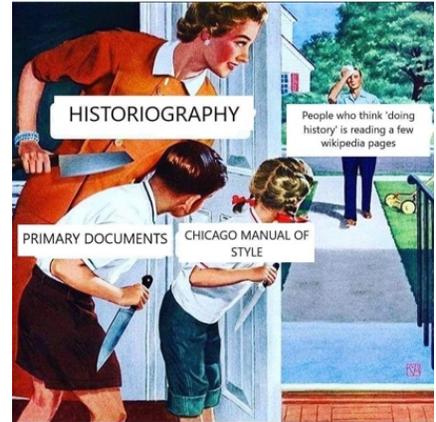
1. Think or write about your racial autobiography. What are some key moments? What work would you like to do to move forward in self-awareness?
2. Consider your positionality. What are you a generation removed from? What are your hopes for generations to come? How can you be an agent of transformation in antiracist work?
3. What concrete steps can you take to be in conversation about antiracism with those in your sphere of influence?

Chapter/Episode 3 Additional Resources:

- What is Privilege? (3:59) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ>
- Beverly Daniels Tatum, "Is My Skin Brown Because I Drank Chocolate Milk" (13:24) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTFaS3KW6s>
- Identity Questionnaire (UMC General Commission on Religion and Race) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ef390122cafce385dd4d822/t/5f6291a6eee3fd672d4b283e/1600295334253/Family-History-Questionnaire.pdf>

Chapter/Episode 4: How to Study the History of Race

In this chapter, Tisby outlines the importance of understanding history and context, and he provides us tools to navigate between competing narratives. History provides us a sense of who we are and where we come from. But when questions arise surrounding the truth of a narrative, the call to go back to the sources (*ad fontes*) provides guidance that can help us “develop an awareness about history as it relates to race” (p. 91).



Racial Justice Practices:

1. “Learn from academic historians” (p. 67). The *research vetting process* undergone by academic historians who publish peer-reviewed articles and books through university presses contributes to (but does not guarantee) reliability. Many academics have been trying to write for a general audience, but it is also important to read some intellectual writing to learn about racial history from those who have studied it the most.
2. Learn to spot trustworthy history. Even though all history is interpretation and historians have particular agendas, it is still possible to assess which sources are trustworthy. Tisby recommends seeking out primary sources; gathering a variety of sources for historical data; and being on the lookout for an overly optimistic version of history that has clear heroes and villains and sees progress as inevitable. As Tisby says:

Where we find ourselves in the present day is the result of complex and competing forces that evade linear narratives of progress. The line between good and evil is not always clear.
Search for the histories that honor the complexity of the human experience (p. 70).

3. Learn your local history: begin by learning the history of the people around you. What are the origins of the names of streets, buildings, etc. in our community? America’s story is one that involves the forced displacement of Native Americans, who lived on the land we now call home?
4. Take them down: Here, Tisby weighs in on the debate surrounding Confederate monuments and explains why Confederate monuments should not be seen as “innocent, benign, or patriotic symbols” (p. 73). The monuments are part of the myth of the Lost Cause, which is the name historians give to the narrative that developed *after* the Civil War that recasts the Confederacy as a “a noble endeavor” which had the main objective of preserving “the Southern way of life” against Yankees and Black people (p. 71). Returning to the sources (*ad fontes*) reveals the historically accurate narrative than what the Lost Cause presents. Opponents to monument removal claim that doing so removes history and that Confederate monuments carry a more positive connotation today. Tisby explains, though, the many ways that Confederate monuments can be relocated so they can be viewed *in context* for the purpose of remembering the figures *but not venerating them*. History shows that the Confederacy existed to defend slavery, a practice that denied black people the dignity and respect they deserve as creations of God. As part of the fight for racial justice, we should

“honor what is honorable” rather than celebrating whiteness and those who defended it at such great cost.

5. Conduct an oral history: following the recommended guidelines (for example, being up front about intentions and sharing people’s experiences only with permission), conducting oral history is an exceptional way of gaining important information about a community’s historical context.
6. Conduct an institutional history: Many institutions have begun the process of understanding their historical connections to slavery so as to understand the weight the historical past bears in the contemporary moment
7. Commemorate Juneteenth—on this day, two months after the end of the Civil War, Texas enslaved people heard the news of their emancipation. Commemorating it reminds the U.S. of its past and celebrates the progress that has been made toward racial justice. As well, the day comes with reminders that there is work still to do. (81).

Tisby concludes by explaining that “the past unavoidably impacts the present. If we want to pursue racial justice today, then we need to know what happened in the past to create the circumstances of the present” (p. 81).

Chapter/Episode 4 Content Questions:

1. How do you know if an historical account is trustworthy? In what ways have primary sources been used to skew the narrative throughout history? Watch the trailer for *Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre* for a bit of helpful context. (2:24)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHrQouNrzBI>
2. Why is it important to know the racial history of your local community and institution?
3. What reasons does Tisby give for communities to celebrate Juneteenth? What reasons does he give?

Chapter/Episode 4 Additional Resources:

- Bowling Green Daily News, City moves war monuments from Fountain Square
https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/city-moves-war-monuments-from-fountain-square-park/article_7e2913e9-0309-5495-8265-adcbf3117f11.html
- NPR, Our relationship with statues and memorials
<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/17/988331480/uva-initiative-looks-at-our-relationship-with-statues-and-memorials?fbclid=IwAR30I7St66lNvxKTK-HQJIXgsXtza0QVIBw6k2zOpnZvhI685f7gCn35w8c>
- “A Historian of the Tulsa Race Massacre Confronts the Myth of Objectivity”
<https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/tulsa-massacre-karlos-hill/>
- Dr. Clint Smith on How the Word is Passed with Brené Brown (Podcast) (97:00)
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/7zxyMWfMSJXeCCMMFPkDKw?si=AjSkQ9YkTtufueCgQlw6bQ&nd=1>
- Juneteenth: What You Need to Know (3:25)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR3WqYI6wco>

Week 2 Discussion Questions

1. When did you start growing racially conscious? Was it a particular moment or series of moments that led to your awakening?
2. How does the history of race influence our understanding and experience of racism today?
3. Did these chapters ignite your interest in researching any aspect of your sphere of influence?

Week 3: Relationships: Understanding Reconciliation, Cultivating Friendships

(Week of June 27, Chapters/Episodes 5 & 6)

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. John 13:35

Chapter/Episode 5: How to do Reconciliation Right

Relationships, the “R” in the ARC model, are the heart of the work of racial justice. Here, Tisby focuses on the ways that reconciliation across racial divides advance communication, improve inclusivity, and reduce misunderstanding. Tisby identifies three Essential Understandings:

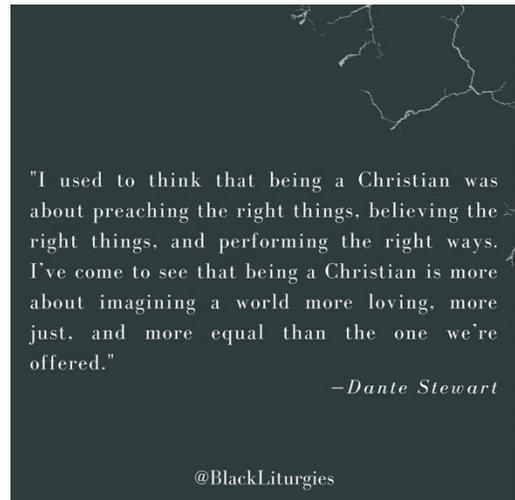
1. Racial justice often begins with relationship: efforts to combat racism are best grounded in an empathetic understanding of the experiences of people of color (p. 88).
2. Tisby argues that reconciliation is still a good term and by pointing back to the biblical origins of the term and calling for our relationships to be built on God’s best ideas for human interaction (p. 89). Unfortunately, racial reconciliation, as it has been practiced in evangelical Christian circles, often identifies the “problem” as separation, in which case the “solution” is to bring people together. *Bringing people together without attending to the cause of separation* (for example, institutional barriers, financial disparities, authority, systemic exclusion, or inequality) *will never bring lasting change*. Including people of color in leadership positions does not necessarily bring about change, especially if they are not fully included in decision-making.
3. Reconciliation efforts should more intentionally include women so that such reconciliation can be holistic and inclusive.

Racial Justice Practices:

1. Incorporate lamentation into worship: not unlike the musical tradition of the Blues that emerged in the Deep South, lamentation—the words of prayer that cry out to God in deep longing and sadness over the world’s brokenness—can remind us of the real victims of racial injustice and reiterate our repentance and sorrow for our part in what has gone wrong.
2. Corporately Confess the Sin of Racism: Like the Old Testament religious leader Ezra, we understand ourselves as part of a community and part of the narrative and story of people who have done wrong. Although each person must take responsibility for their individual sins, we must also look to the norms that we set and the behaviors that we allow as communities. We do not confess our sins just as individuals but also as part of broader communities.

While each person is responsible for his or her own choices, one’s moral conscience is formed in relationship with a community of people,” which gives each of us the “responsibility to examine the boundaries of their bigotry” (p. 96).

3. Acknowledge your church’s Racial History: Tisby outlines here the ways that churches can investigate their own history and communicate those findings to congregation members.
4. Reconcile as a church with people the church has harmed through racism: This section provides an example of a church that formed in opposition to integration efforts and that



church's efforts to own and repent of their origins while also recommitting to serving the community.

5. Preach Racial Reconciliation: On this practice, Tisby provides advice on how to broach hard topics within a congregation and includes questions to use to query the biblical texts for equality, empathy, wisdom and truth, poetry and art, and contemporary moral concerns.

Chapter/Episode 5 Content Questions:

1. According to Tisby, what should reconciliation look like, and how have reconciliation efforts gone wrong—according to Tisby?
2. Why does Tisby think that individuals should repent over past sins—both individual and communal?
3. What did you think of the BUMC service of lament in June 2020? Has your view changed in light of this chapter or in the past year? BUMC Lament Service: <https://vimeo.com/426779895>
4. What do you think communities owe to the people they have wronged or to their ancestors? What did you think of how the churches handled their past wrongs in the examples?

Chapter/Episode 5 Additional Resources:

- Equal Justice Initiative Reports: Slavery in America, Reconstruction in America, Lynching in America, Segregation in America <https://eji.org/reports/>
- UMC's history of racism <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-does-the-united-methodist-church-say-about-racism>
- "Can people be 'converted' out of racism?" <https://www.deseret.com/indepth/2020/7/13/21292134/racism-prejudice-white-supremacist-daryl-davis-conversion-change-conversation>
- Christena Cleveland, "How Can Privileged Christians Work Strategically for Equality?" (42:03) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJlt1zwGZqM>

Chapter/Episode 6: How to Make Friends

While cross-cultural friendships are crucial to moving forward toward racial justice, many people have trouble making friends. Cultivating meaningful relationships with people across cultural divides takes great intentionality—fostering genuine engagement, care, and respect. Doing the work of racial justice requires us to develop meaningful relationships with people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds (p. 119).

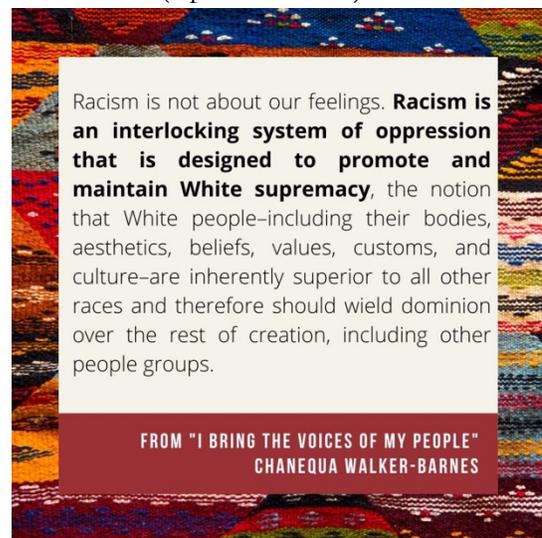
Essential Understandings:

- 1) Humility not utility: be friends to be friends not to gain information or exploit someone.
- 2) Listen more than you speak: do not ask Black people to educate you; realize that they might not want to speak about prejudice and marginalization, and that choice may have nothing to do with you.
- 3) Race is felt: White Americans can treat race/racism as a more abstract discussion and do not always understand the ways that racism devastates individuals and communities.

Racial Justice Practices:

- 1) Do your homework first: whenever possible do your own research on issues. We need to own our ignorance and inform ourselves *before* conversing with others. We should not take one individual's view as a representation of the whole, nor should we treat an individual as having the final word on race. We do need to care enough to educate ourselves.

- 2) Initiating a friendship with someone from a different background may be as simple as asking. However, it is important to be sensitive and respectful of that person’s response and desire to share and to be up front so that no one feels ambushed.
- 3) Meeting People of Different Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds: Developing relationships with people of color may require we change our routines or habits to create opportunities to meet new people; other ways to expand our social circles involves volunteering, attending multi-cultural events (if appropriate), and going to free events around the community such as library classes.
- 4) Talking to Racial Justice Resisters: If the person is “misinformed” on a particular topic, but you think engagement is still worthwhile, then don’t be patronizing, but do offer to trade information. The section concludes with a reminder that “the root of resistance to racial justice is the heart” (p. 117), which means that the main obstacle to understanding may not be a lack of intellectual knowledge. A change of heart requires prayer, patience, and a recognition that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12).
- 5) Find your community or make one: this practice urges people of color to find communities—virtual and in-person—there are “like-minded people who can affirm your dignity and encourage you on your journey” (p. 118).



Chapter/Episode 6 Content Questions:

Do you have friends who are of different ethnic or racial origins? How did you meet? What is it like when you talk about race? What could you do to be more intentionally about

1. Diversifying your friends?
2. Make a list of questions that you have regarding race—begin to answer them by doing an internet search. Feel free to reach out to Katy or Eliza if you get stuck on a question.
3. Do you have conversations with racial justice resisters? What do those conversations entail?

Chapter/Episode 6 Additional Resources:

- How to Have Uncomfortable Conversations with Your Loved Ones (4:27) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McUkaTM1WKo>
- Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man (9:27) (This is an introduction to the series, check out the episodes on Emmanuel Acho’s YouTube page) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8jUA7JBkF4&t=103s>
- Our Bodies Remember by Danté Stewart <https://sojo.net/articles/our-bodies-remember>
- The Bible and Social Justice: Dr. Esau McCaulley, Where Ya From? (Podcast) (42:03) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOZl-Kz-2Fw>

Week 3 Discussion Questions

1. How has your perspective been changed through relationships with people who are different than you?
2. What is at the heart of the relationships Tisby suggests cultivating across color lines?
3. What are some best practices for talking with people who don't see race as a problem? What is/isn't helpful in person or on social media?

Week 4: Building Diverse Communities and Working for Racial Justice (Commitment)

(Week of July 4, Chapters/Episodes 7 & 8)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

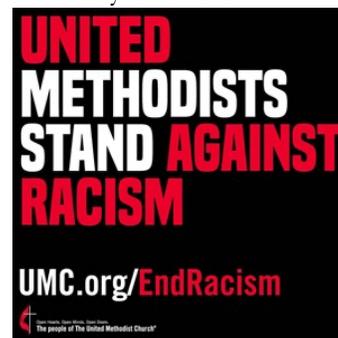
Chapter/Episode 7: How to Build Diverse Communities

This chapter considers how organizations can more closely approximate the goal of practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion. To begin, there are two essential understandings:

- 1) *Diversity* is about who is present. *Equity* asks “who has access to a community’s resources and on what terms” (p. 121). *Inclusion* is the “sense of welcome and belonging extended to each person or group” (p. 121). These three principles are essential for cultivating a healthy culture in our organizations. Organizations must invite in people of different ethnic backgrounds, but these individuals must also be included in decision-making processes and participate in the projects (p. 121).
- 2) Achieving better diversity, equity, and inclusion does not happen accidentally, so Tisby says to *Make a Plan, Work the Plan* (p. 122). Privileging diversity in hiring can lead to accusations of “reverse racism,” but two realities must be kept in mind. First, out implicit biases often advantage white people and disadvantage people of color; in other words, it’s nearly impossible *not* to consider a person’s race in hiring decisions.. Second, people of color have been deliberately excluded from certain fields in the past, so now it is necessary to intentional include them.

Racial Justice Practices:

1. Do a group study on race: provide opportunities to discuss race; intentionally cultivate diversity in these groups; begin meetings with stories that can help build relationships.
2. Build diversity into the DNA of your organization—especially if it is just forming—by making it a “core value from the beginning and crafting an organization’s ethos and practices accordingly” (p. 128).
3. Build a Case for “Why” by showing the ways that diversity strengthens the organization’s effectiveness. Many organizations have founding documents or commitments to racial justice, which can lay the groundwork for this kind of argument.
4. Assemble the Team: Identify team members who can “diagnose the specific problems and issues that the organization faces in terms of diversity” (p. 130) as you identify pathways to institutional change.
5. Adopt a Statement on Racial Justice: Statements of this kind can articulate an organization’s views on racial justice and are for internal and public use. It shows that leadership has thought through what racial justice entails, and it provides an institutional policy. Not only is the statement helpful, but the process of developing it can be an instructive time to further dialogue on these topics.
6. Require Applicants to submit a statement on racial justice: ask applicants to explain their own history of prioritizing racial justice.



7. Hire in clusters: this strategy works best at larger institutions; it provides people of color a cohort of sorts as they begin work increasing the likelihood of retention and can “help shift an organization’s beliefs and practices across constituencies” (p. 135).
8. Some organizations will remain homogenous largely because of an area’s demographics. Nevertheless, it is important for such organizations to create an environment that is healthy. This means talking about racial justice, teaching diversity, equity, and inclusion, and attending to other forms of diversity such as socio-economic background, geography, and gender.
9. For people of color in predominantly white institutions (PWIs), Tisby advises them to organize as needed and to address problems with one voice.
10. When to leave an organization over racism: Tisby provides a helpful list of questions as Black people and other people of color may be discerning when it is necessary for them to leave a predominantly white organization. For Jemar Tisby’s story on leaving his predominantly white denomination, listen here: <https://thewitnessbcc.com/leave-loud-jemar-tisbys-story/>

Working toward racial justice at an institutional and organizational level requires long-term commitment. Quitting too soon shows a lack of consistency and commitment and causes great harm and hurt. A healthy organization in which all can flourish benefits everyone.

Chapter/Episode 7 Content Questions:

1. What stands out to you about this chapter/episode?
2. What are diversity, equity, and inclusion, and why are they important? What is the difference between equity and equality?
3. How can you contribute to bringing greater diversity, equity, and inclusion into your sphere of influence?

Chapter/Episode 7 Additional Resources

- Equality vs. Equity Infographic
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ef390122cafce385dd4d822/t/5f04edd050ca7f35793abbb1/1594158547469/equity-vs-equal_13087830_cfbf5ba5de89888a8afe50cfb01300bde94f8795.pdf
- Austin Channing Brown: Faith, Justice, and Race (26:24)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Wx1rVorlA>
- Black theology and a legacy of oppression by Dr. M. Shawn Copeland
<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2014/06/24/black-theology-and-legacy-oppression>

Chapter/Episode 8: How to Work for Racial Justice

This chapter/episode begins the discussion of Commitment by exploring the framework of love and justice, particularly in how churches can work to change racist policies.

Essential Understandings:

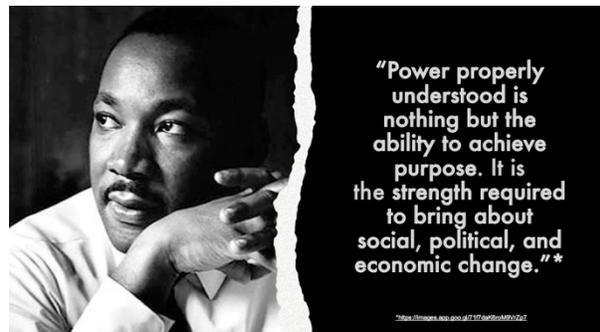
- 1) Love for God and Neighbor: Love and justice are inextricably linked.

Love is the energizing force of justice that insists on fairness and equity for all. Love is the motivating factor that demolishes any paternalistic attitudes and builds a posture of humble service. Without love there can be no justice. –Jemar Tisby, *How to Fight Racism*, p.143.

2) Fighting racism is bearing witness to Christ.: Working for racial justice coheres with the Gospel message. When Christ calls his followers to “bear witness about him throughout the world,” this call includes verbal proclamation and “the imitation of Christ’s concern for the marginalized and oppressed” (p. 145).

Racial Justice Practices:

- 1) Steward your budget for justice: money is one way to convey love of neighbor; churches can allow community organizations or other congregations use their facilities for free; taking up special offerings and redistributing money can help “address the clear financial dimensions of discrimination” (p. 147).
- 2) Hosting a candidate forum creates space for respectful and meaningful political dialogue. As long as all candidates are invited, the church is not taking a political side. The church simply expresses its mission to do good in the world.
- 3) Host a voter registration drive: again, without endorsing candidates or platforms, churches can lead the way in helping to register people and promote voting rights.
- 4) Use existing church documents: this practice could involve a class or sermon series on “denominational documents regarding race relations” or taking these documents and forming a committee to discuss how to implement the commitments.
- 5) Host a freedom school: using the structure of a summer day camp, the school aims to “inform [students] about matters that affect their lives and instill from a young age a sense of collective responsibility for their community” (p. 151).
- 6) Start a community development corporation: This takes an immense amount of effort but can be an effective way to do the work of justice. Similarly, financially supporting existing organizations can demonstrate a similar commitment.
- 7) Sponsor a school: beginning by determining what a school needs, churches may be able to help with a mentoring program, book drive, sponsoring hobby clubs, and supporting staff and administrators.



Chapter/Episode 8 Content Questions:

1. What has been your experience of faith communities and politics? What do you think would be beneficial or challenging about holding a candidates forum or voter registration guide at your church?
2. Looking at school sponsorships: what kind of guidelines does Tisby suggest for these kinds of partnerships?

3. Research the following social problems particularly as they might relate to people of color in Bowling Green: school to prison pipeline, housing (with attention to the issues on the agenda for the City Commission), access to voting in KY, representation in education.

Chapter/Episode 8 Additional Resources:

- The Ongoing Fight for Civil Rights, Sherrilyn Ifill (6:44)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGftnokIBII>
- Overt and Covert Racism <https://www.r2hub.org/library/overt-and-covert-racism>
- 3 Ways Votes are Suppressed, with Stacey Abrams (6:29)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkQvoJiD1bk>
- Free and Fair Elections <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/civil-and-human-rights/free-and-fair-elections>

Week 4 Discussion Questions

1. What would you say to a fellow Christian or a church community who pushes the idea of love and yet refuses to take a stand on justice? What are the implications of these kinds of actions—of pushing love without standing for justice?
2. What have you learned about existing Bowling Green organizations that work on racial justice efforts, such as the NAACP, Freedom Walkers, and Game Changers? What are some ways to support their work?
3. Which recommendations above seem most powerful to you in the effort to live love in public?

Week 5: Fighting Racism in Systems

(Week of July 11, Chapter/Episode 9)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

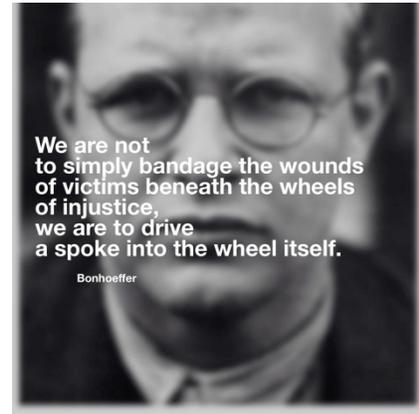
Chapter/Episode 9: How to Fight Systemic Racism

Essential Understandings:

1) *It Is Not Just About Individual Behavior*: Tisby calls readers to become aware of the beliefs, systems, laws, and other moving parts that contribute to systematic racism. Fighting racism means considering how society operates and identifying and intervening with the mechanisms that propagate and create racial injustice (p. 159).

2) *It Is about Impact, Not Intent*: intent matters, but what is more important is the outcome. It's hard to acknowledge that even with the best of intentions, our actions can still be hurtful. So if a policy is perpetuating racial injustice, then that policy could be racist, and—if so—it should be changed (p. 160).

3) *What is worth conserving?* We must consider racial inequality and the ways that political policies may disproportionately disaffect racial and ethnic minorities (p. 161). If so, then we must be willing to change course.



Racial Justice Practices:

- 1) Advocate for voting rights: efforts to restrict votes tend to disproportionately affect Black voters, and a 2013 Supreme Court decision made it easier for states to change laws in ways that make it harder for Black people to vote. Efforts to protect racial and ethnic minorities' right to vote is work against racism. Tisby includes many ideas to expand the access and opportunity to vote.
- 2) Work for immigration reform: first, the language that we use on this topic matters. For example, we should refer to "undocumented people" rather than "illegal immigrants." Nearly everyone agrees that the U.S. immigration system needs reform; it's just that people disagree about how to reform the system. Two ways to contribute to racial justice are to create pathways to citizenship and to support organizations working toward this goal.
- 3) Pay reparations to Black people: The recent COVID relief bills demonstrates that government has plenty of mechanisms for distributing money. Tisby points out the ways the United States built its wealth on the stolen labor of African Americans through slavery and through sharecropping practices after the Civil War. The penal system and Jim Crow systems perpetuated the marginalization of Black people, and the New Deal and GI Bill intentionally excluded Black people, as did segregation and red lining. The Federal Reserve's 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances showed that the a median household wealth of white families ten times greater than that of Black families (9.7, to be precise).
- 4) How individuals and organizations can pay reparations: individuals and organizations can independently "take reparative steps" including sharing facilities at no cost, contributing to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), contributing to Black-led organizations with finances or services that would be of help. We determine the distribution of wealth in the future.

“The racial wealth gap is the bleeding wound of racism that will not heal apart from a comprehensive and substantive policy of financial reparations for Black people in America,” Jemar Tisby, *How to Fight Racism*, p. 174.

- 5) Criminal justice reform: loving justice must include addressing the failures and inequalities of the criminal justice system. Racial disparities figure significantly into who gets put into prison. Black people, who represent 13 percent of the US population, make up 38 percent of people in prison. Tisby outlines three practices in this section. They include (a) eliminating the death penalty because it kills innocent people and does not deter crime; (b) abolishing cash bail and overhauling or eliminating solitary confinement; (c) changing police practices to cut down on use of force and by police officers and providing more funding for professions like counselors and social workers, who can respond to crises without weapons.
- 6) Promote equitable funding for public schools: despite laws against segregation, schools remain racially divided. More than half of students attend schools that are more than 75 percent white or non-white. Since local school funding is based on property taxes, there are significant disparities. Affluent districts are separated from poor districts with intentionally drawn boundaries. At a policy level, *redrawing* school districts for the purpose of achieving integration can lead to better opportunities for all students.

While covering a lot of ground, this Chapter/Episode has barely scratched the surface; for example, we haven’t addressed housing, healthcare, or the environment. Policies are not neutral. We need to advocate for policies that increase racial equity and promote racial justice. Doing so will undoubtedly disrupt traditional ways of drafting laws and policies. But the traditional ways have established and perpetuated racial disparities.

“For too long the discussion about race has focused on the intentions and feelings of individuals, and this has allowed people to sidestep the necessity of addressing systemic racism. But confronting the interlocking pattern of practices and policies that create and maintain racial inequality is what love looks like in public.” Jemar Tisby, in *How to Fight Racism*, p. 180

Chapter/Episode 9 Content Questions:

1. This chapter/episode contains a daunting list of racial justice practices for how to fight racism and love in public. Why are some of these practices considered controversial?
2. Which practice creates the most tension for you? Why is it uncomfortable?? What else do you need to understand the importance of this suggestion as a racial justice practice?
3. Which practice do you feel most passionate about, and why? How are you contributing to this practice as an individual and as a community?

Chapter/Episode 9 Additional Resources:

- “A Christian Call for Reparations,” Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas
<https://sojo.net/magazine/july-2020/christian-call-case-slavery-reparations-kelly-brown-douglas>
- “The true costs of the Tulsa race massacre, 100 years later”
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-true-costs-of-the-tulsa-race-massacre-100-years-later/>

- *13th* : A Netflix documentary analyzing the United States criminal justice system and mass incarceration.
- Mass Incarceration Visualized (2:33) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u51_pzax4M0
- How the School-to-Prison Pipeline Functions (2:00) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zer6FapK49E>
- History of the Black vote (5:50) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pEEem0Be7H8>

Week 5 Discussion Questions:

1. What is systemic racism? Why are people reluctant to describe racism in these terms?
2. What aspect of systemic racism—or in which of the areas mentioned above—seems particularly pernicious to you?
3. Do you feel God calling you to dig deeper in any of these areas?

Week 6: Orienting Your Life to Racial Justice—Where do we go from here?

(Week of July 18, Chapter/Episode 10)

Chapter/Episode 10: How to orient your life to racial justice

The work of racial justice is about actions, not attitudes. Fighting racism should change the way we situate ourselves emotionally, spiritually, and culturally as well as intellectually and politically so as to identify and address racism in its different permutations (182).

Essential Understandings:

- 1) Cancel contempt; it feeds a false sense of superiority that dehumanizes others.
- 2) Ground understanding in humility (Philippians 2:3-4) and be willing to admit that all people—regardless of skin color—get things wrong.
- 3) Keep the light switch on: acknowledge that *although white people may be able turn on and off their concern for racism, people of color must stay alert to these realities and potential threats.*

I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;" who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season."

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Racial Justice Practices:

- 1) Budget your time toward racial justice by intentionally scheduling the time to fight racism.
- 2) Give sacrificially to black organizations and to causes or individuals involved in racial justice.
- 3) Be careful about referencing racists without acknowledging their limits: “It is one matter to quote people with racist views—whether in churches, classrooms, in the home or elsewhere—for historical and education purposes. It is another matter to hold them up as people worthy of imitating to the very groups they would have considered less than human” (p. 190). Deliberately seek out sources that have not held those views.
- 4) Refuse to expand the reach of racists. In other words, opt out of their messages, products, and conferences (and say why).
- 5) Use your platform productively particularly on issues that directly affect your community. Speak out when prominent leaders/officials make racist comments, or when someone who shares your religious, political, or ideological affiliation does something that is hurtful or harmful to people of color.
- 6) Support minority-owned or minority-led businesses (including historically Black colleges) and take your talents to minority-owned or minority-led organizations including local businesses.
- 7) Support candidates committed to racial justice, or run for office yourself.
- 8) Reconsider where you send your kids to school in the interest of cultivating the common good. In the words of Nikole Hannah-Jones, “true integration, true equality, requires a surrendering of advantage” (p. 199).
- 9) Use the questions on pages 200–201 to ensure local schools practice racial justice.

The work for racial justice is ongoing, and we must stay reflective and renew our commitment regularly.

Chapter/Episode 10 Content Questions:

1. How have you started to orient your life toward racial justice in these past few weeks?
2. How do you plan to “keep the light switch on” in the fight against racism in your own life and in your community? How will you encourage others to do the same?
3. What are the challenges of interacting on issues of racism on social media platforms?
4. What does it mean to take part in a “surrendering of advantage” for “true equality” (p. 199)? What might this look like in your life and community?

Chapter/Episode 10 Additional Resources:

- Letter from Birmingham Jail
https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
- When the Crucified Rise: A Black Lives Matter Easter Sermon, Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney
<https://www.wilgafney.com/2017/04/16/when-the-crucified-rise-a-black-lives-matter-easter-sermon/>
- Amanda Gorman Poem <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/01/amanda-gormans-inauguration-poem-the-hill-we-climb/>

Conclusion

Fighting racism changes communities and individuals; Tisby discusses the ways that he has grown spiritually, socially, and personally as a result of his work (p. 204). Fighting racism can be anxiety-provoking; nevertheless, Tisby urges people to move forward and join in this work. Everyone makes mistakes, but “baby steps turn into long strides toward freedom” (p. 205). His closing words are below:

“We cannot give up. *We are people of hope.* Hope is not blind optimism. It is a realistic assessment of current conditions with the faith that tomorrow can be different. We are people who believe that a brutal, unjustified murder resulted in a resurrection. We believe that a poor carpenter from Nazareth conquered death and is forming a people who will join in this triumph. Each day that we live is the opportunity to be witnesses to the resurrection life and the coming of the kingdom of God. We pray and work for that kingdom to come and for God’s will to be done, not just in the sweet by and by, but right here and now. The journey for racial justice continues, but the music we hear along the way is not a funeral dirge; it is festival music leading us to a banquet of blessings and a harvest of righteousness. Today is the day and now is the time to join this journey toward racial justice” (p. 206).

Week 6 Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see God working in this journey to fight racism?
2. What is your biggest takeaway from this six-week class?
3. What are your next three actions to continue your work for racial justice within your sphere of influence?