

DISMANTLING RACISM DISCUSSION GUIDE

EMERGING LEADERS: CREATING AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

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RELIGION & RACE
The United Methodist Church

OPENING PRAYER

God. Allow us to see our humanity as tied to those whom we have been taught to dismiss, overlook, and even demonize. I call on you, O God, to eradicate the spirit of fear that fills the seats of our sanctuaries and ruminates the spaces of our minds and hearts. Allow the kingdom to be held accountable to your call and likeness. May this discussion be of fruit and generate new beginnings, understandings, and movements. En tu nombre oramos, Amen.

INTRODUCING THE DISCUSSION



- Ann Jacob
- The Rev. Theon Johnson III, Ph.D.
- Andres De Arco
- Katelin Hansen, Ph.D.
- Erin Hawkins, moderator

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 23: 23-24 (THE INCLUSIVE BIBLE)

Woe to you religious scholars and you Pharisees, you frauds! You pay your tithes on mint, dill and cumin while neglecting the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy and faithfulness! These you should have practiced, without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out gnats, but swallow camels in the process!

DEVOTION/REFLECTION

As a life-long United Methodist, I am constantly challenged to live out the call of making disciples for Jesus Christ. This passage, however, serves as a constant reminder of just how radical of a mission this is. It is at times difficult for me to picture an indignant Jesus getting in the face of highly respected religious leadership and unapologetically calling out their hypocrisy. But what is equally unsettling is that thousands of years later, the expectation Jesus has placed toward

his followers has not changed. Jesus shows me in this moment that the battles we confront as Christians are not always fought with an agreeable demeanor. Rather, he reminds us that the path towards justice is never on neutral grounds. At some point, our walk with Christ will absolutely oblige us to face Pharisees head on and call them for who and what they are.

Today, we face long-standing Pharisees in the form of racist systems. Speaking candidly, as a Black person living in the U.S., I worry that my skin color can one day become part of my own demise. I worry that I will join the insufferably long list of those whose skin has been an invitation to brutalization. I also worry, however, that the very Christians to whom I'm tied in this call, will remain silent in the face of my suffering. This call to walk with Christ is not one that requires perfection, but it demands courage and repudiates neutrality. We as a community, when facing the Pharisees of the system of racism, must be willing to hold ourselves to nothing less than the standard Jesus has shown us, no matter how unpopular. It is our life-long duty.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How can we begin creating an infrastructure of accountability within our places of worship?
- Where do we find the most resistance/pushback when confronting racist systems in our faith communities?
- Where have we personally fallen short in our quest for racial justice?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: WATCH, LISTEN, TAKE ACTION

HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST BY IBRAM X. KENDI

This best-selling book provides a vision for how we may walk in a manner that actively seeks to challenge the internalized racism/racial bias we hold as individuals and as a community. For those interested in engaging in the journey towards anti-racism, this book is a great way to start.



LISTEN TO THE AUDIOBOOK

