

DISMANTLING RACISM DISCUSSION GUIDE

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

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RELIGION & RACE
The United Methodist Church

OPENING PRAYER

Creative One, open our hearts, our minds, and our awareness of our interconnectedness. Fill us with desire for listening for your will and living it out with courage. Turn us from our oppressive habits, and deepen our understanding, that we may choose paths of transformation and together building the world you desire. Amen.

INTRODUCING THE DISCUSSION

 [WATCH THE CONVERSATION](#)

- **Dr. Lisa Dellinger**, a pastor with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of The United Methodist Church and expert in racism, the Doctrine of Discovery, and the history of Native American Peoples, opens the conversation talking about how European settlers to North America viewed Indigenous peoples and its relationship to the Christian Church.
- General Secretary of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History, the **Rev. Fred Day III**, then confronts both the pride and shame of the Methodist Church's involvement in the racial dynamics of the U.S. and why it is important that United Methodists know that history.
- The **Rev. Dr. Bobby McClain** (1938-2020), a United Methodist pastor and author of *Black People in the Methodist Church*, then shares pillars of racism that must be dismantled in the Church.
- **Dr. Alison Greene**, an expert in United States religious history, then teaches about theologies of white supremacy and racial violence.
- **Erin Hawkins**, moderator

SCRIPTURE

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-13 (INCLUSIVE BIBLE TRANSLATION)

God highly exalted Christ and gave to Jesus the name above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee must bend in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God: Jesus Christ reigns supreme!

Therefore, my dear friends, you who are always obedient to my urging, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, not only when I happen to be with you, but all the more now that I'm absent. It is God at work in you that creates the desire to do God's will.

DEVOTION/REFLECTION

The Apostle Paul sends his hopes to a new community of disciples who are trying to live out the mission of liberation given to them by Jesus. This panel discussion similarly shares a vision of where God is calling The United Methodist Church to go next to work for liberation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people who have historically been marginalized, especially in our churches.

"Freedom doesn't just show up; we go in search of it," says Erin Hawkins, moderator of the panel discussion. Likewise, Paul says collective liberation is something that must be worked for. When we proclaim that Jesus is Lord or that Jesus reigns supreme, we are also saying that "whiteness" or other forms of racist idolatry is not Lord—that white supremacy is not compatible with the way of Jesus.

Speaking out requires risk. When we take an honest inventory of our individual, church, denomination, and country's response to the oppression of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, white people have all too often been silent. When white people allow systems of harm and violence to continue against our siblings of color, we betray the good news we proclaim and lose our humanity as well.

Another way to think about salvation is a salve that heals and liberates. In this current moment, perhaps working out our collective salvation looks like tearing down the vestiges of white supremacy. If we don't, we betray the very gospel we proclaim.

