

Churches Uniting in Christ
Racial Justice Task Force

Talk about Race Sunday

The Racial Justice Task Force presents the following program for the observance of *Talk about Race Sunday*, a one-day program designed to involve religious institutions and communities in engaging in an ongoing dialogue about the oppressive practices of racism and classism.

The persistence and perniciousness of racism and classism in our society and sadly in our churches today convinces us that we must re-energize this discussion and rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of equality and justice. And who better to initiate this process than *Churches Uniting in Christ*, whose mission clearly states that we, as People of God, are separated from each other by the sin of racism.

We believe that, in keeping with the mission of *Churches Uniting in Christ*, all of the observances of *Talk about Race Sunday* should be held in an Ecumenical setting wherever possible and therefore we have envisioned this program in that manner.

The day should appropriately begin with worship and we present the following outline for a worship service. Please note that all Scripture readings, hymns and prayers are suggestions and we encourage any substitutions designed to personalize the service.

May God, who has given us the will to undertake this work, bless our efforts and give us the strength to persevere in doing justice and loving mercy.

Ecumenical Worship Service

Gathering of the People and Call to Worship

HymnsLift Every Voice and Sing
This is Day that the Lord has made

Invocation by the Pastor

God of all humanity

You call us to bring about healing and wholeness for the whole world:

For women and men of all races and cultures and creeds.

Help us to respond to a world that is groaning under the
weight of injustice and broken relationships.

Remind us that differences are a gift,

and interdependence a strength from the same creative God. Strengthen us to resist the
forces that encourage polarization
and competition rather than understanding and cooperation.

We know that your reign is not built on injustice and oppression, but on the transformation
of hearts —

new life, not just reordered life.

Teach us forgiveness, O God. Bring us

reconciliation. Give us hope for the future. We

pray in Jesus' love. Amen.

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

Opening Hymn We Are Marching in the Light of God

Apostolic Greeting and Gathering of the People

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God be with you all

Litany

Hymn of PraiseCome All You People

Prayers of the Day

O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, page 840

Grant, O God, that your Holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart (and especially the hearts of the people of this land), that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that, our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, page 827

Scripture Reading*

First Lesson: Hebrew Bible Reading

Amos 5: 21-24

Micah 4: 3-5

Micah 6: 8-10

Ex: 3: 7-12

Psalms.....Ps 24, Ps 27, Ps 44 (1-8), Ps 72 (1-7)

Second Lesson: Galatians 3:23-29

Romans 12: 1-8 I Cor.

12: 4-11

I Cor. 12: 12 - 31

- Bible Translations used: MV, RSV, NRSV Hymn or

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia

Gospel: Beatitudes (Mt 5: 3-12, Lk 6, 20-23)

Syrophoenician Woman (Mt. 15: 21-28, 7: 24-30)

Sermon Doing Justice and Loving Mercy

Hymn of the Day We Have Come this Far By Faith Prayers

of the People

Confession

Absolution

Sharing of the Peace

* Communion (Holy Eucharist) May be Inserted Here if Desired

Communion Hymns I'm Gain Eat at the Welcome Table
Let Us Break Bread Together

Thanksgiving for Blessings

Hymn To God Be the Glory
The Lord's Prayer

Churches Uniting in Christ Prayer Benediction and
Sending Forth Prayer for Beginning on a New Path
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Let us go forth rejoicing in the Power of the Spirit
Thanks Be to God

Young Adult Christian Education/Forum Material

** Young adults will have the opportunity to review film and then analyze based on what their perceptions of the film are.

Film Synopsis

CRASH is that rare cinematic event - a thought-provoking film that challenges audiences to question their own prejudices. Diving headlong into the diverse melting pot of post-9/11 Los Angeles, this compelling urban drama tracks the volatile intersections of a multi-ethnic cast, examining fear and bigotry from multiple perspectives as characters careen in and out of one another's lives. CRASH boldly reminds us of the importance of tolerance as it ventures beyond color lines...and uncovers the truth of our shared humanity.

One thing that happens, again and again, is that peoples' assumptions prevent them from seeing the actual person standing before them. The movie presumes that most people feel prejudice and resentment against members of other groups, and observes the consequences of those feelings.

CRASH tells interlocking stories of whites, blacks, Latinos, Koreans, Iranians, cops and criminals, the rich and the poor, the powerful and powerless, all defined in one way or another by racism. All are victims of it, and all are guilty. It shows the way we all leap to conclusions based on race -- yes, all of us, of all races, and however fair-minded we may try to be -- and we pay a price for that the movie contains hurt, coldness and cruelty, but is it without hope?

All of these people, superficially so different, share the city and learn that they share similar fears and hopes. Until several hundred years ago, most people everywhere on earth never saw anybody who didn't look like them. They were not racist because, as far as they knew, there was only one race. You may have to look hard to see it, but CRASH a film about progress.

I believe anyone seeing it is likely to be moved to have a little more sympathy for people not like themselves.

Question for the group:

1. What are the themes of this movie?
2. To what/whom do you relate and why?

3. What are the messages you take from this video?

- a. As a white person or a person of color?
- b. As a Christian
- c. As a citizen of the United States

4. What are the issues presented on a:

- a. Personal/interpersonal level
- b. On an institutional level (the church and other institutions) e. On a systemic level

5. As a result of viewing this video, what will be your next steps?

- a. Who will you tell about it?
- b. What will you tell them?

Thank you.

Multicultural Meals

It is crucial to the spirit of this day to break bread together in the manner of Jesus and his followers. Women and men should share in a meal to celebrate the oneness of the Family of God and in so doing, remember the feeding of the five thousand, the wedding feast at Cana and the Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before his suffering and death.

The preparation of the meal may be a shared function with people lovingly preparing and freely sharing of their food with other members of the Family of God. An alternate plan is for various churches or community organizations to take turns hosting *each* other in the best tradition of the hospitality that we are called upon to show to one another.

The sharing of recipes and cultural and ethnic traditions surrounding the preparation and eating of the food can only enrich the occasion and deepen the feeling of fellowship.

Supplementary Material

Come All You People (Gathering Song)
(Uyai Mose)

Come, all you people, Come and praise the most high; Come, all
you people, Come and praise the most high; Come, all you
people, Come and praise the most high;
Come now and worship the Lord

U - ya - i mo -se, ti - a - ma-te Mwa — ri
U - ya - i mo -se, ti - a - ma-te Mwa - ri
U - ya - i mo -se, ti - a - ma-te Mwa - ri
U- ya- i mo- se Zvi—no

Come, all you people, Come and praise the Savior; Come, all
you people, Come and praise the Savior; Come, all you people,
Come and praise the Savior;
Come now and worship the Lord

Come, all you people, Come and praise the Spirit; Come, all
you people, Come and praise the Spirit; Come, all you
people, Come and praise the Spirit;
Come now and worship the Lord

Text: Alexander Gondo, st. 1; tr I-to Loh, b. 1936; With One Voice, 1995, sts 2-3.
Music: Uyai Mose, Alexander Gondo, Copyright 1996 World Council of
Churches.

Dialogue for Beginning On a New Path

Single Voice (SV) Many
Voices (MV)

SV: Precious God, every day you set us in reality. We see so many things, yet pretend we do not see.

MV: Guide us to see all people, even when they are different from us.

SV: We live our lives of survival, self-preservation, and hard work. We grow tired.

MV: Direct our living so that we might live for you first and for your will and purpose.

SV: In our churches we seek refuge from our toils. We seek comfort, reassurance, and affirmation. We want to be at peace.

MV: Stretch us when we feel uncomfortable or challenged, when people come to worship with us who are not like us. Guide us in our journey to grow each day in our understanding of ourselves, of others and the messages that shape us.

SV: If we have failed in the past to see all people as your children and our equal sisters and brothers in you, help us to see that this can be a new beginning.

MV: Grant us the gift of your courage that we might confront and overcome our fears and our prejudices. As Jesus died for us, let us die a little each day, to ourselves, that we may know new life in you and with one another.

SV: Without pain there is no reconciliation, for we live in a world of sin.

MV: May we live in your grace, knowing that it may take discomfort, pain, sacrifice, repentance, forgiveness, and healing. Guide us to acknowledge ugliness within us and strengthen us to trust your grace to live as your redeemed children in one church, by one faith and in one baptism.

SV: The old satanic foe of racism is still woven into fabric of our life.

MV: Although we are not equal to this foe, through your grace, empower us to overcome the forces that break human community.

SV: You have created us as your one family. You have called us together. The time is now for new beginnings.

MV: May we do the work we must do in your church and world, while it is still day, before it is too late. *May we* never tire, nor turn our back, nor believe our work is ever done. For each day, we must begin anew.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prayer to End Racism

God of all peoples of the earth: we pray for an end to racism in all forms, and for an end to the denial that perpetuates white privilege, and for your support for all of those who bear the struggle of internalized racism, and for wisdom to recognize and eradicate the institutional racism in the church, and for the strength to stand against the bigotry and suffering that inhabits the world; for these and all your blessings we pray, O God, Christ Jesus, Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

Prayer to End Racial Profiling

God of infinite compassion, we
live in times of turmoil.
Out of our fear we seek to target and to blame the innocent.
Out of our ignorance we tolerate racist systems that oppress and demean
our brothers and sisters.
God of justice,
help us to resist all forms of racial profiling.
Confront our prejudices.
Expand our understanding.
Strengthen our resistance.
Help us to resist the urge to protect ourselves at the expense of others.
Remind us that all people are ultimately yours.
This we pray, in *the* name of the Christ.
Amen.

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

Kaleidoscopic God

O God of radiance, fascinating in your kaleidoscopic diversity: help us to love ourselves as we mirror your image to the world, as we grow tired of this struggle, Lord, and we feel alone in our weariness, strengthen us when we grow faint of heart and give us a memory for the victories of our ancestors; help us to remember a time when our forebears faced immeasurable pain with the sure knowledge that you were with them, and remind us that we are truly never alone; when we grow faint, g^rid us with your strength; when we doubt, fill us with confidence that the beauty of our skin, ebony, mahogany, lemon, ivory, and taupe is but a mere reflection of the richness of your glory; help us to understand the gifts we bring into this broken world—the gift of your love of color and variety; this we ask in the name of Jesus, who touched all and loved all. *Amen.*

Jayne Oasin

Prayer for Humankind

God of all humanity,

You call us to bring about healing and wholeness for the whole world
for women and men of all races and cultures and creeds.

Help us to respond to a world that is groaning under the weight
of injustice

and broken relationships. Remind
us that differences are a gift,

and interdependence a strength from the same creative God.

Strengthen us to resist the forces that encourage polarization and competition rather
than understanding and cooperation.

We know that your reign is not built on injustice and oppression,
but on the transformation of hearts

new life, not just reordered life.

Teach us forgiveness, O God.

Bring us reconciliation. Give

us hope for the future. We pray

in Jesus' love. *Amen.*

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

Seeing the Face of God to Each Other: A Manual for Antiracism Training and Action

An Opening Prayer *(From National Dialogue on Anti-Racism, 1996)*

Leader: O Lord, you created us equal; yet we have treated one another unjustly. People: Forgive us, O God.

Leader: You created us in your holy image. Yet we have failed to recognize the dignity and sacredness of your image in every person.

People: Forgive us, O God.

Leader: Some of the old wounds of injustices are still bleeding, and the callousness of our scars prevents us from being more sensitive to others as we ought to.

People: Heal us, O God.

Leader: Help us, that we may listen to those to whom injustices have been done until we hear your cry in theirs and feel your pain in theirs.

People: Help us, O God.

Leader: As the new, tender skin emerges from under the old scars, create in us a new humanity through the brokenness of our experiences.

People: Create in us, O God, a new humanity.

Leader: That we may celebrate together the dignity and sacredness of humanity in one another for the sake of your glory.

People: For the sake of your glory. Amen.

A Call to Confession

Leader: A journey is not easy. Our journey together has not been easy. To move from sin into wholeness is risky, painful, filled with peril. We have met obstacles on the way, and we have found resistance in our own soul. Some of us have heard the call, but have worked hard to keep others from hearing; others have acknowledged the call for all but wanted to keep some "in their place" on the trip.

Others have heard the call but are afraid of what it means. Like Jonah, we have tried to run the other way.

Still others of us have started out, but like the children of Israel in Exodus, the trip has become hard, and we have turned to run back to Egypt. We looked for the security of the good old days.

All of these obstacles are the sin of racism. Racism is a barrier. Racism is a burden. Racism interrupts God's call. Racism destroys God's community. Racism is a cancer in the souls of God's people — and God's judgment on racism is clear.

SCRIPTURE LESSON I John

4:19-21

Leader. To keep on the journey, and to keep alive on that trip, we need to know about the sin of racism, and we need to turn to God and to one another in repentance.

UNISON PRAYER

O God, we acknowledge the sin of racism. We have not been what you have called us to be. We have wounded the body of Christ, even as we have wounded those persons whom you have called to share in your grace. Forgive us our sin and lead us into new life through the one who was broken for us, Jesus Christ, Your Chosen One, Our Savior. Amen.

A LITANY OF CONFESSION/REPENTANCE

RIGHT SIDE: We have marred your image within us, O God, for we have violated the spirit of love that you intended for each of us to express.

LEFT SIDE: You have called us to be brothers and sisters together, taking responsibility for your creation.

RIGHT SIDE: But we have divided ourselves by the erection of barriers of superiority and power; by not encouraging persons to develop pride in themselves, which is thefts as children of God.

LEFT SIDE: We have glorified ourselves at the expense of the dignity and humanity of others.

RIGHT SIDE: Sometimes, O God, we have lived and taught our children to live by a creed of racism, declaring that some of us, by reason of our color, are superior and others of us are inferior. And what is more, O God, we have developed ways to institutionalize our racial sins against one another and to justify them in your name.

LEFT SIDE: We have forgotten the partnership of our creation and denied each other equal places of honor and responsibility within the world, forgetting that no one of us can make it on our own, but we need each other.

RIGHT SIDE: At times, O God, we have abused our children and battered our old, forgetting that persons of all ages are sacred and expressions of maturing grace.

LEFT SIDE: By our insensitivity to justice, we have removed from our sight the presence of those who are poor, hurting, broken, marginalized, and imprisoned.

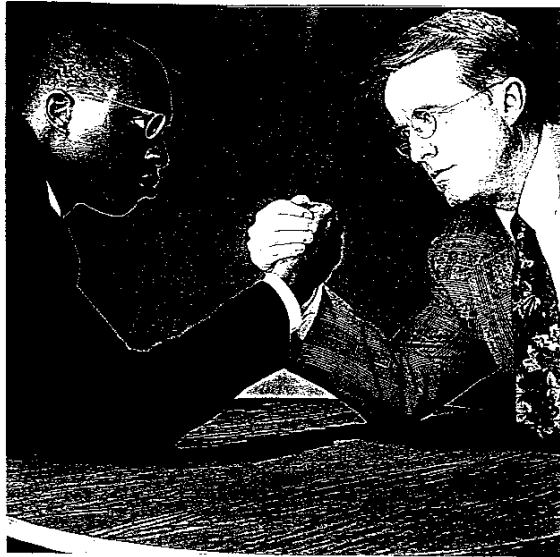
RIGHT SIDE: We confess unto you, O God, that there is a sickness within us and there is a brokenness within our community.

LEFT SIDE: Because we have not recognized the presence of your Christ in the faces and condition of our brothers and sisters, we have sinned against you.

RIGHT SIDE: We cry out for healing: "Is there no Balm in Gilead, is there no great physician there?"

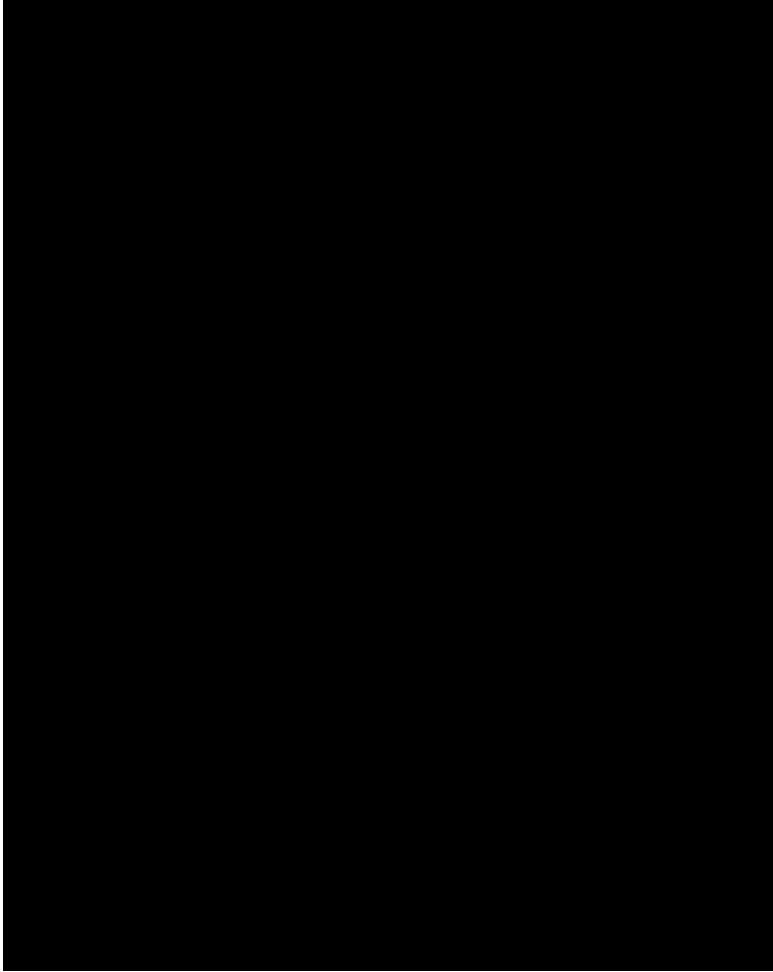
LEFT SIDE: Hear our prayer, O God, and forgive us, we pray

ALL: Hear not simply the recitation of our offenses, but see also the sorrow in our hearts. Forgive our sins of racism, which we have confessed unto you, and give unto us newness of life and singleness of heart, that we may perform the intentions that we speak silently with you. Through Christ our crucified and risen Savior.
Amen.



Assumptions for Anti-Racism Dialogues

1. People are bon' good. Racism is a learned behavior and is not inherited.
2. Oppression must be acknowledged. Every ethnic, cultural and racial group has suffered some form of oppression.
3. Racism exists to maintain power and control of one group over another. It persists because the powerful refuse to relinquish or share power.
4. The process of anti racism must include the disestablishment of racism in all its manifestations. It is a lifelong process which must incorporate ongoing reflection, repentance, reconciliation and transformation.



5.

Racism is:

- ◆ Prejudice plus exercised power, engendered by fear; fostered by ignorance and under girded by privilege.
- ◆ It uses power to dominate, set standards, and influence behaviors.
- ◆ It is systemic, endemic, sinful (omission and commission), systematic, based on false assumptions.
- ◆ It is differential or discriminatory treatment of a group based on race, color, and/or language in which the group is denied the power of self determination.
- ◆ It is discrimination engrained in institutions based on the disproportionate power and resources of the dominant group.
- ◆ Racism is perpetuated by conditioning of whites and people of color as they grow up.

Hurricane Katrina: Responding to "Those Left Behind... Again" with Compassion and Reconciliation!

As Disciples seek ways to respond in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, let us respond with a holistic approach to address all the issues that this devastating natural disaster revealed to us. It is our hope and prayer that *even* through the suffering and pain of *many* directly and indirectly affected in the Gulf Region that we will seek to respond faithfully by building bridges of compassion and reconciliation.

In the midst of all this, what does the Lord have to say to the community of faith? "Is there a Word from the Lord?" The Word of God is a great source of strength and hope, especially for a time such as this. Let us consider the familiar words of the Prophet Micah:

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

-Micah 6:8

These words are the source for the vision we claim collectively as Disciples of Christ. Through the timeless words of the Prophet Micah, we can formulate a strategy that will help us address the immediate humanitarian needs and the long-term concerns about race and class inequality that this crisis brought to our attention once again.

To love kindness...

There is no doubt of the immediate response needed for this catastrophe - to respond with compassion through humanitarian relief - to ensure vital needs are met and victims' lives are stabilized. Week of Compassion, the ministry of our church providing emergency response and disaster relief, is working with local congregations and through Church World Service to respond to the basic needs of those adversely affected by the hurricane and its aftermath. In response to Katrina, we are living out our calling and witnessing to our commitment to be a church that shares and embodies the good news of Jesus Christ. We praise God for Johnny Wray of Week of Compassion, and his staff and volunteers who are ministering on our behalf to mediate this devastating event. Your gifts through Week of Compassion are already at work making a difference in the regions hardest hit and those giving emergency assistance: Great River Region (where our ministry to the states of Louisiana and Mississippi is being overseen), Alabama Northwest Florida Region, Florida Region and Southwest Region.

To do justice...

However, our response to the catastrophe must span beyond meeting human need. We must address the long-term concerns this crisis has pushed to the forefront, we especially need to examine the role racism played in this catastrophe as well as its connection to classism. General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, reflected: "Katrina has punched through the aura of progress brought by 1960's civil rights. What is revealed is that there is much work yet to be done to rid our nation - and our church - of the blight of systemic racism and economic injustice." Racism is still alive. We are surrounded by images of its impact in the lives of people in Louisiana the images of African-Americans trapped in their homes, the Superdome, and the Convention Center returned us to another time in history. The images alarmed us, appalled us, and brought our illusions of a fair and just United States crashing down. It is our prayer that our compassionate response will give way to a profound examination of the torn social fabric no longer hiding our ills.

John McCullough, Executive Director of Church World Service, stated, "No doubt race is

an important factor in the Gulf Coast... but class is also a critical factor... The disaster has reopened to discussion the issues of race and poverty in a positive way. This should help us as Americans to look at the responsibility of one for the other, and our expectations of government." Likewise, his statement raises the question for us - what should be the expectations of the faith community.

Reconciliation Mission, as the ministry entrusted with guiding the anti-racist/pro-reconciling commitment of our community, is committed to keep us focused on this exploration. Already we can identify four ways in which responses raises issues of deep concern for us.

Media: the Blessing & the Bias

If someone had described to us what has happened in the "Big Easy" for the last two weeks many of us would never believe or accept the awful reality experienced by those left behind in toxic waters. But the images broadcasted around ti world have forced us to deal with the reality that in this country poverty and race are intrinsically connected. Moreover, that when these social ills are experienced simultaneously in one community the results are disastrous. The images playing on our televisions and covering our newspapers not only told the honific story of death and survival. They have made it impossible for us to deny that the devastation impacted the mostly poor people of color.

But not everything shown by the media has served to confront us with troth. The bias of the media was most evident with two images that began circulating on the Internet last week. One image from the Associated Press showed a young African American man walk through chest-high water pulling a bag and the caption reports he has looted a store. The second image this time from the Associated Foreign Press shows two white people also walking through chest-high water pulling bags but this time the caption reports they have found the bags. Looters or Finders? The inconsistent and biased reporting of identical actions occurring in similar conditions reveals that in our social mind people of color continue to bring criminalized.

The media deals most often with the spectacular and that which captures the attention of the public while oft times ignoring the heart of the matter. Jack Cafferty, CNN broadcaster, had this to say about his own peers: "That's the big elephant in the room: the race and economic class of most of the victims, which the media hasn't discussed much at all."

Language: The Power & Interpretation of Words

The aftermath of Katrina brought a verbal storm characterized by shifting blame and unclear terminology. A word that invoked a profound sense of outrage and anger for persons of color was "refugees." Initially, the media used this term to describe the thousands of US citizens that overnight became internally displaced by the floodwaters and storm surges that pounded the Gulf Coast. The Merriam Webster Dictionary of law defines refugees as people seeking refuge or asylum; especially individuals who have left their native country and are unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution (because of race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.) "Evacuee: are those who are defined by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English of Language as persons evacuated from a dangerous area.

African-American leaders immediately raised their voices in protest. The Rev. Al Sharpton had this to say: "They are no refugees. They are citizens of the United States. They are citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi, tax-paying citizens. The• are not refugees wandering somewhere looking for charity. *They* are victims of neglect and a situation they should have never been put

in the first place." The outrage was held collectively by the African-American community. But many white persons did not understand, could not comprehend the significance of this issue. In the aftermath of this tragedy the deep chasms between racial groups in this country cannot be denied. A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll released on September 12, 2005 revealed that 60% of African-Americans believe that race was a factor in the slow governmental response to the crisis in New Orleans; as opposed to 86% of whites who believe it did not.

Evacuate: "Why did people stay?"

When the order to evacuate New Orleans was issued it was widely known that an estimated hundred thousand citizens do not have the means to leave. Leaving a job, a house, a city, is a possibility when people have the resources to do so. But i people's reality demands living from check to check, without accumulated savings, without credit, without a bank account then evacuating is not a viable option. People stayed in New Orleans and in the towns along the Gulf Coast because they did not have a way to leave. These were not folks who willfully defied the orders of the mayor and the governor. These are folks who believed their government would provide the way out.

Rebuilding the City: By whom? For whom?

We know that it will take years and billions of dollars to rebuild the city. Will there be justice in how the recovery dollar! will be allocated so that the urban poor are included in the deliberations as a part of the solution? We hope that the image of persons etched in our minds from pictures and videos of the *week* following the breach of the levee are reflective of the persons who will help to rebuild the city. Many of these jobs will be those that will produce a living wage. The way to eradicate the urban poor is to provide opportunities for people to provide a means of support for theft family. Will we equip and enable job training that *they* can perform the work that is assigned?

The following are some of the issues and concerns raised by a Diversity Inc. editorial entitled "'Negro Removal' or 'Urban Renewal': New Orleans at a Crossroads." When the city is rebuilt, who will dwell in the new accommodations? Will the urban poor, those of little means - retirees, social security recipients, etc - be able to live in the community they once called home? Has the flooding of New Orleans allowed for a permanent displacement of the poor, African Americans from the city, thereby, once again minimizin^g and negating the plight and struggle of the most vulnerable and marginalized of New Orleans.

To walk humbly with your God...

The present crisis once again affords Disciples with an opportunity to recommit and to rededicate ourselves to our mission "to eradicate the root causes of racism" through the ministry of Reconciliation Mission. Through your gifts and contributions to Reconciliation Mission, we will seek ways to transform the systems and institutions that perpetuate racism, classism, and structural oppression. We invite you to share and partner with us in this ministry for justice.

As we seek to do justice and to love kindness, it is imperative that we walk humbly with our God. Our ability to do this task depends on our ability to walk humbly with one another. Let us be intentional about eradicating and breaking down the bathers of estrangement, ignorance and indifference, especially in the beloved community. We cannot control or dictate the storms of life; but we have the power to control how we respond. Here are some responses to consider:

- We can respond by donating from our abundance to Week of Compassion and Reconciliation Mission so that be the short-term results of this hurricane and the long-term challenges are addressed.

- We can respond by questioning the use of language, the continued interpretation of this devastating crisis, and if way we respond as a faith community.
- We can respond by praying that *there* will be justice in the way dollars are allocated for the rebuilding.
- We can respond by praying that our displaced citizens are included in deliberations and decision-making processes that will impact their lives.
- We can respond by praying that the images of thousands of internally displaced citizens remain etched in our minds as a living reminder that our work is not done.

Let us walk more humbly with each other so that when the storms of life arise, we will know how to respond faithfully, responsibly and respectfully.

Can We Talk?

If we are to ever address the issues and concerns that Hurricane Katrina has revealed, we must be intentional about finding ways to talk and then act on that, which will bring about both kindness and justice, compassion and reconciliation. In the weeks to come, the ministry team of Reconciliation Mission will further expand on the above justice issues, as well as to look at "Racism: Intentional or Consequential... Is It the Same Thing?," "Race, Poverty and Class: Who are *they*? Why are *they*?" and other topics raised from your feedback. Let us create some time to talk - through honest dialogues and critical conversations - within our faith community and all that we serve that we might fulfill our vision as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.

We have the capacity to walk humbly with God and *live* out our "responsibility one for the other? Let us be courageous and do it!

Peace with justice,

T. Eugene Fisher
Minister of Reconciliation

Jessica Vazquez
Associate Minister of Reconciliation

Reconciliation Mission Commission