

Congregations Can Learn More about Racism and Classism

General Assembly 2006 Responsive Resolution

"Resolved, that the Delegates to General Assembly are charged to work with their congregations to hold at least one program over the next year to address racism or classism, and to report on that program at next year's General Assembly."

This resolution, written by a GA delegate, was in response to reports of UUA officers at GA 2006 as well as events impacting Unitarian Universalist communities of color, especially youth, at the 2005 and 2006 General Assemblies. It was overwhelmingly supported by the delegates from over 600 UU congregations.

Some of our member congregations have done significant work on issues of racism, classism, and multiculturalism using resources provided by the UUA and other sources of expertise. This is an opportunity to share what you've done with other congregations in your region or district. When delegates representing our congregations gather at 2007 General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, we will have an opportunity to share our experiences. Please email your stories to us: ResponsiveResolution06@uua.org.

If your congregation has not yet engaged in such work, consider this resolution as a *CALL TO CONSIDERATION AND ACTION*. As we approach the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we are reminded that racism and classism remain problems in our society that we can and should address. Our experiences together in community show that we have much work to do to live our UU principles more fully.

Here's one example of how a congregation has already acted on this resolution. The delegates from the UU Fellowship of Centre County, PA wrote:

Returning from General Assembly (GA) fully charged, we at the UU Fellowship of Centre County, PA, (UUFCC) have begun fulfilling the plenary resolution to address anti-racism/anti-oppression in our congregation and for us, in our community as well.

For starters, our Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE) has put together a list of our congregational resources on anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Second, our DLRE has put together a religious education program for the fall on "The Life and Thought of Howard Thurman," who has been called, "The quiet voice behind the Civil Rights movement."

Third, we are preparing to bring together a team to work on planning UUFCC activities/programs/workshops, etc. with a focus on anti-racism/anti-oppression. We are very interested, for example, in showing the PBS documentary, "Race: The Power of Illusion," which was shown in a late-evening session at GA, and simulation exercises (such as "Starpower" and "Brown Eyes/Blue Eyes") as well as engaging in congregational intergenerational dialogs on this topic...

Fourth, we would like to encourage 100% of the congregations in our district (Joseph Priestley) to join with us in participating in this initiative by sharing resources and exchanging ideas for programs. To do so, we hope we will have guidance and support from our district office. Perhaps a JPD/UUA workshop could be offered? Perhaps Interconnections will showcase congregational activities and provide suggestions?

Finally, as a congregation, we are committed to being intentional about this work as a faith community. We look forward to being a part of an association of congregations that is committed to this work.

Learn more at the UUA website:

<http://www.uua.org/actions/responsive/06racism/>

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We are pleased to support congregations in this important work going forward. Here are some resources that you may wish to use to act on our 2006 General Assembly resolution.

Resources for Congregational Education/Discussion

- ***Race: The Power of an Illusion***

This three-part PBS video series explains the cultural and social construct we call race. According to Executive Producer Larry Adelman, "Most of our common assumptions about race—for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines—are wrong. Yet the consequences of racism are very real." This series is suitable for a discussion series, with each session lasting two hours. Each video runs 56 minutes, and the free discussion guide provides questions for an hour or more of small group conversation.

Order *Race: The Power of Illusion* from California Newsreel for \$99.00* on VHS or DVD. (*This is a community organization price; you must order the DVD or video on your congregation's letterhead to get this price). You can download the free discussion guide for *Race: The Power of Illusion* from PBS.

- ***Soul Work: Anti-Racist Theologies in Dialogue*** (Editors: Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones)

In January 2001, the UUA convened a three-day consultation on theology and racism. Approximately thirty scholars, ministers, theologians, seminarians, teachers and activists participated. The resulting papers and dialogue that followed address the complex and pressing issues of racism. The thoughts and feelings captured here encourage reconsideration of our long-held beliefs. What theological or philosophical beliefs bind us together in our shared struggle against racism? What are the costs of racism, both for the oppressors and the oppressed?

A resource presenting many points of view, *Soul Work* can be used for individual reflection and study, for book discussion groups or adult education classes, for church leadership discussions or minister's retreats, for Sunday programs, and to create or supplement anti-racism workshops. Each paper is followed by a transcript of the resulting responses, a summary of the major points and questions for personal or group reflection. You can purchase *Soul Work* from the UUA Bookstore

- ***Privilege, Power and Difference*** by Allan G. Johnson (second edition)

Through the lenses of privilege, power and difference, Johnson offers an accessible model for exploring class and classism. Joining theory with example this book offers opportunity for us to see the nature and consequences of privilege and our connections to it.

Questions? Contact Congregational Services
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