

Study Guide – Just Women, Summer 2017

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Introduction

Welcome to *Just Women*! We hope this leader's guide will help you plan meaningful Study sessions using the Summer 2017 issue of the magazine.

In the introduction to this issue, Marilyn F. Williams, President of International Disciples Women's Ministries for 2014 – 2018, states that as a child growing up in the eastern part of North Carolina she experienced the first year of volunteer integration of the public schools in Lenoir County North Carolina. During this experience, she knew that God loved her and "had a unique design for her life" but she also experienced the pain of racism and disconnect of injustice. She speaks of her own calling to work for justice and encourages us to consider how this is a part of God's call for all of us.

The Spring 2017 issue of *Just Women* focuses on God's desire for justice for all. In this study guide we will consider four different ways to answer God's call to do justice. In April Johnson's *The Work of Reconciliation: A Call to All Disciples*, we are encouraged to consider how Reconciliation Ministry has been a formal initiative of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since 1971 and stands at the center of the 2020 Vision for the church. Racial justice is further explored by Kasi Zieminski in *A Call to the Church: Wake Up to Racial Justice* as we consider the ministry of the Reverend Dr. Dietra Wise Baker and Liberation Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in St. Louis MO. The long standing injustice against Native American is lifted up as Tanya J. Tyler writes about GA 1722 in *GA Resolution seeks to Repudiate "Doctrine of Discovery."* Finally, Selys Rivera calls us to consider the church's ministries with refugees and immigrants in her article *Taking a Stand: Disciples Fight for Immigrants and Refugees*.

Also included in this study guide are four devotions for those who want to connect with information in *Just Women* but do not engage in the full study each time they meet. These devotions introduce the themes of the feature articles that can be read more thoroughly outside of the group meeting.

Preparation

In preparing for the study sessions outlined here, have an individual subscription for each woman in your group. If you need more magazines, go to <http://www.discipleswomen.org>, and follow the link to *Just Women*.

Read through the Summer 2017 edition and familiarize yourself with how the theme is developed in the articles. Ask your group members to read the article that you will be focusing on *before* your meetings so everyone will be prepared to participate in the study.

Session 1

Supplies

- Copies of “*The Work of Reconciliation*” by April Johnson for each member of your group
- Bible
- 2 sheet of Newsprint with a long line drawn the center and marker

In Preparation for Your Meeting

Prior to your meeting invite your group members to read the article “*The Work of Reconciliation*” by April Johnson. Take some time and browse the Reconciliation website at <http://reconciliationministry.org>. Consider what is provided under each tab and read recent news that is on the website. Be able to tell your group what resources are available on the website. Consult your regional website or office to learn more about activities of your regional team.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

“O thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being. We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls, and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive, we love our friends and harm our enemies, we go the first mile but dare not travel the second, we forgive but dare not forget. And so we look within ourselves we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against thee. But thou, O God, have mercy on us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know thy will. Give us the courage to do they will. Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen.”

Prayer by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Baldwin, Location 274 of 1693).

Icebreaker

Our History Exercise

Take the first sheet of newsprint with the line drawn down the center. Divide the line into decade sections beginning with 1940 and ending with 2010 (8 sections: 40s, 50s, 60s, etc.) Ask the women of your group to consider what activities and events were/are going on in their churches, communities and world during each of those decades. Record the events on the timeline as they are discussed. As the discussion begins to wind down ask them to consider the events that impacted race relations. Record these events. Post this chart where it can be seen throughout your meeting.

Scripture Focus

Isaiah 59: 1 – 20

Background

The book of Isaiah is the longest of the prophetic books and the first of the three major prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures. Isaiah lived in the eighth century BCE and was a contemporary of Hosea, Amos, and Micah. The book addresses conditions during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah, a land under political pressure of the Assyrian empire.

Isaiah lived in a community that struggled with greed, violence and abuse of power. It was time characterized by injustice. At the heart of this injustice was the “loss of ‘right relationship’ – right relationship with their God and consequently, right relationship with God.” (Dempsey, 2). Despite the reality of this situation and Isaiah’s conviction that the people would experience the consequence of injustice he points the people to the presence of the Divine and the hope that the people could repent and build a community founded on justice, righteousness, and loving-kindness.

Chapter 59 is part of a larger section that begins at chapter 56 and ends at chapter 66. These chapters have a confrontational tone that contains warnings and challenges to the leadership and to the people. Isaiah 59: 9 – 15 is a prayer. It follows the prayer of the people where they question God’s ability to intervene (59:1 – 8). Isaiah assures the people that God can but will not intervene because of the injustice and lack of loving-kindness that characterizes their society. There will be no shalom as they do not behave with shalom (Gaventa and Peterson, Location 16551 of 39053). Isaiah’s prayer speaks to both God and to the people. Isaiah confronts the lack of justice. He states that this is why they do not experience God’s justice and righteousness, Isaiah’s prayer concludes with Isaiah offering contrition for the people’s choices. In 59: 15b – 20, Isaiah will tell that people that while God has every right to ignore their prayers, God is concerned for them and distressed that no one is acting on God’s behalf.

Questions

- Read Isaiah 59: 1 – 20. What are the people’s concerns? How does Isaiah respond to the people? How does Isaiah’s prayer (9 -15a) differ from the people’s prayers? What do these verses say about God? How does this passage speak to us today?
- Turning to April Johnson’s article “*The Work of Reconciliation*” consider the following questions: 1) April Johnson asks, “Is the call to work for justice too polarizing?” How does she answer this question? How do you answer this question? 2) Johnson is asked, “What is the biggest barrier to our church becoming pro-reconciling, anti-racism communities?” How does she answer? What do you see as obstacles to working for justice? 3) According to Johnson what progress has been made in the work for justice since the beginning of the initiative? What progress do you see in your communities? 4) What challenges

- might the future hold for Reconciliation ministries? How might the churches strengthen their witnesses? What is your region, congregation doing to strengthen your witness? How are you involved?
- Review the History of the Reconciliation Ministry found at the end of this study session. On the second sheet of newsprint, construct a time-line of the Reconciliation Ministry on the bottom of the line that has been drawn on the timeline. Add activities of your Region's ministry. On the top of the timeline add events that reflect race relations, either positive or negative, i.e, Trayvon Martin murder, election President Barack Obama, Immigration issues, Standing Rock standoff regarding Dakota Access Pipeline, etc.). Where do you see areas of healing and reconciliation? Where do you see ongoing problems and broken relationships? Refer back to the Decades Timeline. How does your timeline reflect the timeline associated with the History of Reconciliation Ministry? What might you want to add to this first timeline. Do things seem to be getting better or worse - why?
 - Read the Initiative found at the end of this study session. What does it mean for racism to be defined as a spiritual and theological dilemma? What are the signs that racism exists within the church?

For further information on Reconciliation ministries within the church contact your Regional office for news on your Regional Team. Regional Teams include: Alabama-Northwest Florida Region, Capital Area Region, Central Rocky Mountain Region, Illinois-Wisconsin Region, Ohio Region, Michigan Region, Mid-American Region, Northeastern Region, Pacific Southwest Region, Pennsylvania Region, Tennessee Region, Oregon Region

Get updates on the Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on facebook.com/reconciliationministry, twitter.com/DOCReconcile, and disciples.org.

Support the ministry by giving to the annual Reconciliation Offering in the fall or by giving online at <http://reconciliationministry.org/give/> . This offering is used throughout the year to support the Reconciliation Ministry of the church. Fifty percent (50%) of the offering goes back to the Region from which it was received. The Regions choose the method of distribution of the funds that they receive. Further information about projects that are supported by the offering may be obtained by contacting your Region. Congregational grants may be submitted to Regions where they will be reviewed and allocated based on meeting grant guidelines. Fifty percent (50%) is received by the Reconciliation Ministry Commission that reviews and allocates funds for grant requests submitted by general ministries, higher education institutions, regions and ministries of the general church.

**100% OF THE RECONCILIATION OFFERING IS USED FOR THE
RECONCILIATION MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.**

Going Deeper

Consider having your group read and study one of the following books:

Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. Revised Edition.* New York, NY: The New Press, 2012.

Ta-Nehisi Coates. *Between the World and Me.* New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau. 2015

Debby Irving. *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race.* Cambridge, MA: Elephant Room Press, 2014.

Sandyha Jha. *Room at the Table: Struggle for Unity and Equality in Disciple's History.* St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2009.

Jim Wallis. *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America.* Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016.

Closing Prayer

Close with Disciples Women's Benediction or have one of the group members close with prayer.

History of the Reconciliation Ministry

The Beginnings

Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was born out of the civil unrest that ensued following the martyrdom of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. His murder brought to fore in the life of our church the dis-ease of our living in two separate societies – one which benefits one group of people and one which systemically marginalizes the poor and powerless. Beginning with Resolution 29 of the International Convention of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in 1968, our Church has persistently pursued ways to address the sin of racism through resolutions and direct action in our congregations, Regions, General Ministries and Recognized Ministry partnerships.

The initial focus of Reconciliation was to ensure our programs be motivated by “ a conscientious Christian concern for these our brethren who before God are equal with us; and be directed . . .to the radical removal of basic underlying causes.” In 1969, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for the church to work for legislative change to change the plight of the poor, “many of whom are minority persons”. As a result of these and other resolutions and initiatives of the whole church, some positive results have occurred including but not limited to:

- Reconciliation was established in 1967 and reaffirmed in 1969, 1971 as a permanent office and fund for working to support racial reconciliation and anti-racist projects (grants).
- The General Nominating Committee began using the 20% racial-ethnic minority provision for all boards and committees it established following the 1969 General Assembly.
- The Short-Term Employment Experiences in Ministry Program to prepare African-American and Hispanic persons for Ministry was created; the David Kagiwada scholarship was initiated to set up assistance for American Asia seminarians.
- The Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and the North American Pacific and Asian Disciples offices were established.

Addressing Racism

In 1996, the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) approved the formation of a church-wide process to discern the nature of racism in North America and to develop ways of helping congregations address racism. In its first meeting, the Steering Committee (assigned to guide this process) agreed on the following three realities: Racism is a spiritual and theological dilemma as well as a social evil, 2) Racist practice exists throughout the life of the church and needs to be addressed (even as local and national issues of racism are addressed), and 3) Racism is a systemic problem with

root causes that have developed over hundreds of years. It is a combination of racial prejudice and institutional or economic power.

The Vision of the Church

In 2001 the General Assembly adopted the 2020 Vision which named four inter-connected mission priorities. Becoming a Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racist Church alongside developing new leadership, establishing 1000 new churches and transforming 1000 churches were identified as critical initiatives for our 21st Century church. Reconciliation Ministry was restructured in 2002 in accordance with the mission priority to strengthen the Church's effort to achieve this mission priority.

The ministry which formally functioned out of Church Finance Council began to report directly to the Office of General Minister and President to plan and implement strategies to dismantle and eradicate racism within each expression of our Church.

The Pro-reconciliation/Anti-Racism Initiative was founded upon the need to make visible God's beloved community. It invites the church to listen to the once silenced voices of its racial/ethnic communities, learn from their wisdom and gain insight from their leadership. It calls the church to discernment and prayer, study of the scriptures and reflection, dialogue and table fellowship. The true goal is to transform, strengthen and deepen the church's spirituality, resulting in a community that understands its mission to be about bringing justice and salvation to the world.

Breaking Down the Dividing Walls

The Pro-reconciliation/Anti-racism initiative has made steady progress. In 2007, Regions were urged to assume primary leadership in enabling congregational involvement in the work of racial reconciliation. In 2008, eight Regions of the Southeast Regional Fellowship called a minister to serve as minister of Reconciliation and Anti-racism Ministries. In addition, the Regions of the Northeastern Regional Fellowship are working together to provide a week-long Bridge Building Camp for Youth representatives from the seven regions.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) remains vigilant and faithful in pursuing God's call to reconciliation, "breaking down the dividing walls" that separate us from one another and God and building up God's realm on earth!

The Initiative

Many Members, One Table

Racism is a spiritual and theological dilemma as well as a social evil. In 1996, the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) approved the formation of a church-wide process to discern the nature of racism in North America and to develop ways of helping congregations address racism. Out of this process, an Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation initiative was put before the church in 1998. At their July, 1998 meetings, the Administrative Committee and the General Board approved this initiative. The initiative is based on several premises.

- Racism is a spiritual and theological dilemma as well as a social evil;
- Racist practice exists throughout the life of the church and needs to be addressed. The church needs to get its own “house” in order even as it none shall be turned away.”

The Initiative called the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to practice faithfulness with regard to the elimination of racism, which exists in all manifestations of the church, to discern the presence and nature of racism as sin, to develop strategies to eradicate it, and to work toward racial reconciliation.

Devotion

See, the LORD'S hand is not too short to save,
nor his hand too dull to hear.

Rather, your iniquities have been barriers
between you and your God

Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not reach us;
we wait for light, and lo! There is darkness;
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

The LORD saw it, and it displeased him
that there was no justice.
He saw that there was no one,
and was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm brought him victory
and his righteousness upheld him.
He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in fury as in a mantle.
According to their deed, so will he repay;
wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies;
to the coastlands he will render requital.
So those in the west shall feat the name of the LORD,
And those in the east, his glory;
For he will come like a pent-up stream
That the wind of the LORD drives on.

And he will come to Zion as Redeemer
To those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the LORD.

Isaiah 59: 1 – 2, 9 -10, 15b – 20

Isaiah, an eighth century BCE prophet, spoke for the Lord in a time when his community struggled with greed, violence, and the abuse of power. He spoke a word from the Lord declaring the loss of right relationship. The people did not love the Lord their God with their whole heart and soul and mind; they did not love their neighbor as themselves.

Today, we see the struggle to live in right relationship with one another. We hear of walls being built to keep the other out. We hear of violence that robs us of the lives of black men and women. We hear the cries of frustration of parents who work two jobs and cannot afford to feed their children as the top 2% of the economic pyramid make more and more. We hear of the potential loss of health care and programs that feed the hungry. Fear of the other and greed cast long shadows on the landscape of our lives.

Into this reality, God speaks a word and that word comes to us from the Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Since 1971, women and men of the church have heard the call to work for justice by healing the breach that divides us by the color of our skin. April Johnson, Minister of Reconciliation for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) states, "Racism is a deeply complex sin. It represents broken relationships and estrangement from each other and thereby God." The sin of racism has been named and people have repented and turned back to the Lord. Again April Johnson states, "Every day this ministry is making new connection points with our members and partner ministries. We are asking the questions: who else is participating in the work of dismantling racism and its dehumanizing implications? What are the points of connection between our services and those our congregations are already providing? Where are the places of cooperation and collaboration that the Church can help facilitate?"

In the eighth century BCE, the prophet Isaiah confronted the lack of justice in his society. He tells the people that this lack of justice displeases God. In the twenty-first century, the Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) confronts the lack of justice in our society. They tell us that this lack of justice displeases God. In the eighth century BCE, the prophet Isaiah assured the people that God was concerned for them. In the twenty-first century, the Reconciliation Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) reminds us that God is concerned with us. As God came to Zion as redeemer, God comes to us today.

How will you embody this justice of God? How will you work to dismantle systematic racism in your congregations and in your communities?

Let us pray:

"O thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being. We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls, and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive, we love our friends and harm our enemies, we go the first mile but dare not travel the second, we forgive but dare not forget. And so we look within ourselves we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against thee. But thou, O God, have mercy on us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know thy will. Give us the courage to do they will. Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen."

Prayer by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Baldwin, Location 274 of 1693).

Session 2

Supplies

- Copies of “*A Call to the Church: Wake Up to Racial Justice* ” by Kasi Zieminski for each member of your group
- Bible
- A copy of Carol Swartout Klein, *Paintings for Peace in Ferguson* or the coloring book of the same name. If you use the coloring book have crayons or colored pencils. If it is not possible to obtain the book, have a computer with internet access so that you may view the Ferguson paintings.
- A copy of Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization for each member of your group. This Continuum may be obtained at <http://www.aesa.us/conferences/2013acpresentations/ContinuumAntiRacist.pdf>
- A table for painting with water colors or tempera paints, sheets of paper, and bowls of waters

In Preparation for Your Meeting

Following the fatal shooting of 18-year old black man Michael Brown by a white police officer and the riots that ensued in Ferguson, MO, artists and volunteers turned the boarded up windows into works of arts and messages of hope. This art has been photographed and collected into a single collection by Carol Swartout Klein, *Paintings for Peace in Ferguson*. The book is available from Amazon.com and has been made into a coloring book that can be used as a tool to begin conversations of healing and unity with persons of all ages. If possible obtain a copy of the book to show or the coloring book to use as an icebreaker for your group. The artwork is also available on the Painting for Peace website, <http://www.paintingforpeacebook.com/gallery>.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray:

I see the anger in your heart,
That pulls you down and tears apart,
The sense of peace within your soul,
Security that makes you whole.

I know the pain that they don't see,
I see you struggling to be
what they expect, while deep inside,
I count the tears you try to hide.

I hear each question in you mind,

Confusion you daily find,
The certainties, forever near,
turn their back and disappear.

I'm hear through these uncertain days,
and as you walk these unknown ways,
Believe tomorrow's just begun,
And trust the light that lead you on.

(Heasley, God Sees the Hurt, The Wailing Wall, Location 676 of 964).

Icebreaker

Explain the Paintings for Peace in Ferguson project. Pass out pages from the coloring book and crayons or colored pencils. Give group members time to color their pictures. After they are done ask them to share about their picture. What do they notice about each other's pictures?

If you do not use the coloring book, show the art works from Ferguson either by looking at the book or the website. Ask what they notice about the artworks? What surprises them? What emotions does the artwork evoke?

Scripture Focus

Micah 6: 6 – 8

Background

Micah addresses the people in Israel and Judah during the 8th century BCE. He was one of the four prophets, along with Amos, Isaiah and Hosea that confronted the political, social and religious injustices of the time. Under pressure from the Assyrian empire and beginning of the Syro-Ephraimitic War (734 – 732 BCE), Mich spoke to turbulent times. He gives a strong message that God will not tolerate the apostasy, idolatry, hypocrisy and corruption of the time.

Micah 6: 6 – 8 stands in the middle of the third major section of the book, 6: 1 – 7:20. Micah 6 begins with a covenant lawsuit that accuses the people of forgetting their story and their God. Verses 6 – 8 are the response to God's questions. Micah speaks for the people raising three questions aimed at atonement.

Questions

- Read Micah 6: 6 -8.
- In the article "*A Call to the Church: Wake Up to Racial Justice*" by Kasi Zieminski, Dietra Wise Baker church planter and pastor of Liberation Christian Church in St. Louis, MO, states that the church overall has been resistant to working for justice and reconciliation. To what does she attributes this? Do you

agree or disagree – why? What evidence of resistance do you see? What are you and your congregation doing to overcome the resistance?

- At the 2001 General Assembly, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted the 2020 Vision which contained four priorities including: becoming a pro-reconciling/ anti-racist church, formation of 1000 new congregations by 2020, transformation of 1000 current congregations by 2020, and leadership development necessary to realize these new and renewed congregations. According to the disciples website <http://disciples.org>, “Reconciliation Ministry is the special ministry of the Church that fights the primary causes of racism in North America. Strides toward becoming a Pro-reconciling/Anti-racist Church were made with support from the Reconciliation Offering soon after the 2020 Vision was adopted.

The Pro-reconciliation/Anti-Racism Initiative was founded upon the need to make visible God’s beloved community. It invites the church to listen to the once silenced voices of its racial/ethnic communities, learn from their wisdom and gain insight from their leadership. It calls the church to discernment and prayer, study of the scriptures and reflection, dialogue and table fellowship. The true goal is to transform, strengthen and deepen the church’s spirituality, resulting in a community that understands its mission to be about bringing justice and salvation to the world.

The Pro-reconciliation/Anti-racism initiative has made steady progress. In 2007, Regions were urged to assume primary leadership in enabling congregational involvement in the work of racial reconciliation. In 2008, eight Regions of the Southeast Regional Fellowship called a minister to serve as minister of Reconciliation and Anti-racism Ministries.”

How is becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church related to the 2020 vision of the church? How does this initiative undergird all of the other initiatives of the vision?

- According to Baker what is the theological rationale for the church’s pro-reconciling/anti-racist priority? How is working for justice at the heart of every justice issue?
- How is Baker working to do justice in the St. Louis area?
- What are tangible ways that the polity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) might be changed so that it might better work for justice?
- Pass out copies of the *Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization*. Ask each person to identify where her congregation falls on the continuum. Ask members to discuss why they placed their congregation where they did. What changes might your congregation make to be more effective in the work for justice?
- Baker states, “I believe our church loves mercy, we’ve checked that box.” What examples of “loving mercy” does she give? How does your congregation “love mercy?”

- According to Baker, what is deeper than charity work? What makes charity work more difficult than working for systematic changes?
- According to Baker, how do we “walk humbly with God”?
- The article concludes with Baker stating: ““I want there to be relationship—we have to do it right. Meanwhile, it can’t take forever. Organizing takes a fight, a base, power, money, people—it’s not quick. But when you win, you win something substantial—that shifts us back to a beloved community, and gives us more of the power for the kind of community that we imagine. That’s the kind of work I believe the church is called to—to do justice. I think that’s what many in our church are really waiting for.” What will the beloved community look like? What are the glimpses of the beloved community?”

Closing Prayer

Have the women move to the table with the paints. Give each woman two sheets of paper. Guide them through the following prayer experience:

- State “The world is broken in many ways. Each of us experience hurtful things and have done hurtful things. These hurtful events take place in our relationship with God and with others.”
- Go on to say, “ Consider what hurtful things have been said to you? What hurtful things have been done to you? What hurtful things have you done? Write a word, draw a symbol or picture to describe this. What is your picture of brokenness.”
- Allow time for the women to draw the symbol on their paper. After sufficient time state, “ God is with you in this time and place. God wants you to experience healing and wholeness in your life. God desires to heal the hurts of our life.”
- Instruct the women to take the second piece of paper. Say, “God is faithful and just. As we repent of hurtful acts, God forgives us. As we let go of the hurts that we have received, we forgive. God will purify us from unrighteousness and help us to establish the beloved community with us. We are loved. Forgiveness is possible. On your paper write a word, draw a symbol or picture to describe this. What is your picture of hope.”
- Allow sufficient time for your group members to reflect and create finish their paintings. End your time together by saying, “Amen.”

Adapted from “*Symbols of Hurt*”(McCloud, location 1041 of 2594)

Devotion

With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
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: 6 -8

Eighth century BCE prophet Micah, addresses the people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the midst of political, social and religious upheaval. Micah reflects on the pressures that the kingdoms face and the turmoil that characterizes his world. His word from the Lord strongly admonishes that God will not tolerate the apostasy, idolatry, hypocrisy and corruption of the time. He speaks the heart of the all the prophets calling the people to recognize that God requires doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

Following the killing of Michael Brown, an 18-year-old black man, by a white police officer and the subsequent riots in Ferguson, MO, The Reverend Dr. Dietra Wise Brown and her congregation at Liberation Christian Church in St. Louis, MO found themselves examining how they responded to God's requirements of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. While the congregation had "focused on the school-to-prison pipeline, developing leaders in collaboration with the Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) to address systematic racism and inequity in the juvenile justice" since it was formed, Brown states, "Ferguson changed everything."

Rather than doing justice work at the margins, Brown urges that justice work should be at the center of all that the church does. She reminds us that in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) church's first initiative is to become a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church. This initiative is the first priority of the church's collective action.

As God's people, we are called to do justice as we work for the poor and the oppressed and as we provide protection for the most vulnerable in our society. We are called to dismantle the mechanisms and structures that sustain systematic justice. As God's people, we are called to love kindness as we have food pantries, clothing drives, advocate for health care, and see that the basic needs of others are met in ways that preserves dignity

and recognizes our shared humanity. We are called to acts of mercy and charity. As God's people, we are call to walk humbly with God as we "connect, share, and invite others" in forming the beloved community. Baker states, " We have to be gentle with each other, hold each other close! We're going to have to walk humbly for us to walk together. Justice might be something that brings a lot of us together."

Let us pray:

I see the anger in your heart,
That pulls you down and tears apart,
The sense of peace within your soul,
Security that makes you whole.

I know the pain that they don't see,
I see you struggling to be
what they expect, while deep inside,
I count the tears you try to hide.

I hear each question in you mind,
Confusion you daily find,
The certainties, forever near,
turn their back and disappear.

I'm hear through these uncertain days,
and as you walk these unknown ways,
Believe tomorrow's just begun,
And trust the light that lead you on.

Amen.

(Heasley, God Sees the Hurt, The Wailing Wall, Location 676 of 964).

Session 3

Supplies

- Copies of “*GA Resolution Seeks to Repudiate ‘Doctrine of Discovery’*” by Tanya J. Tyler for each member of your group.
- Bible
- Copy of opening prayer for each member.
- GA 1722 Repudiation of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery: A Call to Education and Action, and Support for Indigenous Voices in the Witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that can be found at the end of this study session.
- Copies of the opening and closing prayers for each member.
- Write each of the following on slips of paper for the Early Message Icebreaker. Only put one word on each slip of paper and have two to three slips for each member of your group. Words for paper slips: Native Americans, Asians, Jews, Middle Easterners, Latinos, African Americans, Whites, Irish, Italians, French Spanish, Indigenous People, Colonizers, Discovers.

In Preparation for Your Meeting

Prior to your meeting ask some of your group members to read the article “*Landscape Mending Resource Manual*” that can be found at <https://landscapemending.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/landscape-mending-resource-manual.pdf> and be prepared to summarize the article. Have others read *Bent Grass: A Brief History Concerning DOC’s Relationship with the Doctrine of Discovery*” *When Reason Becomes Faith* found at <https://yakamamission.org/bent-grass-a-brief-history-concerning-docs-relationship-with-the-doctrine-of-discovery/> and be prepared to report on it.

Opening Prayer

Pray together

Let us pray:

O’ Great Spirit help me always to
speak the truth quietly, to listen with
an open mind when others speak,
and to remember that the peace that may
be found in silence.
Amen.

Cherokee Prayer (Jean, Location 607 of 3745)

Icebreaker

Early Messages

Divide your group into small groups so that there are no more than five in a group. Pass out the slips of paper that you have prepared, giving two or three to each person. Have each person share what they were taught as children about the group of people that is named on one of their slips of paper. Give each one an opportunity to share about each of the slips that they have received.

Gather back together in your larger group Discuss the following”

- Where there any surprises?
- How where these early messages taught?
- How does your current thinking differ from your early messages?
- What are some of the early messages that continue to influence you?

Scripture Focus

Luke 4: 16 – 21

Background

All people long for justice. Acting justly reflects the very nature of God. The Gospel of Luke embeds the story of Jesus in the history of Israel and shows how Jesus fulfills the scriptural longing for justice as he brings healing and wholeness and embodies the hospitality of God.

Luke 4: 16 – 21 is the inaugural address of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee. In it he proclaims the good news of God’s reign. This reign is characterized in acts of healing, forgiveness and justice. It is seen in right relationship between the people and God and the people and others. Jesus declares that he is empowered by the Spirit of God to bring good news to the poor, to liberate those who are bound and to restore sight to the blind. Jesus’ words harken back to the prophet Isaiah 58. In this inaugural address, Jesus ministry is irrevocably linked to the pursuit of justice.

Questions

- What is the Doctrine of Discovery? When did the Doctrine of Discovery originate? Where you aware of the Doctrine of Discovery prior to reading this article? What are your feelings, if you were previously unaware of this doctrine? What precedent did the Doctrine of Discovery set regarding relationships with indigenous people? What precedent did the Doctrine of Discovery set in relationship to the descendants of those who “discovered” and colonized North America?
- Read Luke 4: 18 – 21. What do Jesus’ words mean to you? How are Jesus words linked to the pursuit of justice? How do these words relate to what you know about the Doctrine of Discovery?

- Have the women who read “*Landscape Mending Resource Manual*” provide a summary of what they read? What was new to you in this information? What surprises you in this information? How do you feel about what you heard?
- Have the women who read “*Bent Grass: A Brief History Concerning DOC’s Relationship with the Doctrine of Discovery*” *When Reason Becomes Faith*” provide a summary of what they read. What was new to you in this information? What surprises you in this information? How do you feel about what you heard?
- David Bell states that the Doctrine of Discovery is “the foundational document of racism in the United States and therefore it is foundational to racism in the church.” What do you think that he means by this? Do you agree or disagree – why?
- How is resistance to the Doctrine of Discovery growing? Can you think of other instances of resistance beyond those named in the article?
- How is resistance to the Doctrine of Discovery making itself manifest in the church?
- For what does GA 1722 call? How is this resolution an example of the church’s pro-reconciliation/ anti-racism emphasis? A copy of GA 1722 can be found at the end of this study session. Feedback regarding GA -1722 can be left by visiting <http://ga.disciples.org/resolutions/2017/ga-1722/>.
- David Bell states ““We are the first Christian denomination to be born on this soil and we’re the only one that doesn’t have an indigenous ministry or a leader at [upper] levels, for that to happen, we’re talking about a different power structure. It means we have to change.” How does the resolution call for an indigenous voice and presence to be developed in the life of the church? Why is this important?
- What are the next steps that need to be taken should the resolution be affirmed at the Regional Assembly?

Going Deeper

Choose one of the following for further study:

God is Red: A Native View of Religion, by Vine Deloria Jr.

Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide, by George E. Tinker.

Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, by Steven T. Newcomb.

Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny, by Robert J. Miller and Elizabeth Furse.

Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies. By Robert J. Miller, Jacinta Ruru, Larissa Behrendt and Tracey Lindberg.

Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights (Critical Issues in Indigenous Studies). By Dian Million

The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance, Edited by M. Annette Jaimes.

Romanus Pontifex or Discovery

Doctrine: <http://www.cherokeephoenix.org/Article/Index/6046>

Gold and Genocide, The True Story of the California Gold

Rush <http://www.revcom.us/a/v21/1030-039/1039/gold1.htm>

Closing Prayer

Pray together Psalm 50: 1 -2, 4 – 8, 14 – 15

Let us pray:

People who practice justice, walk in the light of God.

The mighty one, God the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth....

He call to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people.
“Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak,
O Israel, I will testify to you.
I am God, your God.
Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you:
your burnt offerings are continually before me....

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
And pay your vows to the Most High
Call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

Glory to the Father.

GA -1722

(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

REPUDIATION OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY: A CALL TO EDUCATION AND ACTION, AND SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE WITNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

WHEREAS, Luke 4:16-21(NRSV) testifies to the 5-fold mission of Jesus Christ to “bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” thereby calling Jesus’ disciples to oppose genocide, oppression, dehumanization, and the removal of Peoples from ancestral lands; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery (CDoD) is a body of work beginning in the 15th century with a series of papal bulls and theological statements justifying the Age of Discovery and the colonization, conquest, subjugation of lands and peoples around the world^[i]; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery continues to facilitate genocide, oppression, dehumanization, and the removal of Peoples from ancestral lands in the United States, Canada and globally; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court legally adopted the Doctrine of Discovery in the 1823 landmark decision of *Johnson V. McIntosh*^[i]; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (DOC) has historically and consistently claimed an identity of a westward movement church on the North American Landscape; and

WHEREAS, the DOC recognizes its identity, polity, congregations, and theology have benefited from the CDoD and its legal/theological support of seizing indigenous lands and human rights abuses of indigenous peoples and further recognizes North American DOC congregations reside on land immorally acquired from Indigenous North American Tribes and Bands; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) under the guise of civilization and Christianization, engaged in programmatic assimilation, discrimination, subjugation, and desecration of Indigenous American Tribes and Bands (e.g., American Tepee Christian Mission—*also known as Yakama Christian Mission*); and

WHEREAS, cultural, communal, and individual damage experienced by American Indians, Alaska Natives and First Nations people are disproportionate in the United States and Canada^[ii]; and

WHEREAS, governmental and economic institutions lack the will to dismantle the CDoD, and the Church is the one institution who can clearly speak against this unjust CDoD system, as it has in the past against slavery and apartheid; and

WHEREAS, the DOC has recognized disproportionate hurt inflicted upon People of Color and oppressed Creation with Sense of the Assembly Resolutions [\[iii\]](#); and

WHEREAS, many of our ecumenical partners have already repudiated and renounced the CDOD [\[iv\]](#); and

WHEREAS, Robert Brock, Northwest Regional Minister, began a process of relational change between the DOC, American Indians, and First Nation peoples in 1987 by signing *A Public Declaration* of formal apology for the Northwest Christian Church's participation in the destruction of Native American spiritual practices;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 8-12, 2017, in Indianapolis, Indiana, condemns and repudiates the Christian Doctrine of Discovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly encourages the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to expose and remove denominational structure which benefits from the Doctrine of Discovery; work toward eliminating the CDoD as a means to subjugate peoples, property, and land; develop resources for study; enter into self-examination; seek to recognize and understand the historical trauma of indigenous people and to recognize DOC's participation in the continuing effects of that trauma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly urges the Office of General Minister and President, National Convocation, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, Global Ministries and Disciples Home Missions: [\[v\]](#), in consultation with Yakama Christian Mission's Advocate for Indigenous Justice, Reconciliation Ministry, and the Moderator(s) of ad hoc Landscape Mending Council to learn where their organization/entity/structure have benefited from the CDoD *and* assist Regions and Congregations in documenting and explaining the effects of the CDoD in the life of the Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly encourage the leaders of the church's racial/ethnic constituencies to insist on an indigenous voice in all General Church and Office of General Minister and President meetings/conferences/etc., where leaders of the ethnic constituencies are invited; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly encourages the church's educational affiliates (e.g., Colleges, Universities, Seminaries) to educate students on the Christian Doctrine of Discovery, how the CDoD influenced past and current DOC polity and theology, support instructors to research and write on how the Christian Doctrine of Discovery has benefited and/or damaged their area of expertise and recruit and provide scholarships to Native people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly urges all Regions and congregations to develop and nurture relationships with the American Indian, Alaska Natives, or First Nation people of the place where they reside; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2017 General Assembly encourages congregations to act and urge their State to offer a free curriculum about the history, culture, and government of federally recognized Indian Tribes within State boundaries to State school districts, and require districts to incorporate the curricula of their nearest Tribe(s) into their schools' curriculum [vi].

Notes:

[i] Find educational information on the Doctrine of Discovery at Yakama Christian Mission, <http://wp.me/P6DjFC-2j>.

[ii] US incarceration rates for American Indians (<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aic.pdf> and https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/2010percent/US_American_Indian_2010.html), suicide among American Indian/Alaska Native adolescents and young adults ages 15 to 34 is 1.5 times higher than the national average (<https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Suicide-DataSheet-a.pdf>), American Indian students are disproportionately disciplined (https://archive.uneews.utah.edu/news_releases/american-indians-disproportionately-disciplined-at-school-compared-to-white-students-new-university-of-utah-research-shows/)

[iii] GA 1323: Incarceration, Justice and Restoration in the United States; GA 1324: Reflection on Christian Theology and Polity, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery, and the Indigenous Voice; GA 1518: Black Lives Matter: A Movement for All; GA 1519: Commemorating 100 Years Since the Armenian Genocide; GA 1520: Concerning Environmental Racism; 0313 Ending Violence Against Women—an essay on Native Human Trafficking can be found at: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/politics/trafficking-in-native-communities/>.

[iv] Episcopal Church, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, New England Yearly Meeting-of Friends-Quakers, United Methodist Church, Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), World Council of Churches.

[v] Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Green Chalice, Disciples Women, and Disciples Men, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Week of Compassion, National Benevolent Association, Pension Fund, Hope Partnership, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Disciples Church Extension Fund, Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church Foundation, Christian Board of Publication, College of Regional Ministers, Disciples Center for Public Witness, Disciples Peace Fellowship, European Evangelistic Society, National City Christian Church Foundation, and the United Christian Missionary Society.

[vi] Washington State adopted such an amendment, RCW 28A.320.170, which, can be found at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/Rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.320.170>.

Yakama Christian Mission, White Swan, Washington
Marshall Avenue Christian Church, Mattoon, Illinois
Westlake Christian Church, Westlake, Ohio
Illioopolis Christian Church, Illioopolis, Illinois
Heights Christian Church, Shaker Heights, Ohio
Disciples Christian Church, Owasso, Oklahoma
Christian Church in Ohio (Regional)
United Christian Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania
Firestone Park Christian Church, Akron, Ohio
First Christian in Bowling Green, Ohio
First Christian/Presbyterian Church, Pryor, Oklahoma
First Christian Church, Concord, California
First Christian Church, Clarkston, Washington
First Christian Church, Vallejo, California
First Christian Church, Puyallup, WA
Canoe Camp Church of Christ, Mansfield, Pennsylvania
University Christian Church (DOC), San Diego, California
First Christian Church of Eugene, Oregon
Downtown Disciples, Des Moines, Iowa
University Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas
First Christian Church (DOC), Minneapolis, Minnesota
University Christian Church, Seattle, Washington
Pine Valley Christian Church (DOC), Wichita, Kansas
Rock Bridge Christian Church, Columbia, Missouri
First Christian Church, Redding, California
Nixa Christian Church, Nixa, Missouri

Supporters and Advocates:

Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin Regional Council
Christian Church in Illinois & Wisconsin Pro-Reconciliation & Anti-Racism Team
GLAD Alliance
Ohio Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission
Disciples Justice Action Network
Blue Eagle Wellbriety Ministry

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-1722.

Devotion

All people long for justice! Acting justly reflects the very nature of God. Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee by proclaiming that the day of God's justice has arrived. The kingdom is among us and God's justice will be seen in acts of healing, forgiveness, and justice that are empowered by the indwelling Spirit of God. Jesus links his ministry and subsequently the ministry of those who follow him with acts of justice.

General Assembly Sense of the Assembly Resolution 1722 begins, "WHEREAS, Luke 4:16-21 (NRSV) testifies to the 5-fold mission of Jesus Christ to "bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" thereby calling Jesus' disciples to oppose genocide, oppression, dehumanization, and the removal of Peoples from ancestral lands". It calls for us to acknowledge the sin of racism that has contributed to the facilitation of genocide and the ongoing oppression and dehumanization of Native Americans throughout our history. It traces the roots of this racism back to the 15th and 16th centuries when explorers and colonizers were told through a series of papal bulls that lands that were found were not ruled by Christians and thereby rightly belonged to the discoverers. This doctrine that dehumanized indigenous people has been codified in laws and policies that have shaped colonial expansion and Disciples polity to this day.

The first Christian denomination to be born on North American soils we say that we are a "movement of wholeness in a fragmented world." The resolution urges us to act in ways that demonstrate our commitment to being this movement and to action that lives out our priority to be a pro-reconciling/ anti-racist church. It calls us to repent. It calls us to resist this doctrine that has given legal and theological support to oppress and marginalize indigenous people. It urges us to invite indigenous voices into leadership and to tables where decisions are made. It demonstrates one step in our commitment as disciples to follow Jesus in proclaiming that the day of God's justice has arrived.

Let us pray:

People who practice justice, walk in the light of God.

The mighty one, God the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth....

He call to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people.
"Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"
The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak,
O Israel, I will testify to you.
I am God, your God.

Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you:
your burnt offerings are continually before me....

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving
And pay your vows to the Most High
Call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

Glory to the Father.

Psalm 50: 1 -2, 4 – 8, 14 – 15

Session 4

Supplies

- Copies of *“Taking a Stand: Disciples Fight for Immigrants and Refugees”* by Selys Rivera for each member of your group
- Bible
- Computer with internet accessibility.
- A world map and push pins.
- Postcards for each member to participate in Refugees Welcome Summer Legislator Postcard campaign. To print postcards go to <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/RW-SUMMER-Legislative-Postcard.pdf>.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer for Migrants and Refugees. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, https://ignatiansolidarity.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Unaccompanied_Toolkit_Prayers.pdf.

Icebreaker

Post the map where all can see it. Ask the women of the group to share the country(ies) from which their families immigrated. Have them put a pin(s) in the countries from which their families came. What have they been told about their families coming to the United States? Point out that all except indigenous peoples are immigrants even if countries of origin have been forgotten and an individual's genealogy might include a mix of people from different places.

Scripture Focus

Deuteronomy 10: 1 - 22

Background

Deuteronomy argues that the law given at Mt. Sinai must be restated and interpreted by each new generation as they seek to apply the requirements of covenant law to the circumstances of their life and generation. It is a call for God's people to live into their identity as they move from principle to practice of the covenant.

Deuteronomy 10: 1 – 11 reviews Israel's history including acts of idolatry and rebellion. It reminds the people that they are God's people by choice despite their behavior. The covenant continues because of God's character and God's promise. The ongoing relationship is not because of Israel's righteousness but because of God's grace.

10: 12 – 22 reminds the people that God calls them to live out their covenant relationship through their care of the weakest and most vulnerable and intervention for those who are in need of protection. Simply stated, Israel is to love and serve because God has chosen them

Questions

- Read Deuteronomy 10: 1 – 22 summarize the scripture in your own words. What does this passage tell us about Moses' behavior? The people's behavior? How are they similar? What does this passage tell us about God? How are the people to act in light of God's actions? How does this passage speak to us in the 21st century? Who are the weak and vulnerable in society today? Who needs protection today?
- What are DAPA and DACA? How does Rivera say that the election of President Donald Trump affected immigrants and refugees and those who care about those populations?
- On the Refugee and Immigration Ministries website it is stated, "Since 1949, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has resettled more than 37,500 refugees and assisted countless people facing immigration problems. Currently, Refugee and Immigration Ministries enables your congregation to:
 - Participate in the global mission of the church.

- Do hands-on mission work.
- Learn more about refugee and immigration issues.
- Resettle refugees in your community.
- Respond to the needs of refugees around the world.
- Respond to those in your community with immigration problems.
- Support the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries.
- Support Humane Borders.
- Speak out against anti-immigrant attitudes.
- Advocate for the rights of refugees and immigrants.”

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/about/>.

- What are the current ministry goals of RIM?
- According to the article what are the obstacles and challenges in ministering with refugees and immigrants today? What obstacles and challenges do you identify in your congregation’s desire to engage in ministries with refugees and immigrants? How can these obstacles be overcome?
- How are refugees and immigrants affected by human trafficking?
- Read GA - 1723 which may be found at the end of this study session. In your own words what is this resolution seeking to do? Feedback on this resolution may be given by visiting <http://ga.disciples.org/resolutions/2017/ga-1723/>
- How are you and your congregation involved in ministries with refugees and immigrants? Visit <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/>. Identify the resources and the ministry opportunities. How might you or your congregation become more engaged in this work?
- Consider engaging in the Refugees Welcome Summer Legislator Postcard campaign.

Encourage group members to continue to be engaged following your meeting by participating in the #ToImmigrants with Love campaign by visiting <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/toimmigrantswithlove/> and writing an electronic letter. Point out that they can subscribe to the RIM newsletter to receive regular updates on Refugee and Immigration Ministries by visiting <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/>.

Closing Prayer

Close by singing *Santos, Santos, Santos* that can be found in Chalice Hymnal, # 111.

Defining DAPA and DACA

found at <http://www.voanews.com/a/what-are-dapa-daca/3389540.html>

DAPA (Deferred Action of Parents of Americans)

“ DAPA was introduced by the Obama administration in November 2014.

It grants deferred action status to some undocumented immigrants who have lived in the U.S. since 2010 and have children who are either American citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

Those immigrants must have been in the United States since November 2014 without holding lawful immigration status.

They must not have been convicted of a felony or significant misdemeanor and must not otherwise pose a threat to national security.

The "deferred action" does not equal full legal status, but instead confers exemption from deportation and a 3-year, renewable work permit.”

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)

“ DACA was introduced by the Obama administration in June 2012.

It originally allowed some illegal and undocumented immigrants who entered the country before their 16th birthday and before June 2007 to get exemption from deportation and a renewable 2-year work permit.

Eligible persons must have lived continuously in the United States since 2007.

They must be enrolled in school, have completed high school or the equivalent, or have been honorably discharged from the armed services or Coast Guard.

They must not have been convicted of a felony or a serious misdemeanor, or otherwise pose a threat to national security.

In November 2014, DACA was expanded to include illegal immigrants who entered the country before 2010, and it eliminated the requirement that applicants be younger than 31 years old.”

GA-1723

(SENSE OF THE ASSEMBLY)

ON BECOMING IMMIGRANT WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS

WHEREAS, the Bible instructs, “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34 NRSV); and

WHEREAS, Jesus commands us to welcome the stranger, for “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40 NRSV); and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizes that it was founded partly by immigrant ministers, such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell; and

WHEREAS, immigrants are pastors, congregation members, and leaders in our church and denomination; and

WHEREAS, in these uncertain times of unprecedented negative rhetoric against immigrant groups and with changes in immigration policies, our congregations and pastors have heard the cries of affected communities many of whom are fearful of detention, deportation, and the ultimate separation of families and who are concerned about their families and family members who are already residing in detention centers; and

WHEREAS, the United States immigrant population stood at more than 42.4 million, or 13.3 percent of the total U.S. population, in 2014^[1] and immigrants in the United States and their U.S.-born children now number approximately 81 million people, or 26 percent of the overall population of the United States^[2]; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration, an estimated 11.4 million undocumented immigrants resided in the United States as of January 2012. Between 2009 and 2013, it is estimated that 4 million unauthorized immigrants (39 percent of the overall unauthorized population aged 15 and older) resided with children under the age of 18. Of this group, about 3.3 million (84 percent) resided with at least one U.S. citizen child under the age of 18, and 16 percent resided with non-U.S.-citizen children^[3]; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that in the 2009-13 period, 5.1 million children under the age of 18 lived with an undocumented immigrant parent, representing 7 percent of the U.S. child population. About 79 percent (4.1 million) of these children were U.S. citizens, and another 19 percent (959,000) were permanent residents and those with temporary visas^[4]; and^[5]

WHEREAS, there were between 35,000 and 120,000 undocumented immigrants in Canada as of May 2013[6]; and

WHEREAS, it was estimated that somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 undocumented migrants resided in Greater Toronto area alone, and that the number was expected to surge in 2015 when four-year work permits for thousands of temporary foreign workers who had moved to Canada began to expire under a 2011 law, potentially moving thousands more “underground” [7]; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada has historically fought for social justice and has advocated in favor of the poor, dispossessed, and marginalized; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is committed to serving all of God’s people; and recognizes all persons are created by and valuable in the eyes of God;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in this prophetic and historic moment, the 2017 General Assembly, meeting July 8-12, 2017, in Indianapolis, Indiana, encourages the church to deepen its commitment to building unity and integration among all our Disciples congregations by issuing a call to congregations to become “immigrant welcoming congregations;” and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and their respective Disciples ministries consider:

1. engaging in congregational prayer, listening conferences, and action around immigration policies;
2. offering mental health training and resources to immigrants and immigrant families, and to those from communities providing support and solidarity to these immigrants and immigrant families, such as clergy and other leaders;
3. supporting immigrant families when facing and experiencing separation; and
4. promoting ministries of healing for trauma resulting from immigration travel and trafficking[8]; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and their respective Disciples ministries consider:

1. establishing preventive measures that help immigrant families and individuals avoid fraud and obtain credible legal resources and guidance;
2. offering planning and resource materials for individuals and families in the face of detention and deportation risks; and
3. offering support for those immigrants and families living in border communities and beyond; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that churches of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada seek to:

1. build solidarity between immigrant and non-immigrant congregations;
2. consider becoming or assisting congregations offering sanctuary protections to immigrants;
3. develop community protection and response models for families facing separation due to detention or deportation;
4. educate themselves and others about those immigration policies that support the rights of immigrant families;
5. offer support for current Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, border communities, and victims of hate crimes, fraudulent activity, and sex trafficking; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that congregations, ministries, organizations, and institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will continue to strive to respect and affirm the dignity of every child of God and to advocate for the fair and just treatment of immigrants and immigrant families in the United States and Canada.

Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (Obra Hispana)
 Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
 Iglesia Alas de Salvación, Chandler, AZ
 Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel, San Benito, TX
 The National Benevolent Association (NBA)
 National Convocation
 North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD)
 Disciples Women

Background Information

References / resource links for drafting assistance:

- *Previous Disciples statements/resolutions:* <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/about/disciples-statements/>
- *UCC Immigrant Welcoming Congregations Initiative:* <http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/Becoming%20an%20immigrant%20welcoming%20congregation%20updated%20Nov%201%202012.pdf>
- *UCC's historical resolutions related to immigrants, including their most recent resolution passed in 2013:* http://www.ucc.org/justice_immigration_resolutions

**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly APPROVE GA-1723.
 (Discussion time: 24 minutes)**

[1] In 2014, around 47 percent of immigrants (20 million) were naturalized U.S. citizens. The remaining 53 percent (22.4 million) included lawful permanent residents,

undocumented immigrants, and legal residents on temporary visas (such as students and temporary workers)

[2] <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

[3] Id.

[4] Id.

[5] The U.S. Supreme Court's 4-4 split [decision](#) on June 23, 2016, effectively blocked President Obama's executive actions on immigration that sought to expand Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and created Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA), thereby resulting in adverse effect upon thousands of families residing in the United States. *United States v. Texas*, No. 15-674.

[6] As reported by the Toronto Sun, <https://www.reference.com/government-politics/happens-illegal-immigrants-canada-107f166da99ce7e4>

[7] As reported by the Toronto Star newspaper reported August 20, 2013, https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2013/08/20/undocumented_immigrants_toronto_may_be_a_sanctuary_city_but_agencies_still_ask_about_status.html

[8] According to the Pew Research Center, "The Obama administration deported 414,481 unauthorized immigrants in fiscal year 2014..." <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/31/u-s-immigrant-deportations-declined-in-2014-but-remain-near-record-high/>

Devotion

Deuteronomy 10: 12 – 20.

¹² So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God^[c] and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being. ¹⁴ Although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it, ¹⁵ yet the Lord set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today. ¹⁶ Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer. ¹⁷ For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, ¹⁸ who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. ¹⁹ You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear.

Deuteronomy 10 reminds the people of Israel that they have rebelled and worshipped other gods on numerous occasions. It tells them that they are God's people because of God's grace and not their righteousness. It calls them back to covenant relationship lived out through care of the poor and the weak.

All of this speaks truth to us today as it did to the people of Israel. Deuteronomy 12 – 20 reminds us that as God's chosen people, as the body of Christ, we are called to love and serve; we are to care for the most vulnerable, and intervene for those who are in need of protection.

Immigrants and refugees are among those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection in our society today. Millions of men, women and children have fled their homes for safety from war-torn Syria. Millions of others live in refugee camps around the world. Multiple generations have dwelt in what their ancestors thought would be temporary housing as they fled their homes over sixty years ago. Many flee from poverty and gang-torn existences seeking the opportunity for a better lives and economic stability for themselves and their families.

Like the people of Israel, our ancestor was also a wandering Aramaic and for most of us our more immediate ancestors came to the United States or Canada from different lands. Like the immigrants and refugees of today, they came seeking freedom and opportunity.

Deuteronomy 10: 19 states, "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Refugee and Immigrations Ministries shows us ways to love the stranger as we welcome and advocate for those who come today seeking freedom, safety and opportunity.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer for Migrants and Refugees.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, https://ignatiansolidarity.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Unaccompanied_Toolkit_Prayers.pdf.

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About the Author

The Reverend Dr. Beth Rupe has served congregations in Kentucky and Illinois. She currently lives in Bloomington, IL and serves as Interim Minister of Women's Ministries for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in IL and WI, Regional Elder to the McLean Livingston congregations for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in IL and WI, co-facilitator of the CCIW Pro-Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Team, and is on the Regional Board for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in IL and WI. She writes *Prayer Stations* and the quarterly study guides for *Just Women*. She has written congregational resources for Disciples Home Ministries, including for Laity Sunday, 2017 and book reviews that have been published in the *Lexington Theological Quarterly*. Beth practices contemplative prayer forms. She is married to Mark. They enjoy traveling and spending time with family and friends. They have two adult children and two granddaughters.