

The MAC

Summer, 2017



Arrow

Unitarian Universalist

Multiracial Unity Action Caucus

(UUMUAC)

“For the Unity of the
light and dark skinned
people of the world.”

**Celebrating the Rainbow of Steel: The presence of The Unitarian Universalist
Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC) at the Unitarian Universalist
Association General Assembly 2017 – – a narratological analysis**

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Spokesperson, UUMUAC aka the MAC

Where do I begin? The UUMUAC GA 2017 Organizing Committee (MAC GA 17) consisting of Kelvin Sandridge, Marie Cobbs, and later brother Kenneth Christiansen, and myself arrived in New Orleans, LA, the site of the Assembly, after a complicated flight on Southwest Airlines.

We arrived in New Orleans in the middle of a major rainstorm which would last for two or three days. But we were successfully able to taxi over to our hotels, and, once we got settled in, we got ready for our Tuesday activity and indeed for the rest of the week, rain and all. The following is a presentation of our ideological vision, philosophy if you will, and the plan of action which would underlie what we were trying to do at GA 17:

We in MAC GA 17 saw this General Assembly as a major effort for UUMUAC to oppose the “white-supremacy-ology” which was going to dominate this General Assembly. You only had to look at the general agenda developed by the GA 17 Program Committee to see how NEO-racist segregation would be a fundamental part of the white-supremacy-ologists’ vision. There were four basic tracks: all black, all people of color (non-blacks/non-whites), all white, and multiracial Unitarian Universalists, predominantly white. We were the fifth track, the multiracial unitarian universalist track, but we were not an official part of the program. And this would be a problem.

So what is this white-supremacy-ology stuff, anyway? Connotatively speaking, “white-supremacy-ology” is defined as “that form of neo-racism which argues that all white people, but especially anti-racist whites, who live within a racist imperialist system, are **white** supremacists, either overtly or covertly. The

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proponents of this libel call it the **spectrum** of white supremacy. Against this negative vision of our white brothers and sisters, we in UUMUAC argue that the actions of the real white supremacists hurt the majority of workers, students, and professionals of all colors, especially blacks and whites,” (Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell). MAC GA 17 would show how multiracial unitarian universalism is the best way to oppose racism in all its forms.

With that vision in mind, we went to work. On Tuesday, June 21, we set up our headquarters in the Blake Hotel, with the help of the hotel’s program manager, one Kaitlin Son, a young Korean American woman who was extremely helpful in our modest efforts, mainly because she liked our ideas.

Our original plan was to leaflet the People's Institute of New Orleans’ workshop on how to fight racism and then invite early arrivals to an open house at our headquarters. The People’s Institute is one of the chief proponents of the neo-racism in our denomination, with one Tim Wise, being one of their most articulate spokespeople. But we were unable to do any leafleting as we had a number of organizational and personal items to deal with.

On Wednesday, June 21, we had planned the following: 10 am a press conference and open house, a noon luncheon at the Blake Hotel’s in house cafe, an afternoon discussion about the nature of neo-racism, and then go over to the Morial Convention Center for the Mid-America Regional Meeting, the Banner Parade, and the opening service. And to end with a late night open house.

But instead this is what happened: Despite the fact that we had sent out a press release to the local newspaper, no media person showed up. And indeed no one even showed up for our preliminary open house as we called it, except our main presenter, Brother Dr. Kenneth Christiansen. So, he agreed to hold the fort while we went over to the Morial Convention Center and to do some more agitation (leafleting, conversationing).

While we were over there, two curious things happened which signaled to me that the Right Relations Police, my name for the group which is supposed to keep everybody in “right relations,” with the authority to expel you from the Assembly if you were deemed as being disruptive. First, they came over to our headquarters to see what we were up to and then one of them called me to see how things were going. We assumed that this was the result of the situation that had occurred at the Mid-America Regional Assembly in April 2017. Or was it possible that we were being monitored in order to set us up for a provocation? More on this later.

We decided to use the time to get ready for our Thursday evening program. We actually developed a pretty good PowerPoint on the history of multiracial unity in Unitarian/Universalist history, we clarified Ken's presentation about using the asset-based analysis to fight racism, and we discussed with Kelvin how to present his information concerning the way in which anti-black racism hurt white folks. Then about 5 pm we left Ken in charge to work on completing his presentation and headed back over to Morial.

I attended the Mid-America regional meeting and was warmly greeted by Sister Lisa Presley, the regional officer who was a member of the right relations team during the Mid-America Regional Conference, and Brother Tom Capo, the senior minister from DuPage UU Church. It was all quite friendly compared to what had happened at the Regional Assembly. The key announcement was that there would be no Mid-America Regional Assembly in April 2018 since the UUAGA was going to meet in Kansas City, Missouri, June 2018. Maybe we could try to pull off a UUMUAC conference doing the April time slot.

Once the Midwest regional meeting was over, we went downstairs to continue to pass out MAC brochures and announcements, and to get ready for the Banner Parade. Since we did not have a banner, I decided to get an empty metal pole to symbolize all UU's everywhere who believed in multiracial unity.

Traditionally, the Banner Parade signals the official beginning of the convention. It is a glorious sight to see hundreds of folks, predominantly white, but sprinkled with racial and cultural diversity, and Oh the beauty of the banners, what artistic symbols of who we are, signaling the vision of the Beloved Community, an Association of Congregations committed in ways large and small, moderate or radical, to make the world a better place. It had been announced informally that a traditional New Orleans marching band would lead us in. But I had noticed earlier that the Banner Parade was not listed in the order of service for the Wednesday evening program.

The Wednesday evening program was supposed to start at 7:30 PM and here we were still outside of the closed doors, many of us having been waiting since 6 PM for the parade to start—large numbers of white brothers and sisters, people of color, lots of children, adults, youth, scores of folks in wheel and motorized chairs, and walkers.

745 pm, nothing is happening. And then I overheard two African-American women talking about how wonderful the opening speeches had been, given by our three interim presidents. I couldn't believe it: they had started the service without us. I immediately met with Marie and Kelvin, and we begin to let the rest of the hundreds and hundreds of folks waiting in line that they had started the service without us. People became angry and I suggested that we march to the door and demand to be let in. Which we did. The chairperson of the Program Committee came out and pleaded for 3 to 4 more minutes, and he would open the door. I told him what was happening was wrong, and he agreed, but that there was nothing he could do about it.

Six minutes later, they opened the door, the band was already in there and so we started marching in, singing our own songs about not letting the UUA leadership turn us around. I was in such an ecstasy of mass action energy, that one of my white friends had to calm me down, saying that I was making a spectacle of myself which would harm the good we had done. I agreed. However, I did make it a point to come in last, chanting Asian Latin Black Red White, to the beat of the New Orleans marching band, Unitarian Universalists must unite.

Why had the UU white-supremacy-ologist leadership done this? My hypothesis is that the sight of so many committed white folks and their people of color comrades marching in together at the beginning of the Assembly would have broken the myth that somehow all these good people

were in reality white supremacists, if we had come in first. In a word, by trying to stop the banner parade, or as was suggested, by having us come in last, this blatant act of sabotage sent a clear signal that the neo-racists had finally taken full control of the leadership of the UUA.

.To me this was, ironically, the most mass of all the mass actions which we were to accomplish at GA 2017. After this, Thursday until Monday, it was all a matter of small but significant activities, disappointing to be so small, but still important. We met interesting people, shared our ideas of multiracial unitarian universalism in a variety of small group settings: restaurants on one day, a demonstration against the war budget on another day, the presentation about the nature of neo racism to about six people at our headquarters and then Ken's presentation about asset based anti-racism on the next day to about seven more, generating a list of only 12 contacts. But still we did involve two old comrades from my INCAR days, Derek and Rita Pearl from the Brooklyn UU church. And they made a contribution to cover our literature costs.

We heard interesting behind the scenes information about one of the interim presidents, what was really going on in the UUA leadership, the reality behind the scam to extort 5 million dollars from us to pay off the BLUUOC elites, about how they gave out loads of money to get 'black' UU's to come to this GA to enforce their demands. A Palestinian-American brother who signed up as an African received a full stipend but when they saw him, the BLUUOC people did not allow him to attend any of the meetings. On Saturday morning Ken took off for Florida having felt very rewarded for a chance to share his ideas, even though to such a small turn out.

We also had a small turn out for our celebration of those confederate soldiers and generals who opposed slavery and white supremacy, like James L. Longstreet, James Claiborne, and Albert Parsons.

I had another confrontation. While I was leafleting after the Ware Lecture, on Saturday night, I was set upon by a small group of youth, who tried to provoke a fight. Out of nowhere a small integrated group of youth begin to surround me, singing, about those who love justice... I moved to get away from them, they followed. I moved again, they followed. And then I went over and explained to a small group of white folks, two of whom I knew, what was going on. They escorted me to our MAC space, all the time we were being followed by these youth, my blood boiling with outrage, but keeping my cool. Then Kelvin and Marie showed up and thanks to our multiracial unity we were able to avoid an incident. They eventually dispersed. Marie did not feel that they were inspired by the Rights Relations Committee but rather that they were inspired by the spirit of anti-multiracial unitarian universalism pervading the General Assembly. This spirit gave them a license to try to provoke a fight against those who opposed white-supremacy-ology.

On Sunday after the final plenary, where I had been unable to present opposition to the Responsive Resolution on the Proposed 8th Principle, we went out with a brother from Oregon, named Dick Burkhardt, and desegregated, along with scores of others, an old Orleans street car, symbolizing the same street car which Plessey rode so many years ago which had kicked off the second and last phase of the white supremacy movement, finally dead by 1968. We also desegregated a seafood restaurant owned by a black entrepreneur. We say desegregate because the way the UUA neo-racists were pushing all this white supremacy stuff, you'd think nothing had changed.

Our last meeting on Monday morning: I met a Latino woman who appreciated my attempt, in the final Plenary, to say a few kind words about Brother Morales, and she told how, when she went to complain about my being cut off at the program office, an African American official informed her that she and others like her will now have to get to the back of the line. Neo-racism triumphant.

We had breakfast with Jasmine and her family. Jasmine, a UU Christian, was the one who called the question, which prevented me from giving my two minute argument against the 8th principle proposal. She was one of the original founders of the now defunct UU Christian multiracial unity committee way back when, and explained to me that she did not call the question because she disagreed with me but that we really had run out of time. And then she showed me pictures of her multiracial family and we all embraced in the sweet, gentle spirit of multiracial unitarian universalism.

So, what is my final evaluation? First, the hotel we had space at was too far away from the Convention Center and without a shuttle service, it was hard for interested people to come to our activities. Second, not having a program at the Morial Center itself was a major set back. Last but not least, we were really too small of an organization to have carried out such an ambitious plan without having some support from the GA itself.

Still, I do not regret that we did it. We were the David against the Goliath of neo-racist wealth, privilege, and power, and we held our ground; people who heard our message in the variety of ways thus far described were glad that we were there. We definitely were small, but looking back on how we saved the Banner Parade from being completely sabotaged, looking back at our small MAC area where scores of people came by to chat with Marie and Ken, or to be enveloped in Kelvin's empathy, and our two small conferences and breakfasts, lunches, and dinners; e.g., one white sister committed to white-supremacy-ology, over heard our conversation at a lunch, and became moved to tears about how there were three black folks defending white folks. She eventually attended our small Friday night gathering. She was not convinced that she was not a covert white supremacist, but she was glad to hear our analysis of another method to prepare the way for dismantling racism.

So, the old chant remains true;
we may be small, but we aint all.
Fight for multiracial unitarian
universalism; join the MAC.



“White Supremacy” Language and the Suppression of Empathy

By Kenneth Christiansen, July 19, 2017

“White Supremacy” is a very difficult topic to address because the term has had, and continues to have, several meanings that differ greatly in their reach, explanatory power, and psychological effect. Originally the term denoted the philosophy and actions of Nazi’s, the KKK, White Citizen’s Councils and other organizations and individuals with similar philosophies and actions. Nowadays self-identified White Nationalists speak through web news outlets like Breitbart, the former editor of which is now one of our President’s closest advisors.

Nonetheless, seeing the vast number of injustices that are still out there, many of our contemporaries have taken to saying White Supremacy is everywhere including in the UUA. In the process, the term White Supremacy has taken on significant emotional content while losing objective content.

This discussion needs to move in several directions at the same time, which is very difficult to accomplish. Any other approach leaves a lot of loose ends that create even more emotion.

Saying, “We are swimming in a sea of White Supremacy,” suggests that all the problems of society are about race. Combined with the current use of the term “White Privilege,” it suggests that only people of color, particularly black people, are legitimately considered victims of this situation. Empathy flows only toward people of color. This view legitimates separating the races as has been done in the anti-racism work of the UUA.

Saying, “We are swimming in a sea of White Supremacy,” implies white guilt. Collective white guilt. As though all white people are born into the taint of this collective guilt, no matter the content of their character.

Given this kind of thinking and the emotional and physical separation of the races that accompanies it, how are we ever going to build anti-racism coalitions strong enough to effectively challenge the detrimental practices of our society? When empathy flows in only one direction, it is hard to build meaningful coalitions. Add the suggestion of guilt and people tend to freeze up rather than to feel empowered.

Nowhere is it more evident that something more than race is going on than in the actions of the dominant national political party in 2017. To put it bluntly, the so-called Libertarian agenda of curtailing, or preferably eliminating, government funding for Medicaid, Social Security, Medicare, and the rest of the government funded safety net, is class war, not race war. I will say it again. It is class war, not race war. It negatively affects everyone who is poor or disabled or otherwise in need of help.

So where does or should empathy flow in this situation? If we truly believe that everything is really about race, that it is all about “White Supremacy,” empathy will keep flowing in only one direction. Divide and conquer has triumphed again.

So why do people want to keep using the term, “White Supremacy?” It has a deeply emotional effect. It gets a response. But is it the response we really want?

Reflections on Separated/Segregated Anti-racism in the UUA

by Kenneth Christiansen, July 23, 2017

I was surprised and a little shocked when I first encountered the structure of the anti-racism programs of the UUA in 2009. I had just become a Unitarian Universalist by joining the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. I quickly became aware of two segregated groups: *Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries* (DRUUMM) admitting only people of color, and *Allies for Racial Equity* (ARE) admitting only whites.

DRUUMM functioned as a support group for building positive identity for people of color. This meant “de-centering whiteness” using many tools including music, academic discourse, poetry, art, food and worship. ARE functioned to help Caucasian UUs to “Confront racism in ways that are accountable to communities of color, understand whiteness and privilege, and unlearn and challenge white supremacy.” The boundaries between these two groups were rock solid based on the color of the individual’s skin and/or demonstrable racial/ethnic heritage.

The first justification I heard for separating blacks and whites into different groups was for healing. In a separate group, those without power can open up and truly say what is on their minds. Also in a separate group, those with power who have not historically been supportive to those without power can learn about their unearned privileges and, hopefully, change their ways.

Healing is valid and necessary. For me, the best analogy for healing is going to the hospital. A person goes to the hospital to get well and comes back home as soon as they can. They don’t want to stay there forever.

The application of this analogy to race relations in the UUA is that separation for healing can be very good for the soul. When voluntary separation for healing becomes permanent enforced separation, however, it is better called segregation. When segregation is enforced by an institution on the basis of race, it falls under the definition of institutional racism.

Our challenge today is to move past the limitations we have inherited and build on our strengths. What keeps us awake at night? How do we address police violence toward innocent African Americans inspired by fear? How do we turn back the so-called Libertarian tide of proposed cuts in government support for health, education, income security and many other areas? How do we protect the most vulnerable of all races and genders and ages? How do we restore and expand voting rights? Most important, how can we bring all available assets to this struggle?

We desperately need to participate in fully integrated organizational structures where we join together and multiply our power for justice. Inside the UUA, we need to create this kind of organization – it doesn’t presently exist. Outside the UUA, there are things like Church Based Community Organizing and other integrated ways to effectively work for social change.

What about the separated (segregated) groupings that have been established in the UUA? Do they still have a valid role for healing? Do they generate real power for positive change? These questions need to be explored further.

Central in this discussion, the UUA First Principle needs to come into focus. “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” Where is the human dignity of both parties? How do we advance justice if we don’t work together, fully acknowledging each other’s dignity and worth?

Asset-Based Anti-Racism 2.0

by Dr. Kenneth Christiansen

Presented in New Orleans, June 22, 2017

I want to begin with a current example of Asset-Based Anti-Racism with which I am involved. The Unitarian Universalist congregation to which I belong is one of 38 congregations that comprise Jacksonville’s Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment, ICARE for short. ICARE is affiliated with the DART Center, the Direct Action Resource and Training Center, one of five umbrella organizations for Church Based Community Organizing in the United States.

Issues to tackle city-wide are chosen by vote in house meetings held every fall in all 38 ICARE congregations. More than half the congregations are black and located in the most distressed parts of Jacksonville. The issues ICARE chooses to address are usually most pressing in these congregations. But they also affect members or friends of all the ICARE congregations.

While the individual congregations may be black, white, or mixed, all citywide work of ICARE is integrated, from Research Committees to public meetings to board work and organizational staff.

We recently won a major victory that will help stop the school-to-prison pipeline in our city and two neighboring counties. We have been working toward Restorative Justice for Youth for close to ten years. Several weeks ago police and judicial officials in the three counties that comprise the Fourth Judicial District of Florida signed a formal agreement to utilize Civil Citations instead of arrests for first time youthful offenders. This came about as a result of information gathered by ICARE Research Committees and pressure applied by members of ICARE congregations over the years. A Civil Citation means the offending youth does not receive an arrest record, which is huge. These days an arrest record even as a youth functions to deny individuals the opportunity to join the military or enter many other occupations. With a Civil Citation, a youth must appear before a Neighborhood Accountability Board. There are currently four of these in Jacksonville, staffed by volunteer adults and a representative of the teen court. The youth must also apologize and do restitution as appropriate and follow through on counseling and other things tailored to their situation. Recidivism is under 5%, much smaller than with arrests, and their chances for entering the military and many occupations aren't ruined by an arrest record. In Duval County where Jacksonville is located, the Sheriff is actively committed to bring the percentage of eligible youths receiving Civil Citations instead of arrests up from 28% to 90%.

ICARE is also responsible for a parallel program in the schools. 160 middle and high schools in Jacksonville now use Student Accountability Boards instead of arresting kids when they have fights or throw an eraser across the classroom. As with the Neighborhood Accountability Boards, apologies, restitution and counseling are required as needed. Near the end of the process the offending students become part of the Student Accountability Board when other students are brought forward. The suspension rate has gone down significantly with this program in place. Student cultures in the schools have improved, in some cases dramatically. It has been a very positive change.

As I said earlier, and I want to emphasize again, citywide ICARE meetings, where the research and planning for action takes place, are completely integrated, usually with co-chairs that are black and white. The focus is on the issues at hand, how to change things for the better. The bonds of empathy and common purpose create very strong relationships.

Not so much in the UUA.

You've all heard the old saying that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. In 2010 when I wrote the paper, *The Benefits of Asset-Based Anti-Racism Over Guilt-Based Anti-Racism*, nobody had any expectations for what I was going to accomplish. That appears to have changed.

What hasn't changed is the truth that still holds: Asset-Based Anti-Racism is the only kind of anti-racism that has ever really worked to drive major, significant changes in the social order. Martin Luther King Jr. used Asset-Based Anti-Racism. He brought everyone and all the resources they would or could muster into the fight to overcome the old Jim Crow. He was very action focused. It is history that his inner circle was primarily black, but included whites as well. The question was NOT the one that has been increasingly dominant in the UUA: "What is the color of your skin?" The question was rather, "How committed are you to changing the laws, changing the practices, changing the relationships that perpetuate discrimination against people of color and others in our society?"

Changing things requires learning about them. My first real learning experience about racism and discrimination in our society happened in my early 20s. I spent two years, 1965-67, working in the Robert Taylor Homes public housing project community on the south side of Chicago and living nearby. This wasn't a black middle-class community. This was a black poverty community. The Robert Taylor Homes were in the Grand Crossing police district, rated as the most dangerous district in Chicago at the time. It was where police officers got sent for discipline reasons when they had been bad police officers elsewhere. I did get beat up really good one time as did one of my team-mates who later became my wife. But overall I felt safe in that community. When I faced the prospect of moving to an apartment in Austin, a primarily white neighborhood on the west side of Chicago, I was afraid at first for rumors I had heard about white gangs roaming there.

Have any of you seen the old movie, *Westside Story*? Yes, there are white gangs. Gang life is a poverty issue, not a race issue. By the way, the Robert Taylor Homes public housing community is the same community that Sudhir Venkatesh wrote about 40 years later in the book, *Gang Leader For A Day*.

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In preparing to give this presentation, I reread my 2010 paper, *The Benefits of Asset-Based Anti-Racism Over Guilt-Based Anti-Racism*. I am going to quote four paragraphs from the beginning of that paper. These paragraphs focus on an issue addressed by the White Supremacy Teach-ins and other efforts in the UUA today: What can or should Caucasian persons legitimately feel in relation to race in the United States?

For seventeen years at Defiance College in Ohio I taught Cultural Diversity classes every semester to a collection of Education majors, Criminal Justice majors, Social Work majors, Religion Majors, and a smattering of others. The student population in my classes, like the college itself, was mostly but not all white. My assigned task was to help prepare these students to work professionally in schools and agencies where they would be working with children and adults from every race, ethnicity, and economic background. I had one semester to make a difference in their lives.

At the beginning of every class, we began by looking at the history of prejudice, discrimination and oppression in our country. Somewhere in the first several weeks it inevitably became clear that many or most of the Caucasian students in the class were feeling a lot of guilt. Not guilt for things they themselves had done. Rather, guilt for things members of their race had done historically. Or guilt for the advantages they or their racial ancestors enjoyed at others' expense. This would typically cause them to show signs of shutting down; to parse every response they made in class discussion; to become very unsure of themselves. Open class discussion became more difficult. I could only imagine how tongue-tied they would be at the end of the semester, or when helping a student or client of their own in their chosen profession in later life, if I let this continue.

My response was to share what I observed to be an empowering message. That is, if you actually have done any of the horrible things we were reading about, go ahead and feel guilty. If, on the other hand, you haven't done them, get angry instead. Get angry at racism and oppression wherever you see it.

Guilt, I explained, is anger directed inward. If you let it build up, it will eventually either eat you up or burst out as anger directed toward others. If, on the other hand, you feel anger instead of guilt when you see injustice or discrimination, that anger can energize you to help build a better world.

You heard it, didn't you? The Heresy? "Don't feel guilty. Get angry instead."

How much guilt is about right? What will it do for you? I really believe that guilt is anger turned inward, and when left to fester over a long period of time it destroys the soul.

How does the current UUA White Supremacy education program size up the problem? I think the name says it all. No matter where you start or finish, domestically or internationally, the big problems in the world today are all caused by White Supremacy, and all white people are guilty for their participation in this world.

Is that really the way it really is?

The sermon given by Dr. Bill Sinkford during the 2016 Service of the Living Tradition framed the issue in this way: Any white person who says, "I didn't have slaves" is using that expression of a personal fact to withdraw from the conversation, to not care any more about what happens to people of color, to proclaim his or her own innocence. It seems the only two options for white people presented in this sermon are to admit guilt and take responsibility for everything, or to withdraw from the entire discussion on the premise of innocence. The current White Supremacy education program appears to offer the same choices.

Are these the only two alternatives for whites? Withdrawal, denial of responsibility for anything? or admission of full guilt for everything? Is there a third alternative? A third path for motivation and action? A path that can be shared across racial and ethnic borders? I think there is, and it's called Asset-Based Anti-Racism.

I think this is best explained in terms of an example I mentioned earlier. In my opinion, the best practitioner of Asset-Based Anti-Racism in the United States of all time was Dr. Martin Luther King. What did he do?

Dr. King, first of all, eloquently lifted up core values from his religious tradition to build a foundation for love and action in the world, not guilt and condemnation. It was a vision of tough love, not fuzzy love. Love that took to the streets and engaged in Civil Disobedience and endured physical attacks and arrests. Love that did not listen to the pleadings of many both white and black to “go slower.”

Second, he built awareness of the overall problem of racism by focusing on specific operational aspects of racism in specific places. He asked for specific changes to specific laws and practices, ever widening his circle of concern. He looked for what could be changed. He didn’t simply look for who to blame.

Third, he built relationships everywhere he could: with Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, UUs, Humanists, the ACLU, many other secular and religious organizations, legislators, governors, and a President. (There isn’t a lot of evidence that President Johnson liked the relationship Dr. King constructed with him, but he had to respect it.) When it came to education for action, Dr. King didn’t separate the white and black groups like our own Unitarian Universalist racial justice efforts have. Strong collaborative relationships were the key to everything he accomplished in the face of massive opposition.

As time went on, individuals and groups who opposed Dr. King’s goals found ways to break up the King coalition. With the election of 1968, the issue of Law And Order displaced the issue of Civil Rights as the dominant national issue. By the early 1970s the abortion issue split Protestants and Catholics. Soon thereafter Evangelical Protestants who had been split over the issue of Civil Rights were drawn into the anti-abortion camp, further separating them from the liberal groups, religious and secular, who still held to Civil Rights as their dominant organizing theme. Gay rights issues caused further splits which only recently began to come back together.

We are more fond of talking about the split that took place in the UUA in the late 1960s. Suffice it to say in relation to the UUs that two groups with opposing strategies for addressing race issues were formed: BAC, the Black Affairs Council, and BAWA, Black And White Action. As you know, the goals and values of the Black Affairs Council eventually won. What was the difference between them? The Black And White Action group wanted blacks and whites to work together to solve racial issues, effectively functioning as an integrated group. The Black Affairs Council, on the other hand, took cues from individuals and groups in the larger culture who believed integration didn’t work. The evidence for BAC’s position was basically the same evidence put forward today: that white people in general are too hung up on their own innocence or guilt and won’t put forth the needed effort, or have the required understanding of racial issues, to be trusted to make a difference. You don’t have to look far to find evidence for that position. However, I have been looking really hard to find evidence that the segregated approach actually works better than the integrated approach to accomplish real change out there in the world, and I haven’t found any such evidence.

There is an unmet need for a full discussion of the secular history of this period and how it affected the churches including the UUA. It would necessarily include the history of the interference of our government, particularly the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover, to pick winners and losers. Spoiler alert: J. Edgar Hoover ordered FBI actions that favored the success of black nationalist groups that sought re-segregation in our society and damaged or destroyed groups that capitalized on integrated solutions.

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A COMMENT ON THE SOUTHERN REGION CONTROVERSY AND POSSIBLE REASONS WHY AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN WASN'T IN PLACE PRIOR TO THIS CONTROVERSY ERUPTING.

I live in the Southern Region which has become something of a political football in the UUA. Christina Rivera, a Latino woman, applied for the job of District Lead, as did Andy Burnette, a white man. Both were deemed qualified. Andy was deemed a “better fit.” You know what happened next.

Why, knowing that the district leads were all white, and knowing that there was some imbalance in that, why didn't the UUA Board of Trustees have an “Affirmative Action” policy in place to support, where possible, the hiring of members of formerly excluded racial, gender and ethnic groups?

There are historical reasons why a clearly written Affirmative Action Policy wasn't in place in the UUA – or anywhere else in the USA in 2017. The framers of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognized that they couldn't just put people into jail for racial discrimination – a really big proportion of the US population would have to be locked up ... if you could get the convictions necessary to do this. So they called for Affirmative Action in relation to race. Even though the basic law was written in 1964, it wasn't until 1972 that the courts started decisively supporting it. Between then and the early 1990s the use of race-based Affirmative Action laws generally expanded in business hiring and school admissions. This in spite of much public resistance.

One of the most publicly visible and legally effective opponents of Affirmative Action was (and is) a man by the name of Ward Connerly. He was the person most responsible for getting proposition 209 ending Affirmative Action hiring for state jobs passed in California in 1995 and a similar law in Washington State. Later he engineered the precedent-setting Supreme Court decision against the University of Michigan's Affirmative Action plans. In terms used by the UUA White Supremacy Teach-ins, Ward Connerly was tremendously effective at supporting White Supremacy. The only problem is that Ward Connerly is black.

What do we say about Ward Connerly and Clarence Thomas and other black individuals when they effectively support practices of racism and discrimination in our society? Do we say, “Their whiteness is showing?”

Whenever FOX News wants to support racist behavior, racist actions, they put the blackest man they can find out there to be a commentator. Do we say, “The commentator's whiteness is showing?”

What kind of world do we end up living in when we assign all the problems to the cause of White Supremacy?

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S PLACE IN THE WHITE SUPREMACY DISCUSSION

In constructing this presentation, I wanted first of all to look at what is happening in our denomination. I want to affirm from the beginning that learning about racism and discrimination in our society is a necessary first step for achieving positive change. Asset-Based Anti-Racism requires knowledge of what needs to be changed and why it needs to be changed. Let me repeat that. **I want to affirm from the beginning that learning about racism and discrimination in our society is a necessary first step for achieving positive change. Asset-Based Anti-Racism requires knowledge of what needs to be changed and why it needs to be changed.**

I started reading the sections of the UUA *Examining Whiteness Curriculum* written by Dr. James Gardiner that are available online. Dr. Gardiner has done a lot of good work here. We all need to learn what has happened to create the present situation. There are points in his discussion, however, where some very important facts are missing. Important facts that, when lifted up, significantly change the resultant understanding. I will use one example.

In Section Three of *Reflections on the History of White Supremacy in the United States*, Dr. Gardiner correctly quotes Thomas Jefferson as defining blacks as intellectually inferior to whites, as “equal in memory, inferior in reasoning, and dull in imagination.” If that was all Thomas Jefferson said, that would very well support the inference, the theme, that the dominance pattern supported by Thomas Jefferson was “White Supremacy.” That is the conclusion the UUA *Examining Whiteness Curriculum* wants you to draw. Is that all there was?

Thomas Jefferson also had some rather disparaging things to say about lower class whites. Here I am quoting from the book, *White Trash*, by Nancy Isenberg.

In [the Virginia State Legislature] bill no. 79, for the “General Diffusion of Knowledge,” Jefferson laid out a proposal for different levels of preparation: primary schools for all boys and girls, and grammar schools for more capable males at the public expense. For the second tier, he called for twenty young “geniuses” to be drawn from the lower class of each county. Rewarding those with merit, he devised a means of social mobility in a state where education was purely a privilege of wealthy families. Writing of his plan in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, his wide-ranging natural history of his state, he chose a rather unsavory allusion to describe the reform. His handful of lucky scholars would be “raked from the rubbish,” leaving the majority to wallow in ignorance and poverty. “Rubbish” was his alliterative variation on the ever-present theme of waste people. . . . The “rubbish” designation showed contempt for the poor, [in this case the white poor] a sad reminder that very few were capable of escaping the refuse heap.

So, Thomas Jefferson didn’t just look down on blacks. He also scorned lower class whites. As did most or all the upper class at the time. Thomas Jefferson wasn’t simply a white supremacist . . . he was also and primarily a class supremacist.

The UUA *Examining Whiteness Curriculum* correctly relates that the upper classes, primarily white, gave some legal and other advantages to lower class whites in order to turn them against blacks. Sadly, divide and conquer works, then and now. It ends up looking like it is all about race. But class, social class, has won a big battle.

A Note From My Trip Home from New Orleans

Driving long distances by myself, I listen to books on tape. Driving to New Orleans, I listened to *The Great Suppression: Voting Rights, Corporate Cash, and the Conservative Assault on Democracy*, by Zachary Roth. On the way back I listened to 2/3 (it’s a 12 hour book) of *Sons Of Wichita: How the Koch Brothers Became America’s Most Powerful and Private Family*, by Daniel Schulman. Both books offer much insight into the struggles for power in our country along lines of both race and class.

The book about the Koch brothers really intrigued me. I had known about the hundreds of millions of dollars they have poured into election campaigns in the past several election cycles. I had not understood the extent to which members of this family changed the entire climate of discussion about the role of government in our society between 1970 and 2017.

Libertarianism is the name of a school of thought whose adherents believe that the only legitimate role for government is to provide a police force to protect property and to provide an army to protect our borders. Period. No regulation of corporate behavior except as necessary to promote Free Trade and fair dealing. Minimal regulation of individual behavior. No safety net.

Notice that these ideas sound like the platform of the dominant political party in 2017. With the election of a Republican President and Congress and, even more important, the solidification of a conservative and libertarian majority in the Supreme Court, many Libertarian dreams are coming true. How did we get here?

In the 1960s and early 1970s there was widespread public support for the active involvement of the government in Civil Rights struggles, the expansion of the safety net to include Medicare and Medicaid, and the creation of entities like the Environmental Protection Agency. What happened?

Funny what hundreds of millions of dollars can do to change the conversation. Koch Industries, a privately held oil company controlled by Charles and David Koch, was up to it. The Koch brothers jump-started the Libertarian movement by founding the Cato Institute in 1977 and, with David Koch running for Vice-President, bankrolling the Libertarian Presidential campaign in 1980. They spent enough money since then on candidates, organizations and publications to imbed Libertarian ideas into every corner of the national conversation.

So, when the leadership of the UUA says, “We are swimming in a sea of White Supremacy,” is it really all about race? Does the implementation of Libertarian ideas selectively disadvantage blacks? What part does class play?

The Koch brothers and many others at the top of the economic pyramid have changed the conversation. It is about class. Summing it all up as “White Supremacy” means that divide and conquer has again prevailed to all of our detriment.

Some questions for discussion:

1. When the leaders of our church say, “We are swimming in a sea of White Supremacy,” do you feel more or less empowered?
2. Term: **Empathy Wall**: “An obstacle to deep understanding of another person, one that can make us feel indifferent or even hostile to those who hold different beliefs or whose childhood is rooted in different circumstances.” (Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers In Their Own Land*, p. 5) What “**EMPATHY WALLS**” do you see as operative in the UUA? If so, what is their effect?
3. Where are the fires? Dr. King identified the fires, the structures that needed to change, the laws that needed to change in his time. He worked to build coalitions to make the necessary changes. He wasn’t always successful, but he was always faithful. If you want to change something significant, to put out fires that are burning, you cannot do it by yourself. What are the specific things you want to see altered? Who do you need to help you to do the job?
4. Can privilege ever be turned into power for good? If so, give examples.
5. What outcomes – good, bad or indifferent – have you witnessed, or do you anticipate, from mobilizing guilt about racism, discrimination, and White Supremacy?
6. Institutional Racism enforces identifiable borders between groups of people based on race or ethnicity and different rights, benefits and prerogatives for each group. Where all do you see Institutional Racism today?
7. With Asset-Based Anti-Racism, what kinds of assets would help fight racism and its discriminatory effects? For example: information, relationships, empathy, professional-technical knowledge and a place to use it, ability to march on the streets. (add to the list)

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Contact email: Kenneth@christiansens.com



More
Photos
From
GA 2017



2017 UU General Assembly in New Orleans, Louisiana--a Personal Vision of the Power of Multiracial Empathy

By Kelvin Sandridge, Outreach Coordinator, UUMUAC

We arrived at the hotel in New Orleans early afternoon on Tuesday June 21st 2017, and we basically hit the ground running. We went to the hotels and put everything away, got something to eat, and started our first of many meetings. It was a day of heavy rain, so we couldn't get too much done outside the conference hall.

But the next day, we braved the rains and got to the conference with weapons of anti-racism in the form of leaflets and pages of material denouncing the line on "White Supremacy" being handed down from the UUA leadership to the UU rank and file. The program book which laid out all the scheduled talks and workshops was filled with all kinds of nonsense, ranging from why all the White members of the UU family were to accept that they are supremacists and why all Blacks are to be approached with caution because they were being taught by neo-racists that the White brothers and sisters were up to no good.

On a personal note, I saw most of the White brothers and sisters in the Convention Center approaching me and other Black members as if they were literally walking on eggs, so as not to kill the little birds that lay inside each one. It also reminded me of the days when I had to put on my friendly face whenever police were near, or whenever unknown White people would come around me, in order that I wouldn't make them feel threatened. It was shameful and heartachingly sad to see others subjected to accusations of blame for something most would never think of doing and yet being accused as if they did. But, there they were, in pain and not being able to be themselves. I saw it, whether at the escalator or in the main hallway of the Moral Convention Center, and I became sad, and at the same time, I became very upset.

So I came up with the idea of approaching my White brothers and sisters both in the hotels and in the Convention Center to explain to them that they were not guilty of what the neo-racists were accusing them of.

I'd walk up to one or a group of them and ask if I could talk with them or sit with them or they sat where I was. I would say hello, and they all responded back to me in kind.

So I'd interrupt what was being said at the time and say, "Hey, why did you speak to me? Don't you know that you are supposed to be White Supremacists, and you shouldn't even speak to me if you are?" Most became confused and looked at me with surprise. Some said, "I hope I'm not a White Supremacist," with a look of fear and as if they were. Then I would ease their fears by saying, "Oh no, you are not White Supremacists, and I'm sure that you never were. But, I did this to see the resentment in your eyes, which proved to me that you are offended by the title that those at the leadership of the UUA want you to carry." Then to further relieve them of their doubts, I said simply, "You are my beautiful brothers and sisters in the UU family, and that is all I see you as."

I must've gotten at least fifty hugs, and "I love you's", and "thank you's." Their hearts were lifted by the words I shared, with a true heart that believed in them. It was my duty to tell them that they are my family, and that I get upset when members of my family are falsely accused of something they are not.

Now, there is no denying that White privilege and White supremacy have been problems in this and other parts of the world, but it is not the fault of those who were born into it. All forms of discrimination come from the very top, and in the USA those at the top are guilty of ruining lives and creating strife where there should have been none. In Chicago, in the projects, where I grew up, I was encouraged to stay with my own and not to bother with folks of different races and nationalities. They were to stay in their areas of culture and traditions, and I was to stay in mine.

But when I got older, I saw and eventually learned for myself that all of us are mostly the same. The American political economic structure of racist inequality is to blame, not individuals, unless they are real White Supremacists. The kind that wants to and has killed many folks because of their color or race or cultural identities, including white folks. These Nazis and ku kluxers are in no way connected or related to my White Brothers and Sisters at the UU Convention, especially when the neo-racists use the false concept called the spectrum of White Supremacy. And I'm insulted to even hear the term white supremacy being applied to them.

At the UUAGA 2017 gathering, I made lots of friends, and my life was enhanced by the friendliness and love that was shown to me, as a tall, heavy set, dark-skinned black man. This was in contrast to the problem I saw with the "corporate" way business was being run at the General Assembly, and if they continue on this way, many will become angry and find other places where the leadership has not gone insane.

To conclude: to prevent people from being angry about the white-supremacy-ology being practiced at this year's General Assembly, I urge such people to join the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus and become a part of the struggle to fight racism in all its forms.

My Vision of the GA 2017 Gathering – White Supremacy vs. Multiracial Unity

By Ms. Marie Cobbs, Corresponding Secretary, Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus

First, let me begin by stating that the white supremacist concept, reigned at the 56th annual UUA General Assembly, June 21-26, 2017 in New Orleans, Louisiana. This concept could be seen in a variety of ways: By the many bureaucratic commissions, which were described, panel discussions which were presented, and by the reports of the three interim presidents and their Board of Trustees. For example, the Board under the leadership of former moderator Jim Keyes initiated a trustees based committee to reconstruct the meaning of membership into something they called a covenantal relationship and yet even this had a partial focus on the so-called white supremacy within the UUA.

There was one study action concept from the Board, which seemed to be racially neutral; and that was to have the Committee on Appraisal come up with a new meeting schedule: a general assembly based on traditional delegates meeting every other year and then having a special gathering, called a UUA Conference, meeting the alternating year, but with specially selected people. The question is, given the authoritarian nature of the present UUA leadership, is this another way to dilute the participation of the local congregations? We shall see.

From a positive side, there was the appearance of seeking to dismantle White Supremacy and racism as major problems in the UUA and in society at large. This certainly was operational in most of the workshops dealing with racial justice. But if your basic assumption is wrong, then your conclusions for actions will be wrong. For example, , Dr. Mark D. Hicks, on the faculty of Meadville Lombard Seminary

and its leading theorist in multicultural education, put forward in his Beloved Conversation workshop the erroneous idea that racism has always existed. One of the participants in that workshop asserted that white supremacy was in the DNA of every white person. Even if we look at these as exaggerations, they are dangers exaggerations because they were put forward as serious assumptions. They completely eliminate the entire history of the world in which it was multi-human interactions of some kind or another which has shaped our humanity for millennia. What Dr. Hicks did was to take the experiences of the past 300 to 400 years of a racist capitalist system and place them all the way back into human history. This is a very dangerous ethical and intellectual error. And I confess that I am surprised that a scholar of his educational level would hold to such an outmoded idea. I really don't understand it.

So to sum up this part of my essay, with all this emphases on white supremacy at this General Assembly, I can only conclude that the essential function of the GA Program Committee and the UU power structure it represented was to force white Unitarian Universalists to get in touch with their supposed inner white supremacy. What a terrible outcome for six days of supposedly religious, educational, and moral activity.

Only other hand, among the rank-and-file UUA members, there was a serious and sincere effort to really wrestle with the question of racial inequality and the future of Unitarian Universalism without the need to blame White folks for being a white supremacist or being on a spectrum of white supremacy. Many workshops dealt with a variety of issues -- dealing with education, fund raising, and growing our membership. Many of the Whites that I talk with were genuinely interested in figuring out ways to work together in multi-racial unity. For example, UUMUAC set up in area in the Morial Convention Center with Kenneth Christiansen being available for conversation and to pass out the updated version of his essay. We had many people drop by to discuss the issue of how to use multiracial unity in the struggle against racism, how to develop practical programs, based upon assets rather defects, especially white guilt, in the fight against racism.

And in my personal interaction with whites, whether they were waitresses or UU delegates, I felt none of this so-called white supremacy arrogance which the UUA leadership insisted exists among all my white brothers and sisters. For example, the UUA official Statement of conscience dealing with inequality passed by a large vote and the term white supremacy did not appear in the final draft.

By the way, if you are interested in looking for yourselves at some of the key workshops dealing with racial issues, or any issues for that matter, then I recommend that you check out www.ga.org for more information. I must warn you that it will cost 75 dollars for non-GA delegates to do this.

To conclude: what is my overall evaluation of this important General Assembly? A number of important workshops were held which dealt with social justice activism and how to organize commissions on social witness, dealing with issues like environmental justice and a number of others. All this showed that, despite the attempt to make white supremacy the main theme of this event, UU sisters and brothers from around the country were still trying to fight more broadly for social justice in a variety of progressive ways. Most of the folks I've talked with -- of all colors -- were opposed to using the concept of white supremacy for dealing with the many issues we are facing in our congregations, our denomination, and indeed the whole world.

I remain totally convinced that the best way to deal with social/racial justice issues is using the technique which brother Ken Christiansen's essay describes, built firmly on the concept of multiracial unitary universalism to look at our assets and not at our defects in the fight back against a racist system. This the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus is committed to doing.

Treasurer's Note: During the last three months UUMUAC's paid membership has increased from roughly 35 to 55. Income, which comes largely from the annual membership dues plus additional contributions, is not yet sufficient to allow all expenses to be reimbursed.

July 27, 2017

Dear MAC ARROW,

Like many, when I found Unitarianism it felt like I had been a UU all my life. The love and acceptance of everyone was a strong call for me. Four years ago I accepted with humility, a seat on the MidAmerica UUA Board of Directors. I was honored to be associated with such genuine and dedicated people.

Reactions and fallout from a recent Regional Lead hiring decision has saddened me profoundly. A good individual hired another good individual. The decision was challenged, and three people were compelled to resign. Reputations were damaged. I now find myself unable to support recent rhetoric and actions within the UUA. The use and support of the term "White Supremacy" by the UUA to describe the overt and/or cultural suppression of groups, by individuals in positions of power and privilege, is divisive and counterproductive. We are fighting oppression, we are fighting supremacy.

Other actions supported by UUA leadership, including hiring quotas based on race, support of the segregation of people based on race, the funding of Black Lives UU to the exclusion other groups supporting People of Color and "throwing individuals under the bus", are troubling to me. There is much unproductive and unnecessary self-flagellation going on in our beloved faith. These are actions that separate people, we are better together.

I made the decision to step aside from Regional Leadership and vacate my position on the MidAmerica Region UUA Board of Directors. This was very hard for me, these are good people, my friends, they do good work. It's time for all UU Brothers and Sisters to embrace each other and ourselves. There are wrongs to be righted and we are so very much stronger together. The inclusive healing philosophy of the UUMUAC is a welcome voice.

Doug Cauble

Brown County,
Indiana

UUs for Social Justice Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, August 27, 2017, starting at 2 pm
First Unitarian Church of Hobart
497 Main St., Hobart, IN 46342

(from Tollroad / 80-94 exit onto IN 51 south. Follow well marked IN 51 south into Hobart, where it eventually turns onto Main St. First Unitarian Church is near the center of town, to the left just after crossing the railroad tracks.)

Program: (2:00—3:25 pm)
“Conversation About Racism”



At a time when many terms, including White Supremacy, are being tossed around, we want to celebrate the 54th anniversary of the great Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C., by having open discussions, probably in two large circles, of concepts, such as the following:

- **When do you think racism first developed?**
- **Where do you think it originally developed?**
- **Who do you think first developed racism, and why?**
- **What is racism?**
- **How do you think it evolved?**
- **Other concepts, which participants want to discuss.**

Discuss sponsored by the UU Multiracial Unity Action Caucus.
Marie Cobbs and Allan Lindrup facilitators.

Quarterly Board Meeting 3:30 – 5:00 pm

Both the workshop and board meeting are open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact uusj@sbcglobal.net through Aug. 26

