



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

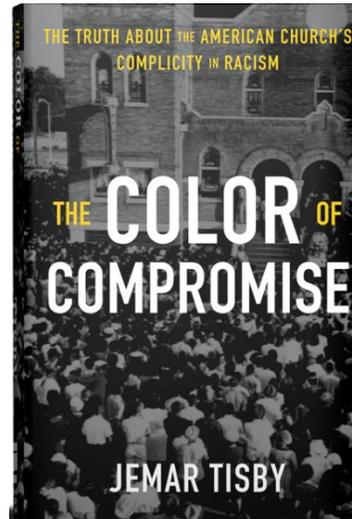
Discovering More About Racism and Ways to Combat It.

By Renee Herrell

For the last seven weeks a group of us have been participating in a religious education class with Rev. Paul titled, *The Role of Dominant Religion in American Racism and White Supremacy*. We read the following books: Jemar Tisby's *The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism* and Robert P. Jones' *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, both of which have been eye-opening and thought provoking.

It has been appalling to see how White Christianity has perpetuated racism throughout our history, using verses in the bible as justification for slavery and the supremacy of the white race. Despite this, the class was not Christian bashing; rather it was bringing this history to light and proposing how to strive for racial reconciliation. To quote part of Rev. Paul's description of the class, "... both Unitarianism and Universalism developed in America as liberal Christian denominations. Religion's failures regarding racism have historically affected our movement's spiritual ancestors and institutions as much as they have mainstream Christianity."

Rather than only provide the history of religion and racism, in Chapter 11 of "The Color of Compromise," Tisby states, "This chapter presents practical ways to address the current state of racial injustice in America. Most of the solutions focus on structural and institutional methods to combat inequality." He continues,



"The ARC (Awareness, Relationships, Commitment) of racial justice helps distinguish different types of antiracist actions, ...[and] provides a useful framework for taking decisive action against discrimination." Here are some of Tisby's ideas you could pursue (pp 194-197).

1. **Awareness:** You can

start by increasing your awareness of the issues and the people involved. One particularly fruitful place to start is by reading and learning more about the racial history of the United States.

- Watch documentaries about the racial history of the United States.
- Diversify your social media feed by following racial and ethnic minorities and those with different political outlooks than yours.
- Access websites and podcasts created by racial and ethnic minorities.
- Do an internet search about a particular topic instead of always asking your black friend to explain an issue to you.

2. **Relationships:** Steps to develop interracial relationships include:

- Start with people you know. Have you talked with them specifically about their experiences and perspectives of race and justice? These individuals cannot merely be projects or sources of information. They are real people

with whom to pursue a meaningful friendship. Still, it takes intentionality to diversify our social networks, and we should start with those nearest us.

- Find new places to hang out. A purposeful effort to develop relationships with people from diverse backgrounds will carry you to different restaurants, grocery stores, and hangouts.... the mundane places where you enact your regular routines can become the richest sites to encounter those who are different from you.
- Join a sport, club, or activity with people who are different. Those who have the most diverse networks of friends have participated in some sort of activity that brought them into frequent contact with people of other races and ethnicities...they can lead to organic friendships that cross traditional lines of social division.

3. Commitment: Action steps for developing a lifelong commitment to racial justice include:

- Join an organization that advocates for racial and social justice.
- Donate money to organizations that advocate for racial and social justice.
- Speak with candidates for elected office in your area and ask them about their views of racial justice and the policies they advocate.
- Vote.

Fellowship and Hospitality Update

By Pat Donovan

It looks like we're going to have a long and isolated winter. So the Fellowship and Hospitality Team has come up with some ideas on how we can have some fun and fellowship together, but at a distance.

Watch Parties: In the past, we had a monthly movie at the Fellowship, but now that we are

unable to meet indoors, we have come up with a new and safe way to view a movie together. It is called a "Watch Party." We are looking at using this format for a group of individuals to watch a movie at the same time and be able to comment to each other on what they are watching during and then after the movie. There are a number of streaming services that offer watch parties, such as Sling, Hulu, Netflix and Prime. If you are interested in participating in this kind of event, please let me know what streaming services, if any, that you subscribe to so we can set up a group to use this service. You can email me at hospitality@uufw.org. For those of you who do not have a streaming service, we can set it up using Zoom. Each group will be limited to eight or fewer people depending on the streaming service. We plan to select movies on enlightening and educational topics. For example, Netflix has a Black Lives Matter collection of movies. Watch parties will take place on the second Friday of each month, beginning on December 11, at times set by each group.

Fun Activities: A new activity will be announced in the newsletter at the beginning of each month. Some will be interactive, others will be a contest with a prize at the end. Look for the December activity in the next newsletter and reminders in the weekly email blast.

Member News

Grace Leary has lived at Gypsy Hill Place for several years. Last week, she and her family made the decision for her to move to a place with more assistance. She would enjoy notes and cards. Her new address is: Royal Care, Apt. S-6, 55 Imperial Drive, Staunton, VA 24401. If you'd like to visit, call Royal Care and they will make an appointment for you.

