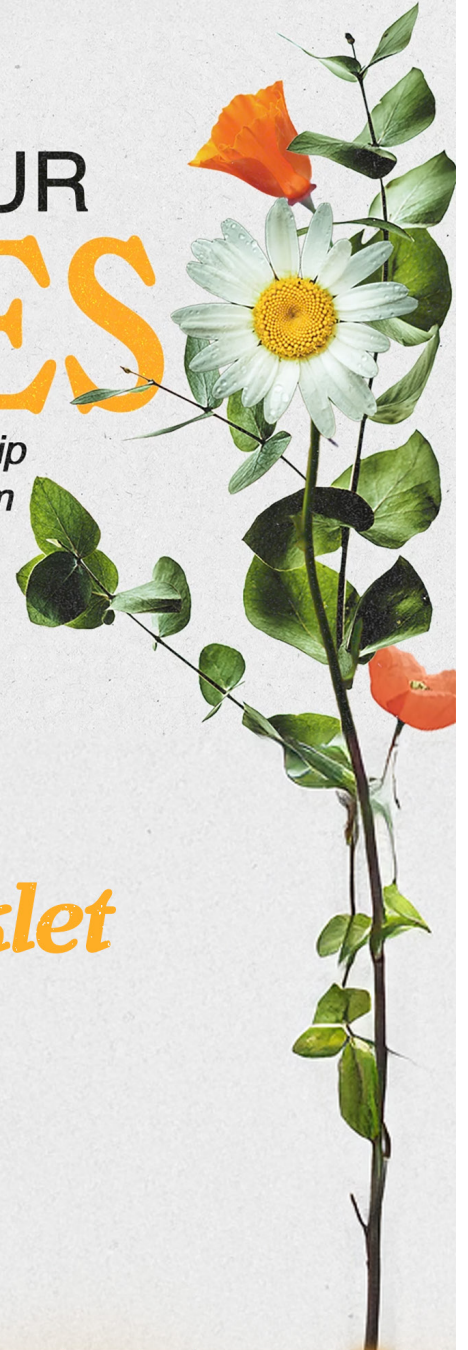




STARING INTO OUR OWN EYES

*Racism, the church, and a discipleship
journey towards healing and freedom*



Companion Booklet
FOR
Small Groups



CBAC
JUSTICE &
ADVOCACY

LEADER'S NOTES

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADERS

Welcome to **Staring Into Our Own Eyes**, a small group study created by the anti-Black Racism Task Force of the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada.

These 'Considerations for Leaders' are intended to equip group point-leaders to effectively lead your small group through this study.

Group Leadership

We recommend the study group have a point-leader who will facilitate the time together each week. We recommend that the point-leader have some experience walking people through challenging inner work, or spiritual formation work. The leader should be someone who can draw out quiet people, listen appropriately, and keep conversation moving as necessary. They will only need to do light prep ahead of each gathering.

Note: *Throughout the material you'll see directions noted like this.*

Flow

We suggest taking 6 weeks to flow through this study, completing one module per week.

We suggest providing coffee / tea and light snacks, and taking some time at the beginning or in the middle for fellowship time. This study will require a foundation of trust and vulnerability!

Space

Take time to intentionally consider the best space in your church to engage in this work. You will need access to a TV for the module videos, as well as space for people to spread out during Journal time. We suggest choosing a space that is intimate, and flexible.

Materials

- As the point leader, you will need to access the module videos through our website: <https://atlanticbaptist.ca/staring-into-our-own-eyes>
- TV or screen to play the videos
- Group members will need to download this companion PDF
- Journal
- Bible

MODULE 1

WHY ARE WE STILL TALKING ABOUT THIS?

Rev. Dr. Rhonda Britton

Purpose

In this session we will explore the problem of racism in Atlantic Canada, how it continues to manifest not just in CBAC / AUBA churches, but also in our communities, and ourselves. We will explore what God says about race and ground the rest of the study in the idea that 'it starts with me.'

Concepts or Key Points

- Racism is still far too prevalent in our society, our communities, churches, homes, and in us.
- Racism is not in keeping with God's design of humankind as "imago Dei".
- Confronting and eliminating racism is part of discipleship / spiritual transformation.

Start Here

Pray: *Begin your time with Prayer. Welcome the spirit into this group. Ask the God would join you in Unity. Allow a moment of silent reflection, and begin.*

Discuss: What has brought you to this group? Why did you decide to join?

Watch: *Watch the supplemental Video: "A Conversation with Rev. Dr. Harry Gardner" These videos are found in the Module 1 content on the website.*

Scripture: *Take time to slowly read the following scriptures. Allow time for reflection as necessary.*

- Matthew 23:23
- Luke 6:31
- Romans 12:2
- Philippians 2:3-4

Watch: *Now Watch the Module 1 Video, pausing for discussion as needed.*

Key Terms

Racial discrimination vs. Racial Policies

In his book, “How to be Anti-Racist,” Ibram X. Kendi posits that: “racial discrimination” is not the proper term to describe the experience of racism. Kendi states that in fact, discrimination is not inherently bad. If one operates with the aim of achieving equity, some discrimination may be necessary. For example, if a company wants to level the playing field for people who are trying to recover from centuries of oppression, marginalization, and inequity, that company will have to be proactive in seeking Black candidates to fill positions, recognizing that there are QUALIFIED, COMPETENT, even BRILLIANT African-descended people who are capable, but have not been given a chance.

Kendi states, and I agree, that people who shouted, “reverse discrimination” at equal opportunity employment initiatives were not entirely wrong. What marks the difference is why you are discriminating. If it is to achieve equity because those qualified—and I emphasize “qualified” Black candidates had been passed over just because they are Black, then it is positive discrimination. Kendi prefers use of the term “racial policies” because it is those inequitable policies that have built the systems in our society that result in systemic and institutionalized racism. It is an overhaul—a reworking—of those policies that will break down historical disparities. In that sense, affirmative action employment policies – the conscious decision by an organization to diversify its workforce—is a positive discrimination that can lead to an equitable balance.

Equality vs. Equity

The other term to be clear about is equity vs. equality. Black people want to be seen and accepted, even celebrated equally as human beings with the rights and privileges as all human beings. We want to be able to access services and benefits provided to all human beings on an equal basis. We want to be paid equally when we are doing the same work as our white counterparts. We should be able to shop in the same stores and eat in the same restaurants, receiving the same service as any other person. That should be equal. But then there are some ways that equity is the aim—not equality.

People who have been denied centuries of wealth accumulation, denied centuries of participation in economic systems to create generational wealth, denied the titles to property they settled and worked and for which they paid taxes are not on an equal playing field simply because one day someone says, “You are free!” Yay! Now what? How do such people make inroads into the systems of the world from which they have been kept for centuries? How do they catch up to the white population who have been benefiting from every advantage for centuries? EQUITY. The scales MUST be tilted to allow them to catch up. The white population has had a 400-year head start! If previously enslaved and marginalized people are going to catch up, policies and practices that promote equity AFTER doors are opened must be in place.

The previous employment situation is an example. A company may say they are an equal opportunity employer, which means a Black person can submit a resume or application like anyone else, but if the hiring manager is biased, that application may be pushed aside because the name or address may indicate the applicant is not white. If a Black person lives in a

neighborhood with no grocery store and no drugstore, if that person cannot access COVID testing like the white population; or isolate in a pandemic because of their socio-economic status, some concession needs to be made that enables equal access to such remedies. That extra step of making it possible for those on the margins is EQUITY. Affirmative Action quotas that say you cannot push a qualified applicant aside just because they are Black, special neighborhood clinics funded by govt. held in underserved communities, special housing for people who cannot isolate at home—these are not special treatment. They are equity initiatives.

Discuss: *After thoroughly discussing and understanding these concepts, please return to the video.*

Module Questions

1. What do you think and feel when you hear certain news reports, or you get a view of a different ethnicity on a television show?
2. What are your beliefs about people of color? Do you believe stereotypes that cause you to have pre-conceived notions of others?
3. When you encounter people who do not look like you or have your ethnic or cultural background, do you avoid difference—not because you are biased or racist, but because you would just rather hang out with folks who look like you or who share your background?

Pray: *Close in a prayer of thanksgiving, and offer this time to the Lord.*

MODULE 2

KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT: STEREOTYPES AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Kyiaisha Benten, BSW

Purpose

This session critically interrogates institutionalized racism and invites participants to reflect on how the interconnectedness of society's systems collectively oppresses people of African ancestry and other racialized communities.

Concepts or Key Points

- **Racism:** The oppression of a race of people
- Stereotypes
- Power
- **Institutions:** A society or organization that comes together for a specific purpose. A few examples of institutions are: our education system, government agencies and transportation.

Start Here

Pray: *Begin your time with Prayer. Welcome the spirit into this group. Ask the God would join you in unity. Allow a moment of silent reflection, and begin.*

Discuss: *What has been on your mind and heart since our time last week? Any follow up reflections?*

Watch: *Now Watch the Module 2 Video, pausing for discussion as needed. The video will prompt you to read the following scriptures.*

Scripture: Take time to slowly read the following scriptures. Allow time for reflection as necessary.

- Acts 10:34-35
- Acts 17:26
- Romans 1:16
- Revelation 7:9
- Galatians 3:28
- Psalm 139:1

Continue the video, pausing for discussion as prompted.

Journal: After you have finished the video and discussion, take time to journal the following questions on your own. Then, take time to share as your group sees fit.

Journal Questions

1. Does racism exist in any of the Institutions with which you interact?
2. Have you spoken up after witnessing an incident of racism?
3. Can you remember a time when you perpetuated racism?
4. Consciously look for incidents of racism in any of the institutions you visit frequently and record incidents of racism for a month. Record what you witnessed and whether you responded. If you did not respond, reflect on why you did not.
5. Consider how the information in this session can be transferred to address institutional racism for other racialized communities?

Close in Prayer. Thank the Lord for meeting your group in this time. Take a moment in silence to bring before the God what you discovered in your journal time. Silently or out loud, repent for where you have personally perpetuated racism. Ask that he would continue to guide you in your journey towards healing and freedom this week.

Homework: Watch or read one of the supplemental resources for this week!

Supplemental Resources

- **Watch:** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – “The danger of a single story” | TED
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>
- **Read:** Layla Saad – Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor
- **Read:** Robin DeAngelo – White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism
- **Watch:** 1000 Years a Slave – History Documentary

MODULE 3

THE CHURCH AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Rev. Dr. Rhonda Britton

Purpose

In this section, participants will learn to identify harmful language and images that have fostered racism and prejudice with the aim of debunking racist ideas and helping participants become more culturally sensitive.

Concepts and Key Points

- Recognizing racist language and behaviors
- Understanding the effects of racism in our society

Start Here

Pray: *Begin your time with Prayer. Welcome the spirit into this group. Ask the God would join you in Unity. Allow a moment of silent reflection, and begin.*

Discuss: What has been on your mind and heart since our time last week? Any follow up reflections? Were you able to take in any of the supplemental resources recommended in Module 2?

Scripture: *Read the following scripture, slowly, to set the tone for the video you will watch.*

- Psalms 51:10
- 2 Corinthians 18-5:17

Watch: *Now begin the video, pausing for discussion as prompted.*

Journal Questions

Journal: *Once you have finished the video and discussion, take time to work through the following journal questions on your own, taking time to come back together and share as you see fit.*

1. What are your views or better yet, what is your reaction to media reports of people seeking equity and demanding justice? Are you indifferent or did you feel the injustice of a people who have been pushed to the margins...again?
2. Have you ever experienced an advantage or disadvantage because of your skin color? How did / does that make you feel?
3. What will you do to commit to being anti-racist?

Supplemental Resources

Watch: *Take time to watch the supplemental video found in Module 3 Content on the website.*

- Supplemental Video: "A Conversation with Rev. Dr. Anna Robbins"

WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT RACE?

EXPLORING FAMILY OF ORIGIN AND DISCOVERING INDIVIDUAL PREJUDICES

Laura Bennett

Purpose

This session invites participants to uncover their deep (often hidden and unconscious) beliefs, assumptions, and prejudices, while exploring where these ideas may have come from in the first place, and beginning the process of replacing them with the truth of what God says about all people.

Concepts

- **Family of Origin:** Family of origin refers to one's nuclear and extended family as a child. It's the people that had the most impact on your first beliefs. We will use the concept of 'family of origin' to help participants uncover where specific ideas about race may have come from.
- Drawing from Pete Scazzero "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" work on family or origin and racism.

Start Here

Pray: *Begin your time with Prayer. Welcome the spirit into this group. Ask that God would join you in Unity. Allow a moment of silent reflection, and begin.*

Discuss: What has been on your mind and heart since our time last week? Any follow up reflections? How have you begun to see change or growth in some of your thinking or heart patterns?

Watch: *Now Watch the Module 2 Video, pausing for discussion as needed.*

Scripture: *The video will prompt you to read the following scriptures.*

- Ephesians 2:14-22
- Colossians 3:11-12
- 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Journal Questions

Journal: Take time to work through the following journal discussions on your own. Come back together in pairs or triads to discuss these questions.

1. Laying the land: Growing up in your family of origin, how were inter-racial relationships modelled to you? For example, were any of the following part of your reality?
 - Interracial parents or siblings?
 - Close friends or family members of different races?
 - Go to an interracial church?
 - Attend a highly interracial school or educational setting?
 - a. What does this reality tell you about race, and your family of origin?
 - b. What were the attitudes of others (other family members, your friends, teachers, etc.) surrounding these inter-racial relationships (or lack of)?

2. Peter Scazzero offers examples of attitudes towards different races and cultures that we may have received from our family of origin. He calls these 'the unspoken rules' of our family culture. Do you identify with any of these attitudes or messages?

- Only be close friends with people who are like you.
- Do not marry a person of another race or culture.
- Other races or cultures are not as good as mine.

What attitudes, assumptions, or messages would you add to this list? How would you define the '10 commandments of your family' when it comes to race and difference?

3. How does the concept of belonging to a 'New Family' in Christ challenge some of the attitudes, assumptions, or messages about race you recognize in yourself?

Pray: Thank God for helping you begin to see the brokenness that has been passed through your family or origin. Ask that today, he would start a new legacy, with healed mind and heart postures towards difference.

Supplemental Resources

Homework: Plan to do one of the following for homework, watch, read, or do a spiritual exercise. (Hint: we highly encourage spiritual exercise for your discipleship!)

- **Watch:** Pete Scazzero, “Getting Beneath the Surface of Racism:” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbvaE2gbCIM>
 - **Reflect:** What does it look like for you to come to this work from a place of vulnerability and brokenness rather than from a place of strength and put-togetherness?
 - **Reflect:** What relational skills do you see your church needing to build racial bridges?
- **Watch:** Tim Keller “On the Sin of Racism:” <https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/the-sin-of-racism/>
 - **Reflect:** What resonates with you from this article? What challenges your current thinking? What do you feel God may be inviting you into from this place?
- **A Spiritual Practice: Do a Genogram**

A Spiritual Practice: Do a Genogram

A genogram is a family mapping exercise that charts out areas of victory and brokenness in our family trees. This tool can help us uncover where trauma, hurt, and brokenness exist, so that we can grow in grace and empathy, but grow in our commitment to be a cycle breaker.

We’ve linked a genogram tool in the supplemental resources section of this module, and would encourage you as part of your homework this week, to spend time on your own genogram.

As you go through this tool, specifically look for lines or threads that help shed light on your family’s ideas actions and attitudes about race and difference.

Ask the spirit to empower you in this practice, and continue a transformative work in you.

<https://practicthewayarchives.org/dealing-with-your-past/genogram-workbook>

MODULE 5

LIVING THE TRANSFORMED LIFE

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Ann Beals

Materials

In this session you will need a few extra items! Each participant will need a personal candle (perhaps a tea light) and a match or lighter. You will need a large white board or flip chart to write group notes on.

Purpose

In this session participants will take what they have learned in the first four sessions, and bring it all before God in their own spiritual journey. Through a shorter video, and two longer guided spiritual practices, we will explore together how we may become willing participants with the Spirit in our transformation, and instruments of the Spirit in the transformation of others.

In this session, participants will be guided through a process of:

- Personal and collective acknowledgement & lament,
- Personal and collective confession & repentance,
- the foundation on which healing, transformation & reconciliation are built.

Concepts or Key Points

- Spiritual formation
- Shame
- Transformation
- Spiritual practices
- Lament
- Spiritual gifts
- Openness
- Compassion

Start Here

Pray: Invite the Holy Spirit to do a good work today. Pray that each participant would experience an encounter with his love as they move through the guided spiritual practices. Pray that collective healing and transformation may begin today as your group communally

Scripture:

- Matthew 5 – The Beatitudes (NLT/ Amp)
- Romans 12:1-2
- Ephesians 6
- Psalm 139 reflection

Lets explore together. Asking the Holy Spirit to show us reality, both in ourselves and in society.

Practise 1: A Personal Prayer of Examen

Individual journalling and guided prayer exercise to help with awareness of racism

You will need at least 20 min to make space to sit with God. Spread out and get comfortable.

Read: Psalm 139:23-24 Amplified Bible

23 Search me [thoroughly], O God, and know my heart;

Test me and know my anxious thoughts;

24 And see if there is any wicked or hurtful way in me,

And lead me in the everlasting way.

Pray: We need the Spirits help to give us eyes to see where we have participated in racism or witnessed it. We are specifically asking the Holy Spirit to make us aware of any evidence of racism in our lives, experiences, or interactions.

1. **Light a candle to remind you God is with you & be still in the presence of Christ.**
2. **Prayerfully make a list of instances.** Attending to them one at a time, ask yourself some of the examen questions. In this experience, was there the giving or receiving of love and grace in this activity or interaction?
 - What did I feel? Others feel?

- Make a list of feeling words for each one involved. For yourself and others involved. For example: danger, accepted, anxious, fearful, angry, apathetic, confused, defeated, disgusted, shame, ecstatic, enraged, paranoid, weepy, undecided, empowered, important, etc.
 - Be with your feelings; don't try to change them or make them acceptable. Sit with the feelings your feeling and then the feelings of others.
 - Talk to God about what it was like for you to be in that moment.
3. **Let these words help you articulate how racism affects you and affects others. How it steals life.**
- How did I or others withhold love and grace and allow the power of racism to have control in this activity or interaction?
 - What does God want you to see about yourself? About others?
 - What feelings are stirred? Write them down.
4. **Repent:**
- Using these feelings and realizations, begin to acknowledge before God your sin. You can use the phrase, "Jesus I repent for..."
 - Ask for His forgiveness for the ways in which love and grace were not the rulers of your heart, but where powers and principalities that produce hate took root.
5. **Receive: What do you need from God?** Forgiveness, courage, understanding, hope, empowerment...
- Receive or extend God's forgiveness.
 - Maybe you have repented for your own sin of racism, or reflected on a time you were personally hurt by the sin of racism. Now it's time to release!
 - Open your palms and ask the Holy Spirit for what you need:
 - To help you forgive, to forgive you, to change you, transform you, comfort you, Allow the spirit to minister to you. Talk to God
 - Note any words of affirmation or scriptures that come to mind. How do you feel now? Write down feeling words to describe this new reality.
6. **What did you discover about yourself? How can this self-awareness help you to resist the power of racism?**
- How can it help you to live a more God-directed life?
 - Ask God to help you ?
 - Thank God for His loving presence. Amen

Practise 2: Communal Activity to Move Through Acknowledgement, Confession, and Repentance.

In this practise you will work together as a team to see your collective reality through God's eyes, and begin to move towards a new, transformed reality, together. (Allow 35 minutes for this activity)

1. **Pray before you begin this activity ask that the Holy Spirit would help you see reality.**
2. **Start by making three large categories on your board, with the headings:**
 - Historic racial divisions in our neighborhood, community, city, and church
 - Current Opportunities for deeper division or restoration
 - Restorative Action Ideas
3. **Now take time to brainstorm collectively, and fill in the first two categories.**
 - Start with historic divisions: In this category, you will list all that you know about the history of racial division in your local context. For ex. "historically, our church expected black people to sit in the balcony," OR "we are aware of a historically black neighbourhood that is adjacent to our church"
 - Now Brainstorm Current opportunities for division or restoration: In this category, you will make a list of where you see the potential for racial division to increase (or where is it currently increasing). Where this is a possibility, restoration is also possible! Look for these opportunities in your church, neighborhood, city, or community – for ex. "we have an increasingly multi-cultural church, and have experienced negative attitudes about this from some people." OR "As the cost of living rises in our city, we notice the racialization of poverty has become magnified"
4. **Before you move on to Restorative Action Ideas, pause and pray communally.** Ask for forgiveness for corporate sins that you may not have played a part in, Ask that the Holy Spirit would begin to give you a vision for His transformed reality in your community, church, or city. Pause in the silence and listen.
5. **Now move to the final category - Restorative Action Ideas**
 - In this category you will take what you've written in the history category and the opportunities category, and begin to generate some ideas for what a restorative action may look like. This should be an action that positively impacts the relationships in your midst, creating deeper unity, mutual understanding.
 - For example: We want to know more about the racialized history of our neighbourhood, and create an educational opportunity for our church family, OR we want to learn more about why more non-white people in our community are experiencing poverty, and find out how we can help, OR we want to create more opportunities for inter-cultural expression in our church family.

6. Close in Prayer, thanking God for his loving kindness to forgive, asking for his grace to allow us to live a transformed life.

Supplemental Resources

- Read: “How to Promote Racial Reconciliation According to Latasha Morrison”:
<https://atlanticbaptist.ca/promote-racial-reconciliation>

MODULE 6

THE CHURCH AND RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Rev. Elias Mutale

Purpose

In this session, we lay a biblical foundation for racial reconciliation. Starting from the proclamation that we are one, there is no Jew or Greek, in effort to cast a vision for a way forward. Participants will be invited to look outward, and consider their action in the world. They'll be invited to consider their families, peer groups, church community, and broader society, as they discern their specific 'right action' or 'reconciliatory action,' in the world.

Concepts

- Racial Reconciliation
- Getting out of our comfort zones
- Beyond multiculturalism
- Kingdom life in a fractured world

Start Here

Pray: *Invite the Holy Spirit to do a good work today! Ask that as you close out this study, your group would receive a vision for living in reconciliation, and building trusted relationships with people of different races and ethnicities.*

Scripture:

Ephesians 2:14-16

Galatians 3:28-29

Watch: *Start the video teaching for today, pausing as prompted for discussion. Allow the discussion to take as long as it needs today!*

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to look outward in your context?
2. What kind of actions do you consider necessary in the world to achieve racial reconciliation in the church?
3. What could it look like for your church to get out of our comfort zones, and go “beyond multiculturalism” and learn to function as an ‘Intercultural’ community?
4. How can we more intentionally build interracial & intercultural trusted relationships in our church family? In our community?
5. Where do we go from here? What’s next?

Supplemental Resources

- **Action Item Suggestions:** Local History Review, etc.

Look into an IDI Consultation (*Intercultural Competency with Steve McMullen*)