

MANDATORY RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING FOR MINISTRY PERSONNEL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. WHY DO I HAVE TO TAKE RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING?

- At the 82nd Annual Meeting of Hamilton Conference May 26-28, 2006, a motion supporting a proposal originating with Ryerson United Church, Hamilton Presbytery and properly transmitted to Hamilton Conference was carried (Hamilton Conference Official Record p 15 and p 29). This proposal was transmitted and subsequently approved by the 39th General Council. The proposal requested the 39th General Council 2006 to 'direct the Permanent Committee for Personnel and Employment Policies and Services, in conjunction with the office of the General Council Minister for Racial Justice, to develop and implement mandatory training in racial justice for all ministry personnel.'

2. WHAT WAS THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL?

- The proposal pointed to the theological basis found in Galatians 3:26-28 and the statement of beliefs found in the policy ***That All Be One***. ***That All Be One*** was the policy affirmed by the 37th General Council in 2000 calling on the church to act justly within its own structures, courts, policies, and practice, specifically by:
 - Reviewing the candidacy, settlement and post-settlement processes for clergy to ensure that they are supportive and non-discriminatory;
 - Developing and publicizing the availability of policies and procedures to address complaints and conflicts with respect to racism;
 - Helping people to become aware of and support others in accessing church services and processes when rights are violated by acts of racism.
- The Journey of Black Peoples in the United Church of Canada Consultation of April 2005 identified the need for anti-racism training in the church.

3. WHY DOES RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING MATTER FOR MINISTRY?

- While most of us think we are not racist, we are all shaped by racially constructed systems, including the Church, in which attitudes, social practices, and power dynamics intentionally or unintentionally treat some with racial discrimination and racial prejudice. Most ministry training has taught us to read the Bible, understand God and God's world, and do the work of our diverse ministries without critically examining the place of individual and collective racial injustice. What would our reading of Jesus' ministry to the Samaritan woman mean if we use race prejudice as a primary lens?

Racial justice training for ministry in The United Church of Canada is a step toward making visible God's likeness and goodness in every person and in the life of the church institution in which we minister so that church leaders can be healing and reconciling agents in our communities and in our time.

4. HOW OFTEN MUST I TAKE RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING?

- The General Council has mandated the training once within the vocational lives of ministry personnel.

5. WHERE IS RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING OFFERED?

- Online training through United Online: [United-in-Learning Upcoming Webinars - Racial Justice](#)

6. I AM A CANDIDATE FOR MINISTRY OR SOMEONE IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS MUST I TAKE THIS?

- **Racial justice training is a requirement** for commissioning to diaconal ministry, ordination or admission. The Conference will need a certificate or equivalent demonstrating that you have completed this requirement prior to the annual meeting of the year you will be received as ministry personnel. For those under appointment (student supply, candidate supply, intern supply, ordained supply) you must complete the course in the first year of your appointment.

7. I AM RETIRED MUST I DO THIS?

- If you are exercising your ministry by presbytery appointment or as a Voluntary Associate Minister you must take this training.

8. I AM A DESIGNATED LAY MINISTER DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

- **Yes it does.** You are considered ministry personnel because you are under presbytery appointment. You must complete the training in the first year of your appointment.

9. I AM A CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATED MINISTER MUST I COMPLETE THIS?

- You are not considered ministry personnel. General Council does not have jurisdiction over your ministry and therefore cannot require it. However taking the course will equip you further for your responsibilities.

10. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FULFILLING THE MANDATORY GENERAL COUNCIL REQUIREMENT?

- Some Conferences are linking fulfillment of the mandatory training to 'good standing'. Only ministry personnel in good standing may apply for call or appointments. In some Conferences there is a six month 'grace period' following accepting a call or appointment to complete this training. In Hamilton Conference, each presbytery is dealing with non-compliance differently. We expect, given that we are over 5 years into the policy, that the consequence of failing to complete the mandatory training will mean **no** approval of your new call or appointment, or renewal of your appointment.

11. I HAVE TAKEN EQUIVALENT TRAINING WILL THAT COUNT?

- In our policy, it is up to your presbytery to determine equivalency; however we are currently working with General Council Office to equip presbyteries for this task. Ministry personnel who feel they have equivalent training may contact their pastoral relations convenors or your Conference Personnel Minister (Diane Blanchard dblanchard@hamconf.org) to explore equivalencies.