

WEEK 30 July 25-31, 2021

Called to Study and Action



I was unsettled by two recent occurrences, and they continue to gnaw at me. The first happened during a ZOOM book club meeting while discussing Ijeoma Oluo’s book titled *So You Want to Talk about Race*. Someone mentioned our United Methodist Charter for Racial Justice, and one woman asked what that was, acknowledging she had never heard of it. The charter, first crafted by United Methodist Women, was adopted by the whole denomination at the General Conference of 1980. I know that we United Methodist Women are urged to study and promote racial justice each year, and we do this through a variety of projects. I did not realize, however, that it had been several years since our unit had presented a program specifically dealing with the Charter for Racial Justice. Our “Been there; done that” approach to program planning meant that a very active member, and perhaps many other women, were unaware of our long commitment to undoing racism.

The second situation occurred at a masked-and-socially-distanced gathering our family was enjoying in our backyard. The afternoon had been delightfully warm, but as the sun lowered on the horizon, we began to bemoan the forecasted chilly days for the coming week. In an attempt at optimism, I offered, “We’ll still have some warm days of Indian summer after this cold spell.” There was an audible gasp and chuckle before David explained, “Mom, I think that’s a racist comment.” I responded that this was ridiculous because I would never refer to an indigenous person as an Indian. Besides, how could warm autumnal days, often celebrating the harvest or hunting season, be considered offensive? As I denied, thumbs around our yard googled. It seems there are numerous theories about the origins of the term “Indian summer”, and one does suggest that it refers to a “false summer” and compares it to the slur “Indian giver.” I didn’t accept this finding immediately because I had not meant to be offensive!

I have not forgotten either of these instances. I have located several UMW programs on the Charter for Racial Justice which I recently reread. I realize we must admit before God and one another when we have sinned against other races in thought, word, and deed, even if our actions were unintentional. Our struggles for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings, and new relationships. As Anne says, ending racism can be compared to our faith journeys. Both require daily work and are lifelong commitments.

Pat Blosser

Scripture:

1 Kings 3:9-12

Psalms 101

Isaiah 1:17

Matthew 18:23-35

Zechariah – 7:8-10

Isaiah 10:1-3

Micah 6:8

Matthew 7:12