

# Racial Justice Training Mandatory for Ministry Personnel

March/April 2010 Insight Article By Susan Howard

*'It is necessary to resort repeatedly to stories and personal experience in an attempt to describe the separation by race and the power imbalance inherent in racist behaviour.'* The Very Rev. Stan McKay in *That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating toward Racial Justice*, The United Church of Canada, 2004, p. 8.

*'We are here together.'* Lorna Pawis, Snapping Turtle Woman, Racial Justice Train-the-Trainers Event, General Council, Toronto, October 28, 2009.

*'For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another ..., I will dwell with you in this place ....'* Jeremiah 7:5-6 quoted in *Ending Racial Harassment: Creating Healthy Congregations* (The United Church of Canada, 2008), p. 8.

Mandatory racial justice training for Ministry Personnel will begin this year. At the 39th General Council meeting in Thunder Bay in 2006, the Council decided that racial justice training would be required for all Ministry Personnel as part of the United Church's efforts to build right relations amongst all peoples. Letters about this requirement were sent from General Council staff person Jennifer Janzen-Ball in December to Ministry Personnel and chairs of Ministry & Personnel Committees. Toronto Conference will be offering four regional events this spring, with training conducted by persons who attended a train-the-trainers gathering last October. Susan Howard, John Lee, Lynella Reid-James and Eleanor Scarlett represented this Conference and will be involved in the training sessions.

While the whole of the body of Christ would benefit from racial justice training, the General Council identified the need for Ministry Personnel to be first out of the gate. In Toronto Conference, about 325 Ministry Personnel will be required to take the training. Additional workshops may be needed because of the numbers to be trained. Trainees will be given materials prior to the event where face-to-face learning will take place. Attendance will be taken and personnel files will be updated accordingly. A racial justice training certificate will be provided upon completion of the training. The events will consist of approximately 3 hours of preparation and 3 hours in a workshop format.

## **Dates, Locations and time of workshops in Toronto Conference:**

Further training opportunities will be announced as they become available.