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PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

a prayer for protection
for Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Latina elected officials
or the residents of Washington D.C.
for each of us who has ever been handcuffed or teargassed or
afraid of police or white supremacists or our government
for each of us who is afraid every day for ourselves or our loved
ones or our children or this country.
may we be protected
may we be protected from generations of violence and hate
from pandemic and sickness and fear.
may we be protected not because we have earned it but because
of the generous grace of justice and spirit.
and may those of us who can be protectors protect.
be pourers of tea for ourselves and others, builders of power for
love for ourselves and others, reminders to breathe and eat and
fight and tend, to rest and risk so we may all be
protected.
and in our doubt and stress may we rest
in the air and the earth and the sky that
have seen governments come and go, despots
and haters come and go. that hold our bones
and our breath with sacredness and survival.
words from the Senator-Elect Reverend
Raphael Warnock "Will we play political
games while real people suffer or will we
win righteous fights together shoulder to
shoulder... Will we seek to destroy one
another or heed the call towards the
common good, building together what
Dr. King called "the beloved community?"
may it be survival and justice. may it be
shoulder to shoulder. may it be beloved
community. this is our prayer.

Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen





FROM THE EDITOR

Photo: Rev. Joseph in the foreground with Unitarian Universalists of Metro Manila on a New Years Hike.

Every day feels so profound, intense, and challenging. The world around us has been in a state of deep churn. The frontline feels like it is at our front door, because it is. When I offered to start up The DRUUMM Beat in 2018, I was leaving one of the most meaningful community ministries of my life with the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) and resettling in Southeast Asia with my family. It was a tough time, a lot of feelings of loss, of loneliness, and at times I felt like I was on the edge of alienation and bitterness.

In my own personal reflections, prayer, and meditation, I found myself coming back to DRUUMM. This was a place where I wanted to invest more of my time and energy. I had served on the Steering Committee from time to time since the early 2000s, and I was excited to do something different. I appreciated the feedback from so many friends and mentors in our UU community who affirmed the idea of creating this newsletter. This has been one new way of how we connect our communities together. I love doing that, I love introducing people to one another. The newsletter has been a passion project, a way to volunteer in a way that gives me the gift of belonging.

Now as the US Capitol is burning, and we feel acutely the suffering of the pandemic, climate change, and White supremacy, it is my hope that our humble DRUUMM Beat helps keep you grounded. We are grateful for the wide range of contributions from our members and friends around the world. While we are primarily centered in the US, we have members in the Caribbean, Canada, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands.

DRUUMM has grown from under 100 dues paying members in 2018 to over 300 today. This is an incredible testament to the leadership of your DRUUMM Steering Committee, and the members like you who are co-creating programs that are serving, caring, and inspiring BIPOC UUs and folks new to UU. Thank you.

We have now published 25 issues of The DRUUMM Beat over the last two and a half years. The full archive is available at www.druumm.org and we encourage you to check it out when you feel the need to be close with our BIPOC UU community. You belong. Blessings, Rev. Joseph



NEW BEGINNINGS 2021

By Rev. Dr. Qiyamah Rahman

NEW BEGINNINGS IN 2021!

I will be changing my employment soon. I will be working with the Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Council as the Sexual Assault Coordinator for the Territory. When I saw this article about feminism it reminded me of the work I will be doing and some experiences that I encountered.

I have done sexual assault work in previous lifetimes and I look forward to returning to it. Now I am older, an elder, and perhaps that identity will shield me from the accusations and assumptions that some males expressed as a result of their discomfort when I conducted workshops and trainings many years ago.

I was called a lesbian and a man hater simply because I dared to speak honestly and openly about the violence & sexual abuse that many women experienced at the hands of men.

Perhaps if I am sure to include the statistic that 1 in 6 males experience sexual abuse before the age of eighteen, then the males in future workshops and trainings will tend to be less hostile. Perhaps it is a cultural thing and stateside men are less polite and men in the Virgin Islands will be too courteous to diss an elder.

I recall when Alice Walker's book, *The Color Purple*, debuted. Some Black men were so angry at Walker's portrayal of Mr. , the wife beating husband of the main character, Celi. The 1985 film version of the book caused even greater controversy in the Black community. Personally, as someone working in the field of domestic violence & sexual assault I was happy people were talking about these issues.

I think we have made a lot of progress and we certainly have a ways to go. I look forward to speaking with many of you here in the Virgin Islands about the topic and how to create a safer world for everyone!

Be Safe,
Rev Qiyamah



BLACK PEOPLE ARE EVERYTHING

By QuianaDenae Perkins

QuianaDenae Perkins works at UU Ann Arbor. She centers Black liberation, joy and excellence in all of her work. Caterpillar Facts is her "posted" blog where she shares all her learning and musings.

BLACK PEOPLE ARE EVERYTHING.

Let me break that down.

We are everything, every kind of human on the scale of human.

There are black goths, black polyamorous people, black folks who love country music, black people who do rodeo, black people who eat mayo, black trans people, black gender non conforming people, queer black people, black folks who dont use violence with their children, black people who hate black people.

Blackness doesn't make folks immune from the full range of human possibilities of existence.

Its 2020.

I am not playing the BLACK DONT BLACK PEOPLE CAN'T WE DONT DO THAT game.

Yes the fuck someone black has

Yes the fuck someone black is capable

Yes the fuck someone black can do a thing and still be hard shiney blue obsidian black black black.

And here I add a note to myself, as I often forget this gracefilled truth:

.

Black people can interact, know, respect, be in intimate partnership with non black people and still be black.

I am not talking about a love for proximity to whiteness as to be in proximity to privilege and power.

I mean I can have a caring relationship with BOB at my job and still be black.

I can have kids with and co parent with a wyt person and still be black. Engaging white people doesn't diminish my blackness.

We need to stop holding folks to our level of comfort which is often rooted in safety and survival.

What if the current Black agenda goal is not assimilation or survival but thriving?

What if these new relationships, new music, new words for gender is Black folks pushing into thriving?

The question is NOT do you feel safe, is this a blackness you know, the question is are you coming along?

Were leaving.

Are you coming to this new vast expanded open space we call Black?

Let me tell you, baby, I am already there and its a beautiful.





CORNROWS, KWANZAA AND CONFUSION: THE DILEMMA OF CULTURAL RACISM AND MISAPPROPRIATION

By Rev. Marjorie BOWENS-WHEATLEY

Editors note: This article was originally published in the Fall 1995 edition of the Liberal Religious Education Journal entitled: Bridges to the Future: From Assimilation to Pluralism. At the time this article was published, Marjorie BOWENS-WHEATLEY was Affiliate Minister at the Community Church of New York and active member in the African American UU Ministries. Later Rev. Marjorie would become a founding member of DRUUMM.

The baobab is an enormous tree found in many parts of Africa. I encountered it first in Senegal, then in Djibouti. More massive than an oak, its roots spread visibly in every direction, sometimes nearly a quarter of a mile. In addition to its central place as a living expression of nature and of God, the baobab is associated with conflict and the resolution of disputes. Elders and village chiefs are frequently seen sitting under the tree with parties of a conflict. Often members of the same family, clan, or tribe. Sometimes, when the parties emerge, there is a working peace. At other times, when they are unable to resolve the conflict, the result is tribal war.

A feeling of discomfort has been welling up in my soul in spite of our recent efforts (including significant anti-racism training) to move toward greater racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. I have encountered several situations in which well-intentioned Unitarian Universalists of European American heritage have sought to "lift up" the cultural roots and experiences of people of color. Many of these have been done with varying degrees of disrespect and what is, no doubt, non-conscious racism. I believe that it is time for Unitarian Universalists from different tribes to sit under the baobab.

This is part of an ongoing conversation I have had with myself, and occasionally with others, for several years. In a way, we are all feeling our way through a new minefield.

I hope that expanding the conversation will help us to delve into a dimension of race relations that is sensitive, difficult, and important. This essay focuses on three aspects of culture: (a) racism and other forms of cultural bigotry, (b) developing greater sensitivity in how we honor the heritage, traditions, and work of racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups, and (c) the threat of cultural genocide and the need for cultural preservation. In these few pages we cannot capture the full scope of cultural racism, let alone analyze it. My purpose is simply to bring the issue to our attention as a religious movement, with the goal of opening up a dialogue between persons of European American heritage and those whose ancestry and heritage is in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.

Undoing the social and cultural constructs that have led to racism is, for me, a theological task. It is a transcendent experience—one step toward breaking down the barriers that divide us from each other, from all creation, and from the Great Spirit of Life that some of us call God. It is taking one step toward building a beloved community.

Racism is a prejudgment based on race, coupled with the power to affirm that prejudice. It is the exercise of power and the presumption of the privilege to establish and proclaim one race, history, identity, and experience as superior to all other groups.

CORNROWS, KWANZAA AND CONFUSION: THE DILEMMA OF CULTURAL RACISM AND MISAPPROPRIATION

By Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

As such, racism is systemic. It saturates every part of our social system economically, politically, and culturally. Racism, including enculturated or cultural racism, imposes the power of one group to institutionalize its values and norms over all other groups. In the United States there is a limited acknowledgment of institutional racism, but cultural racism is often minimized or overlooked. Cultural racism finds its roots in the legacy of White supremacy and in placing more value in imagination than in history or facts. Toni Morrison's book, *Playing in the Dark* [1] is a literary critique of one form of cultural racism which focuses on the White imagination. One of the most widespread assumptions of White supremacy within the system of free enterprise is that the images, symbols, rituals, practices, and/or religious expressions of any culture can be freely appropriated by another, with or without permission. Cultural racism carries with it an all-pervasive set of assumptions, a deeply rooted taken-for-grantedness that affirms the bastardization (including commercialization) of a culture by placing its cultural productions on the auction block, so to speak.

Power of the Dominant Culture

The power of the White majority to decide what is valued as "normal" or acceptable, and to impart subtle and often unconscious messages about what is "right" and what is not, is especially critical when we consider children. Kenneth Clark found that, by the age of three or four, children develop opinions about their own racial groups based on socially prevailing ideas and other expressions from the dominant culture—in

spite of the fact that the child may have had no direct experience with another racial, ethnic or cultural group.[2] Much of the critical writing on multiculturalism in education is really about intellectual racism as a specific form of cultural racism,[3] but it has not been so named. Leonore Tiefer's article, "Intellectual Racism," is one of the few that begins to name the issue, but the challenge of cultural racism is multi-layered. Tiefer points to the necessity for European Americans to read the writings of people of color "widely and deeply" and to examine "ideas and models for their roles in perpetuating racial hierarchies." [4] If we are to improve race relations within the Unitarian Universalist Association and in the country at large, it is also necessary to examine a multitude of values, norms and assumptions of mainstream culture just as partners in a business enterprise would examine the values, norms, and assumptions of a foreign culture in which they were seeking to do business.

Language is one of these assumptions, and it is a primary construct of racism that shapes cultural norms. I recall the exercise undertaken by Malcolm X in the early 1960s, in which he investigated the words "black" and "white" in the dictionary. Thirty years later, we still find "black" too often associated with negatives and evil and "white" with goodness and purity. Assigning terms like: "nude" to nylon stockings or "flesh" to Band-Aids(TM) or crayons, for example, is based on Caucasian skin tones as the norm. Several years ago, the Crayola Company introduced a set of "multicultural" crayons reflecting a wider spectrum of colors, the new palette ranging from alabaster shades to dark chocolate.

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Several friends report that while they have had no problem finding these crayons in neighborhoods where people of color are the majority, they are less available in European American neighborhoods. Market research may have driven this outcome, but it suggests yet another false cultural assumption: that European Americans neither need nor want "multicultural" crayons.

Another example of cultural racism, driven by an institutional partnership, is the term "third world." Thanks to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), commonly known as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), this term has now become a linguistic norm. More than twenty years ago, these two multilateral institutions divided the world in a way that was suited to their needs—according to their own economic formula. The "first" world was the industrialized Western capitalist countries (the United States and Western Europe); the "second" world included the Communist-bloc countries (the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe), and the "third" world represented most of the former colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands judged to have the potential for development with help from the West. There were even "fourth" and "fifth" world terms applied to those countries believed to have little or no potential for development due to climactic limitations or a lack of natural or human resources. This hierarchical arrangement of nations has multiple implications for how people see themselves and how others see them.[5]

The media is another example of how an institution expresses cultural racism. The immense power of media to name "reality" subjectively seems apparent. Since I have written elsewhere on this subject, I shall not dwell on it here.[6]

In spite of the tremendous power of language to influence cultural norms, the attempt to discuss linguistics in terms of race (or gender and sexual orientation) seems to spark a lightning rod. Too often, linguistic challenges are dismissed as "pandering to political correctness." Cultural racism is not about political correctness; it is about who gets to define language and establish and sustain cultural norms. It is about who gets to sit at the table and set agendas. It is about the need and the right to claim one's full humanity instead of accepting disrespect and varying degrees of dehumanization from others. It is about racist patriarchal supremacy. It is about power and freedom and justice.

Read the rest of Rev. Marjorie's essay at <https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/introduction/misappropriation/37852.shtml>

BRIDGING CEREMONY MESSAGES

Delivered to the General Assembly 2008

By Elandria Williams

Good evening. For many of us there are song lyrics that describe our place in the world and how we see ourselves fitting in to this journey called life. One of these lyrics for me comes from a song titled We Are by fellow UU, Ysaye Barnwell, and Sweet Honey in the Rock which many of you know.

For each child that's born
A morning star rises
And sings to the universe
Who we are
We are our Grandmother's Prayers
And we are our Grandfather's Dreaming
We are the breath of our ancestors
We are the children of God

These lyrics capture for me what it means to live my life not just as my life but as a continuation of spirit, struggle and vision for what should and can be. I know that some of us don't believe in a God, but believe in the power of nature or what could be if we reached our highest potential. What does it mean that we are the breath of our ancestors, our grandmother's prayers and our grandfather's dreams? This song touches something down in my core which calls me to act and live differently.

I don't know if my grandparents ever would have or could have imagined me being Unitarian Universalist. But I think and know that they prayed and dreamed that I would find a faith that inspired me to be a better person and to be a prophetic voice.

What are we willing to dream and imagine?
Whose breath are we?

I come from a people who did not bow down to hardship or pain. I come from a people who tried to do the best they could and encouraged their children to push themselves to a higher standard. I come from a people that did what they needed to do whether it was building them a house, growing some food, refusing to ride in the back of a carriage or whatever they could do to fight for dignity. I believe that we have many ancestors. Some are biological or acknowledged as family, others are movement or spirit ancestors and then there are our UU ancestors who for some of us include those above.

When I think of the prophetic voice and what it means to be the breath of our ancestors so many different people come to mind. Nearer ancestors like Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and further ancestors like Clarence Skinner.

Skinner once said "LET US MEET the issues of our time with intellectual frankness and with moral courage. Let us recognize the challenging facts of our day, and answer them with truth and with reason... the fight for freedom is never won. Therefore those who have been reared in freedom, bear a tremendous responsibility to the world to win an ever larger and more important liberty..."

This is a charge to all of us and for all of us as Unitarian Universalists to answer and be the breath of our ancestors and to be our grandmother's prayers and our grandfather's dreaming in the path to liberty.

BRIDGING CEREMONY MESSAGES

Delivered to the General Assembly 2008

By Elandria Williams,

I would like to tell you a story. Most of you have no idea who I am so you don't know how I came to be a Unitarian Universalist. My parents and my brother and I attended a Baptist church in Knoxville, TN till we were in the 4th grade. My twin and I had major challenges with the church that in many ways were centered on why everyone besides Baptists were going to hell and I really did not like that idea that almost all of my friends were going to hell because they were Muslim, Hindi, Jewish and Presbyterian. We went to the 4th grade class at the Tennessee Valley UU church in Knoxville and they were stomping cans to buy acres of rainforests and they were also clearing out a path. That to us was just way cool. We could actually do something and then see how what we were doing was going to make a change in the world. Sounded great to us and we told our parents that this was the church that we wanted to be a part of.

Let's fast forward to high school and YRUU and Youth group. My church gave me and the fellow members of our youth group something special which I will always be eternally grateful. They gave us the power to both be youth and to be people with value. They enabled us to create our own groups, to plan our own agendas and to determine what we needed. They let us feel that we had a voice in what was happening. They understood that the needs of young people are best understood by young people in this current situation. They also made sure that we were never alone and truly understood multigenerational and intergenerational support and family.

They encouraged us to push them past where they sometimes wanted to go. They

encouraged us to be on the board, the worship committee, the choir and other activities in the church. They encouraged us to come to General Assembly and to be involved in the local church, the district and continental levels. They also understood that we felt that social justice was key to our church and the world and they invited me to join the Journey Toward Wholeness Committee which put me on the path to where I am today. This is the church that I wanted to be in and a faith that I feel honored and valued me and what I was able to bring to the table. Because of this I joined the Campus Ministry group in college, became active in C*UUYAN because of people like Joseph Santos-Lyons, Michael Tino and others, was a founding member of Groundwork, became a local and continental youth advisor, served on the steering committee of DRUUMM and worked for the UUA.

I stand before you today with both sadness and with hope. I feel sad because I feel like we at times are a church of the status quo. The status quo of the liberal left saying that we stand for justice while not really being down in the trenches with the folk that are most impacted not just during a forum or an action but as friends and neighbors. For example, we focus on same sex marriage as the most important issue facing queer communities even as queer people of color and queer economic justice organizations ask for a broader dialogue. Marriage is important but secondary if people don't have enough to eat or are being gentrified out of house and home – are we fighting with the status quo or on the path to collective liberation and radical change?

BRIDGING CEREMONY MESSAGES

Delivered to the General Assembly 2008

By Elandria Williams,


My hope is the common threads that weave us together. Laura Spencer who is coordinating the Mosaic Project asked me what makes me feel the proudest or what I like most about being a UU. I realized that I don't feel like I get my values from the UUA but I do feel that my values have a home in the UU principles. Where I feel those values come into play is in the many youth, young adults, older adults and elders that stand up for what is right in their congregations, this country and the world. I work for the Highlander Research and Education Center and no matter where I go I find UUs like Kathryn Kevin who works for El Pueblo in Raleigh, NC who is working for rights for immigrants communities, or Ella Hereth, Laurel Albina and the countless union organizers in our midst, or Robette Dias, Nora Rasman or Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers who are working with communities trying to retain their rights. Those values come to light in the ability to think, act and reflect for ourselves and realizing what it means to have breath and voice. I implore you tonight to support the many UUs and folks that are our allies in this struggle.

Stand with DRUUMM and LUUNA and the ministries of people of color both in our churches and in our communities as many of us are in substandard schools, jails, and on the front lines in Iraq. Support the ministers of color for who it is still a challenge in parish and community ministry. Support the Anti-Racist white folk and people of color who still are trying to transform the UUA.

Stand with youth and young adults as they make their way in the world hopefully holding us accountable along the way to

emancipation; with the elders who are the wings that we are gliding on; with queer folk as we are standing not just for marriage but an end to heterosexism, beatings, unfair prison treatment and heteronormativity; with differently-abled people as we try to make our way in the world that doesn't always want to make accommodations; and with folk who are struggling to pay their rent, provide childcare and pay gas in this neoliberal capitalist world. But most importantly stand for yourself. Stand for yourself because no one else will. Always remember that in this time of great turbulence and hope that righteousness will prevail.

We as UUs have the tremendous responsibility to live out our principles and to support the young folk in our community from youth to young adulthood to elders. To help guide their feet, hold their hands, stand by them, treat them as your children and as the children of God.



DRUUMM ORGANIZER DROP-IN

DRUUMM Monthly Drop-In for Local Facilitators of BIPOC UU Groups

3rd Tuesdays at 8:00 PM
ET/5:00 PM PT

Upcoming: December 15th,
January 19th

RSVP: jsantoslyons@uuma.org

DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2020-2021

The DRUUMM Steering Committee is made up of members elected to three year terms at our annual meeting. For more information you can reach them at info@druumm.org.

- President **Ayanna Kafi Stringer**, Georgia
- Vice President/President Elect **Cassie Montenegro**, Florida
- Vice President **Mathew Taylor**, California
- Secretary **Janell Hill**, Minnesota
- Treasurer **Eric Huang**, Texas
- Communications Co-Coordinator **Rhiannon Smith**, California

- Communications Co-Coordinator **Nicole Pressley**, Georgia
- GA Co-Coordinator **Imari S. Nuyen-Kariotis**, California
- Outreach Co-Coordinator **Noel Burke**, Missouri
- Outreach Co-Coordinator **Kaitlin Dey**, California
- UUA Liaison **Michael J Crumpler**, New York

GROW FELLOWSHIP



This is long haul work, y'all. This is work we do in conjunction with our ancestors. This is work that needs us to show up with imagination, discipline, groundedness and care.

If you don't have a practice group for those things, perhaps G.R.O.W. is the space for you.

If you are

- ☆ on the edge of burnout
- ☆ feeling despair
- ☆ struggling to make meaning and
- ☆ find your place in the movement
- ☆ trying to heal from a movement breakup
- ☆ enmeshed in toxic organizing work cultures

I think G.R.O.W. has something to offer.

- ♡ Weekly calls to stretch our imaginations and skills for justice
- ♡ A cross-movement cohort to strategize with and build accountable relationships
- ♡ Spiritual (nondoctrinal) praxis and care space as critical to our justice work
- ♡ Space and time to think through themes of governance, time, care and conflict- how do we deepen our dreams?

Sounds delicious? You say you want more deets?

We've worked hard to make this space financially accessible by offering a \$250 stipend to folks who journey alongside us.

We will meet on Monday evenings for an hour beginning in mid March through mid August.

Here it is!

<https://www.tfaforms.com/4873497>

Due February 1.

-Rev. Sara Dendy-Green

COLOR/FULL: ANCESTOR



MATHEW TAYLOR
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

GOAL

Network and meet folks. I'm actually in Seminary. Someday I'll be needing things from our faith tradition. I am here to connect, meet, and see what the rest of our denomination looks like.

GIFT

I am Black, gay, pagan, a seminarian, a writer. I don't see a lot of our voices highlighted. So I am here to say, "we need this."

NOTATIONS

- A public memorial for Rev. Chester McCall will be held January 16, 2020.
- A public memorial for Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson will be held on March 28, 2020.
- DRUUMM's Asian Pacific Islander Caucus (APIC) continues to host monthly 2nd Tuesday Coffee Chats - find them on Facebook.
- DRUUMM is working to expand the organizational chaplain program with new lay leadership and ordained clergy in our community joining together to offer more pastoral care and spiritual support for members.
- Earlybird registration for virtual General Assembly 2021 is now open. There are also opportunities to contribute programs and volunteer for the national event.
- Congratulations to Nicole Pressley, who has been directing the UU the Vote field effort in Georgia, on an incredible job. Nicole also serves on the DRUUMM Steering Committee.



The DRUUMM Beat Issue 17, Volume 2

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Read online at www.druumm.org

