HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST
(Book Review)

Session 2
Chapters 5-8
April 9, 2022

Written by:
Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
Welcome: Dr. Linda Abington

Facilitators:
Dr. Linda Abington
Abba Church of Renewed Faith, Nondenominational

LaDonna Gordon
Abba Church of Renewed Faith, Nondenominational

Invocation:
Rev. Phil Tom
Executive Director
International Council of Community Churches (ICCC)
◊ ICCC Racial Equity Committee Members

◊ Rev. Phil Tom – Executive Director
◊ Rev. Dr. Rhonda Blevins – Auxiliary Representative
◊ Rev. Rock Fremont – Vice President for Leadership and Interfaith Relations
◊ Dr. Linda Abington – Member ABBA Church of Renewed Faith, Nondenominational
Introduction of Book Review Participants
Suggested Ground Rules for Discussion

**Recognize:** We recognize that we must strive to overcome historical and divisive biases, such as racism and sexism, in our society.

**Acknowledge:** We acknowledge that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group(s) and about members of other groups. This is true for everyone, regardless of our group(s).

**No Blame:** We agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.

**Respect:** We agree to listen respectfully to each other without interruptions. Only one person speaks at a time. However, this does not mean we should ignore problematic statements. We acknowledge that we may be at different stages of learning on the content and discussion topics.

**Individual Experience:** We agree that no one should be required or expected to speak for their whole race or gender. We can't, even if we wanted to.

**Trust:** Everyone has come to the table to learn, grow, and share. We will trust that people are doing the best they can; we all make mistakes and have bad days; when these occur, let's challenge and encourage each other to do better. We acknowledge once again that we may be at different stages of learning on the topic.
Suggested Ground Rules For The Discussion

**Share the Air:** Share responsibility for including all voices in the discussion. If you have a tendency to dominate discussions, take a step back and help the group invite others to speak. If you tend to stay quiet, challenge yourself to share ideas so others can learn from you.

**Not Experts:** The facilitators are not experts. They are here to help facilitate the process. They and everyone in the group are here to learn. We also recognize that everyone has an opinion. Opinions, however, are not the same as informed knowledge backed up by research. Depending on the topic and context, both are valid to share but it's important to know the difference. To engage in deep learning, we will want to lean more toward informed knowledge and gain practice reflecting and speaking thoughtfully on difficult topics.

**Ask for help:** It's okay not to know. Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes when approaching a complex task or exploring new ideas. Be open to changing your mind, and make space for others to do so as well.

*These Ground Rules are adopted from the thoughtful librarians leading the Library Book Discussion Series at the Iowa State University Library.*
Excerpt From Full Interview: Dr. Ibram Kendi, How to be an Antiracist

https://youtu.be/_JYRGQ4yAk4
The opposite of racist isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is ‘anti-racist.’ ...One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an anti-racist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an anti-racist. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an anti-racist. There is no in-between safe space of ’not racist.”
1. What incentive do people in power have to reconstruct/eliminate the current power structure? Do people of color have power to eliminate racist policies and racial inequities? Is it possible for people of color to be racist? How is engaging in antiracist work different for White people than it is for people of color?

2. According to Dr. Kendi, anyone who values immigrants from European countries and devalues immigrants from Latin America is guilty of racism. Have you ever been guilty of this type of racism? Discuss the unique resilience and resourcefulness people possess if they leave everything in their native country behind and immigrate to another, as Dr. Kendi examines in the chapter on Ethnicity.

3. In Chapter 7, Dr. Kendi explores how African American culture (cultural practices, fashion, language, music, and more) is seen by "culturally racist scholars," sociologists and apologists, and contrasts that with how he describes the experience of being a young Black male navigating "on the Ave." How can we explain these differences in perspective, using the lenses of power and cultural racism?
4. Dr. Kendi writes, “White supremacist is code for anti-human, a nuclear ideology that poses an existential threat to human existence.” How are white supremacists and their ideology actually harmful to all of humanity—including white people?

5. What is class racism? Why does Dr. Kendi describe capitalism and racism as conjoined twins? How do racist policies connect and intertwine with capitalist policies? Can you think of an example of a policy that is both racist and capitalist? Please explain microaggressions as described by Dr. Kendi.

6. In chapter 6, Dr. Kendi writes about racism and the Body. How does racist policy define and affect the body? In Chapters 5 and 6, Kendi introduces the terms racialized ethnic groups and racialized bodies. Explain what is meant by these terms, as well as how these forms of racism manifest. Thinking beyond the examples Kendi offers, identify an example of ethnic racism or bodily racism that you can think of from recent years.
7. Dr. Kendi has already stated unequivocally in the book’s introduction that pretending to be colorblind is actually "...a mask to hide racism." He expands on this in Chapter 3 (page 38), by saying it is "... the privilege of being inherently normal, standard, and legal" that allows some whites to not have to think about race, to dismiss or deny racism, etc. Similarly, in Chapter 4 (page 54), Kendi says the "post-racial strategy" of insisting there is only one race (i.e., the human race) is misguided and "harmful." Without pushing back or fighting against these statements, explain what is meant by privilege and explain Dr. Kendi's perspective.

8. The central double standard in ethnic racism: loving one’s position on the ladder above over ethnic groups and hating one’s position below that of other ethnic groups.” (p65) Have you experienced this tension before? Why do we consume racist/sextist/classist ideas about other groups and reject racist/sextist/classist ideas.

9. Dr. Kendi connects in Chapter 8 the development of IQ tests and standardized tests with the 19th century eugenics movement, and states "... because we're talking about featureless, objective numbers, no one would ever think that racism could have played a role." Had you ever thought of standardized tests in this way before? What is the difference between the achievement gap and the opportunity gap, as Kendi describes, and how might this impact how we interpret a student's performance on standardized tests?
Suggested Review Questions For Chapters 5-8

Breakout Room 4

10. There’s a stronger and clearer correlation between levels of violent crime and unemployment levels than between violent crime and race, but that’s not the story policymakers have chosen to tell. Discuss why you think this is. How might our society and culture change if policymakers characterized dangerous Black neighborhoods as dangerous unemployed neighborhoods?

11. Dr. Kendi thinks that we should assess candidates as being racist or antiracist based on what ideas they are expressing and what policies they are supporting—and not what they say is in their bones or their heart. Do you agree with him? Why or why not?

* Questions were engineered in part by the Diversity and Community Engagement Department at the University of Mississippi, and Josh Parker, “Workbook, How To Be An Antiracist”, Intensive Care Publishing.
Closing Prayer:  Rev. Dr. Sharyon Cosey
Senior Pastor ABBA Church of Renewed Faith, Nondenmonational
Vice President for Membership Enlistment
ICCC