# The Journey to Jubilee: Stories of Anti-Racism Efforts at the UUA

Companion Text: [***The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary***](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Arc_of_the_Universe_is_Long/V4YmXJcrq8YC)by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer ([Available at the UUA Bookstore](https://www.uuabookstore.org/The-Arc-of-the-Universe-Is-Long-P17039.aspx))

# Introduction

Working on The Books *The Arc of the Universe* and *Soul Works* (YouTube, 16:45) Dr. Leon Spencer

“[Toward a New Paradigm for Uncovering Neo-Racism](https://books.google.com/books?id=jH5CPETMesIC&lpg=PP1&pg=PA145#v=onepage&q&f=false)” by William R. Jones. Soul Work: Anti-racist Theologies in Dialogue, edited by Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and Nancy Palmer Jones, Skinner House (1983) pp. 145-158

Why These Interviews? (YouTube, 4:38)

# Personal Journeys to Unitarian Universalism

My Journey to Unitarian Universalism (YouTube, 14:11) Leon Spencer

My Journey to Unitarian Universalism (YouTube, 31:06) Rev. Mel Hoover

My Journey to Unitarian Universalism (YouTube, 8:14) Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson

**Discussion Questions:**

• What was your journey to UUism?

• What has made you passionate about the faith?

# Experiences of Exclusion and Inclusion

Experiences of Exclusion and Inclusion (YouTube 8:55) Dr. Leon Spencer

How Open the Door: Lived Experience of Black UUs (YouTube, 10:39) Dr. Leon Spencer & Rev. Mel Hoover

**Discussion Questions:**

• How do these experiences compare to your own?

# 1967-70: Black Empowerment and Disappointment

The Wilderness Journey (YouTube 1:16:11)   
Produced by Ronald M. Cordes, Music Coordinator: William Norris, Post-Production Consultant: Susan Sirois Ellis

The 1970s: After the Frustrations for Black Empowerment (YouTube, 10:28) Rev. Mel Hoover

# Black Concerns Working Group

Read Chapters 3-6 of ***The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary*** by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer (58 pages)

Read the Report from the **1980 Institutional Racism Audit** (need scanned document)

Early Allies (Before the Black Concerns Working Group) (YouTube, 6:07) Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

The First Meeting and Early Years of the Black Concerns Working Group (YouTube, 19:08) Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

My Journey to the Black Concerns Working Group (17:38) Rev. Mel Hoover

Our Recruitment to The Black Concerns Working Group (YouTube 18:49) Dr. Leon Spencer & Rev. Mel Hoover

Designing the Training, Changing the Culture - Black Concerns Working Group (YouTube, 9:15) Dr. Leon Spencer & Rev. Mel Hoover

Changing Systems: The Black Concerns Working Group (YouTube, 12:28) Rev. Mel Hoover

Resistant Structures and Systems: The Black Concerns Working Group (YouTube, 11:52) Dr. Leon Spencer & Rev. Mel Hoover

White Allies at the UUA (YouTube, 11:23) Dr. Leon Spencer & Rev. Mel Hoover

**Discussion Questions:**

• What are some other examples from the reading where the system and structures resisted anti-racism efforts?

• Where have you seen this happen in your own congregation/community?

• How might white allies make a difference?

The Black Concerns Working Group as a Black Space (YouTube, 7:33) Dr. Leon Spencer

**Discussion Questions:**

• Why haven’t UU congregations been more welcoming to non-white free-thinkers?

• How do you understand the need for spaces/times for people with similar marginalized identities to meet? Has that understanding changed over time?

# 1993 General Assembly: Racial Justice Day & The Thomas Jefferson Ball

Read Chapter 8 of ***The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary*** by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer (17 pages)

**Discussion Questions:**

• How would you describe Thomas Jefferson’s relationship to Unitarian Universalism? Has that view changed over time? How?

• What are lessons that could be learned from the “Racial Justice Day” held before the 1993 General Assembly?

Possible Video: Introduction to “Racial Justice for Times Like These” Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed (Is this available?)

Video: The First Big Test of My Unitarian Universalist Faith (YouTube, 12:50) Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson

**Discussion Questions:**

• Think of a time when Unitarian Universalism didn’t live up to your hopes. How did it feel? How did you resolve the situation in your own heart?

• After Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson made her statement during the Plenary Session, why didn’t the applause translate into addressing the concerns in the statement?

# 1997 General Assembly: Resolution: Toward an Anti-Racist Unitarian Universalist Association & the Journey Toward Wholeness

Read Chapter 9 & 10 of ***The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary*** by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer (17 pages)

The Transition from the Black Concerns Working Group to the Journey Toward Wholeness arc (YouTube, 7:39) Dr. Leon Spencer

The Hope for (and Results from) the Journey Toward Wholeness (YouTube, 13:46) Rev. Mel Hoover

Resistance to the Journey Toward Wholeness (YouTube 7:38) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

**Activity:**

• Create your own list of ways that Unitarian Universalism has changed culturally since the merger. Circle the items that are a result of Anti-racist, anti-oppressive multicultural work.

# Building a Jubilee World

Read Chapter 11 of ***The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary*** by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer (17 pages)

The Impact of Jubilee (YouTube 9:48) Dr. Leon Spencer, Lutricia Callair, LCSW

Why Is It Called Jubilee? (YouTube 6:59) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

How Jubilee Impacts Congregations (YouTube 7:07) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

The Heart Work of Anti-Racism (YouTube 4:59) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

Final Reflections on Jubilee (YouTube 6:00)

# Resistance

Read Chapter 14 of The ***Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism, and the Journey from Calgary*** by Leslie Takahashi, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer (17 pages)

Thandeka’s Critique of the UUA's Anti-Racism Work (YouTube, 6:08) Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

White Resistance to Anti Racism (YouTube 7:34) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

Centering the White Experience While Decentering the Black Experience (YouTube 7:00) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

Response to Travon Martin’s Murder (YouTube 4:57) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Dr. Leon Spencer

**Discussion:**

* How has resistance shown up in your congregation?
* Describe how that resistance was overcome.

# What Now?

Avoid Getting Bogged Down in Our History of Racism (YouTube, 10:58) – Dr. Leon Spencer

Anti-racism - Whose Work? Whose Responsibility? (YouTube, 6:52) Dr. Leon Spencer, Lutricia Callair, LCSW

The Importance of Shared Ministry (YouTube 8:29) Lutricia Callair, LCSW , Rev. Mel Hoover, Dr. Leon Spencer

Shared Ministry in Charleston WV (YouTube 8:13) Rev. Mel Hoover

**Discussion:**

* What is your congregation doing to dismantle white supremacy?

# Additional Resources:

## Early Years

[Black Pioneers in a White Denomination](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Black-Pioneers-in-a-White-Denomination-P16859.aspx) Author: [Mark D. Morrison-Reed](https://www.uuabookstore.org/cw_contributorinfo.aspx?ContribID=3713&Name=Mark+D.+Morrison-Reed)

[Darkening the Doorways](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Darkening-the-Doorways-P17147.aspx) Author: [Mark D. Morrison-Reed](https://www.uuabookstore.org/cw_contributorinfo.aspx?ContribID=3713&Name=Mark+D.+Morrison-Reed)

## Civil Right Era

## Black Empowerment 1967-1980

[Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest for Racial Justice 1967-1982](https://www.uua.org/racial-justice/history/engaging/46951.shtml) (book and study guides)

[Unitarian Universalism and the Quest for Racial Justice](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Unitarian-Universalism-and-the-Quest-for-Racial-Justice-P16864.aspx)

[Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy:](https://www.uuabookstore.org/Revisiting-the-Empowerment-Controversy-P18363.aspx) Black Power and Unitarian Universalism by Mark Morrison Reed