



Teaching Truth for Young People

Trayce Potter

Minister for Youth and Young Adult Engagement

Time moves quickly. It seems like just yesterday I held a newborn in my arms for the first time and wondered about all the possibilities before him. In reality, a little over four years has passed and I am now at the stage of preparing both him and me for the transition to formal education. There is a small private school I have in mind, but this will also pose some challenges as the school is a predominantly white, upper-class private school for boys. I sat across from the admissions representative and asked her very straightforwardly about the school's curriculum when it comes to diversity, representation, and race. I needed to know that history would be taught accurately and that my son would hear about people who look like him more than in the month of February. While I was satisfied with the answers for this particular school, there are undoubtedly too many parents who are frustrated by attempts to [censure voices from the margins](#) or [attempts to erase truth](#).

I am far from an expert on critical race theory (CRT) and defer to my colleagues who have multiple degrees in the area. Essentially, CRT affirms that America—both society and its institutions—have been built on systems of racism that have allowed white supremacy to flourish unchecked. This keeps minorities in a state of oppression no matter how hard they work. Racism is a part of everyday life for many individuals, whether it is talked about or not.

Naturally, this idea can make people uncomfortable and want to shy away from the difficult conversations that it might lead to. White suburban moms have stormed school board meetings and demanded that their children be protected from CRT and any teaching that highlights the fact that certain groups enjoy privileges at the expense of another people. The claim is that many BIPOC voices and concepts of race are unfair because children are not ready for such heavy topics. What these individuals fail to realize is that black and brown children are never too young to experience the effects of racism firsthand.

There is a disconnect between my faith and what our young people are being

taught about history and/or themselves. My faith and what I tell young people centers around the belief that God desires for all of us to live a full and abundant life. If we can't even talk about the simple truths that have been created as a byproduct of racism, there will continue to be children who fail to experience all that life and God have to offer. There are no easy answers or ways to undo four hundred years of racism, neglect, and harm, but we also cannot pretend it never happened or just hope our children will remain innocent and unaware of differences.

My invitation to all of us, regardless of whether you have children or not, is to consistently advocate for our children. We are handing over a world to this generation without giving them the tools to thrive. And I know my four-year-old son and his best friend who looks nothing like him, and every child that God has entrusted to us communally, are worth doing the hard work to dismantle racism one truth at a time.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Trayce Potter is Minister for Youth and Young Adult Engagement for the United Church of Christ.

LEARN ucc.org/justice

DONATE ucc.org/donate

ARCHIVE
WFJ bit.ly/witness4justice

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.