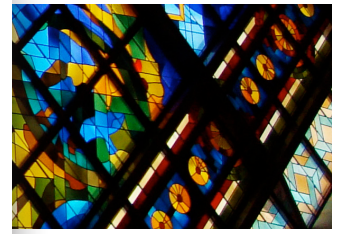




40 DAYS OF ENGAGEMENT on Anti-Racism



DAY 8

Racism, Poverty, and a Livable Income

Thea Sheridan-Jonah



Learning

Racism and poverty are linked. We know that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there are large numbers of racialized people who work in “essential” industries—who were often faced with a higher risk of exposure to COVID in their workplaces or the threat of losing their jobs. We know that racism restricts employment and education opportunities, which causes Indigenous and racialized people to work in lower-paying jobs or to be turned down for jobs they are qualified for due to race. We know that generational wealth is less accessible when Indigenous and racialized people must work to support themselves and cannot prepare or save for the future. We know that

Racism and poverty are linked; our activism against both must also be linked. One way we can begin this work is through advocacy for a guaranteed livable income.

in Canada, one in five racialized families live in poverty compared to one in twenty non-racialized families ([Canada Without Poverty](#)). In Canada, we must also recognize that ongoing colonization results in higher representation of Indigenous people in the prison system, and those who live in poverty and homelessness. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has repeatedly found that Canada racially discriminates against Indigenous children in terms of social welfare funding.

The statements above are broad strokes and do not describe the circumstances of all. Instead, they are patterns we must recognize so we can begin to dismantle them.

Current government social assistance in Canada is inadequate. For example, a single adult in Ontario receives \$733/month, which is below the poverty line. It is meant to support people who have no other options, to be the last resort, but this also means that it cannot help people improve their

Consider your monthly finances. With only \$733 a month, what expenses could you cover? What compromises would you need to make?

circumstances. Instead, it provides the bare minimum to survive.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the government supported Canadians in need with CERB payments of \$2000/month. This was an emergency response to the effects of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns on employment. Due to CERB, many people who never received government assistance now have some experience with it. There was confusion around how to get and apply for it, how it would be reflected in taxes, and how much you could make through employment without getting CERB payments restricted. This could give many the understanding needed to look at current government assistance through a more critical lens.

Current proposed guaranteed livable income, or GLI, is approximately \$1900/month. It is “guaranteed” because it will ensure that every month every person has at least \$1900. Therefore, the amount received will vary depending on financial circumstance, ensuring all people have at least \$1900. This amount is proposed to cover the cost of necessities (food, shelter, clothing, and transportation). This payment enables a person to not just survive but to live with dignity and contribute to the broader community through paid or volunteer work.

How does GLI connect to racism? As we know, racism and poverty cannot be separated. Racism, in direct and indirect ways, can worsen financial circumstances. From generational cycles of poverty, educational barriers, and higher representation in prisons, to intergenerational trauma impacting mental health and lack of opportunities for higher paying jobs and promotions, racism cannot be separated from poverty. The intersections of poverty and racism are a result of systemic oppression. Therefore, a systemic solution like GLI must be pursued.

There is power in connection; the intersection of poverty and racism is powerful. At the same time, we can use this power of connection to persist in the work of anti-racism, and to create meaningful solutions that address systemic issues from multiple levels. GLI is not the only avenue we must look into, but it is one we can use to advocate for a world built on love, equity, and justice.

GLI is a preventative measure, helping people build up to a place where they can support themselves, while knowing that there are supports in place when they cannot.



Faith Reflection

Let us build connection; let us be in relationship. The systems and circumstances that continue to oppress and disempower are connected; they work together and uplift each other. That is one of their greatest strengths. Therefore, we must do the same. We must work together and build relationships to fight against oppression.

God, help us to see the connection between racism and pov-

erty. Help us to come together to make change. We know you call on us to create a world built on love, equity, and justice. This means being in relationship and relying on each other to create this world. We must work together to uplift justice and equity. Help us to reflect on the relationships we build and the changes we want to see. Thank you for equipping us with all we need to create a world built on love, equity, and justice.



Children's Activity

Watch [Rosie's Story](#), a video that shares the experience of a young girl who experiences poverty and hunger. After viewing the video, invite wondering about it:

- I wonder... if you have ever felt so hungry that you couldn't concentrate at school.
- I wonder... what you would do if you found out one of your friends or classmates was hungry.
- I wonder... how our country or leaders could work together to make sure no child goes to school hungry.

You may want to talk with your child about how much your family spends on groceries every month and what percentage of your family income is spent on groceries.



Group Commitment

Before today, had you heard about a guaranteed livable income (GLI)? If you had, had you thought about how the need for GLI connects to racism?

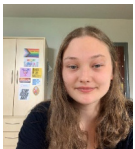
In what aspects of your life do you have a platform where you could advocate for a guaranteed livable income? Could you form a working group at your office, put together an advocacy group at your school, find a group or church

engaging in advocacy, ask your friends and family if they want to learn more, or send an email to your MP? How will you make a commitment to GLI advocacy as a part of your anti-racism advocacy?



Advocacy

- Take some time to read Karlene Cameron's blog: [Guaranteed Livable Income Always a Good Idea](#)
- Join with others across the Church and in civil society to call for a Guaranteed Livable Income.
- Churches across the country drew particular attention to this policy call on Sunday, October 17, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. You can continue to draw attention to this throughout the year! Find resources on the United Church [website](#).



Thea Sheridan-Jonah uses she/her pronouns, is 18 years old, and works as the Youth Social Justice Animator Intern at the General Council Office. Her home church is St. Paul's United Church in Oakville, Ontario. She has been part of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Executive. While she has moved to Vancouver to attend university, she hopes to continue her involvement in the United Church.

