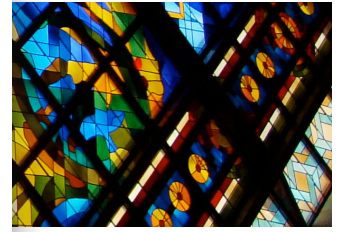




40 DAYS OF ENGAGEMENT on *Anti-Racism*



DAY 26

Indebtedness to the New Motherland

Emo Yango



Learning

Emo Yango

Many times, an incoming immigrant hired as a domestic helper through an international job employment agency is only too happy to arrive in what looks like pristine land—at least compared to the dusty surroundings of the old country.

"This new home will fulfill the promises of my dreams."

"If I work hard enough, there's much more benefits that this new home, the land of milk and honey, will afford me."

"Health care is free. My wage from work is enough for my daily expenses and I can still save to send money to my parents back home."

"Two years of perseverance and then I can petition for my husband and daughter to come here. There is much I am indebted to this country called Canada."

Ah, that word “indebtedness.” Viewed from the lens of immigrants coming from a very different economic set of circumstances, where government welfare provision is next to non-existent, arriving in Canada feels like winning the lottery. There is much to owe the new motherland.

Never mind that some migrants in Canada don't know Canada's history of nation-building. This work of construction continues to oppress the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Along the way, it constructed a humanitarian image to the rest of the world while hiding its participation in the enslavement of people of African-descent. Tucked further underneath these layers of colonial history are discriminatory attitudes against Chinese, Jews, Japanese, Muslims, and Black people, just to name a few.

A point for reflection:

How can you free yourself from being complicit to Canada's colonial history in order to help dismantle racism and this history of oppression?

For some new immigrants in this country, feeling indebted to their new home means remaining unaware of the history of oppression of Canada. The benefits outweigh paying attention to truth that would detract them from fulfilling their dreams. Their indebtedness is to the generosity they feel Canada has provided them—history be damned. Hence, lost and willfully left unheard are the victimizing stories that built the nation of Canada.

This is the picture of complicity that makes immigrants pawns to the country's colonial history.



Faith Reflection

Emo Yango

Read Genesis 10:10-20. What factors cause Abram to claim Sarai as his sister instead of his wife? If you are an immigrant, how much of your personal identity have you given up or lost just so you can enjoy the benefits of being complicit?



Children's Activity

Emo Yango

There was a time when the weather was so dry there was no water for the crops, and so there was little food. One day, Abram, with his wife Sarai, decided to travel very far to a place where the food was not affected by the dry weather. The ruler of this place was attracted to Sarai and wanted to have her as his wife. When the ruler asked Abram about Sarai, Abram said she was his sister. The ruler decided to marry Sarai, but then

he became very sick. Somehow, he was sick because Abram was hiding something about Sarai. When the ruler found out that Sarai was Abram's wife, he let Abram take back Sarai and told them to leave his kingdom.

- What do you think Abram would get by lying about Sarai being his sister?
- What do you think Abram would lose by lying about Sarai being his sister?

- If you, your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were immigrants, why do you think they came to Canada? (This is a good time to ask your family about why they came to Canada.)



Group Commitment

Emo Yango

If you or your family are immigrants, how can you free yourself from being complicit to Canada's colonial history in order to help

dismantle racism and this history of oppression? What might you commit to doing in response?



Advocacy

Emo Yango

What advocacy might you do to work towards learning and teaching about the oppressive history of nation-building of Canada?



Emo Yango is originally from the Philippines. He works at the national office of The United Church of Canada where his work portfolio includes racial justice and intercultural ministries.

He had previously worked overseas in international development in various inter-faith contexts.

