

400 YEARS OF TALK:

BERMUDA'S CONVERSATIONS ON RACE AND THE "CONVERSATION PROJECT, BERMUDA"

In responding to an invitation to lead a session on engaging and enriching dialogic practice that leads to constructive conversations in organisations, families, and amongst communities, I prepared this case study for the Taos Institute/Houston Galveston Institute Conference, "Dialogues that Deliver: Generative Practices in Collaboration, Conflict and Community" held 25th-28th September, 2008 in Sarasota, Florida. The study celebrates Bermuda's 400th Anniversary in 2009 and traces community and organizational responses to racial conflict in our small island community; highlighting specific interactions and interventions over time, throughout our country's rich history.

Narratives of Bermuda

"Any review of the human rights situation in Bermuda needs to bear in mind the territory's painful racial history, which is still a strong legacy today. Slavery [in Bermuda] was abolished in 1834. It was followed by a period of... [state-sanctioned] racial segregation, which lasted until 1956, ending as a result of a theatre boycott. White and black Bermudians over 50 years old remember a segregated Bermuda very clearly. The fault lines of racial politics are fraught with sensitivities, and they sometimes make impartial dialogue on the current human rights situation difficult".

- Social Development Direct,
September 2002

A small island community steeped in a tradition of courtesies and service, for some, Bermuda is located some 1050 kilometers off the U.S. east coast, approximately two hours by jet from New York City. The Island has a population of roughly 62,049, roughly 55 percent of who are black, 35 percent white¹ and 10 percent of mixed-race and others (Bermuda Census 2000). The population is also significantly broken down by two additional categories: Bermudians, in the most simplistic but not a simple term to truly operationalise, those who are British citizens who hold Bermudian status; and

¹ Again, "white", "whiteness" or "white people" as of those persons, typically of European descent, who are able, by virtue of skin color or perhaps national origin or cultures, to be perceived as "white" members of the dominant group. In the context of this story, "White" has no biological basis but acquires meaning in social terms and in reference to how white people access certain privileges in a racialised, class-based or patriarchal system.

non-Bermudians, people who are expatriates, guest workers and their families, who can stay on the island and work for a time-limited period².

When the island was first discovered by Juan de Bermudes in 1511, Bermuda was uninhabited; its first permanent settlers were Englishmen shipwrecked on the island in 1609. The British Crown made its first legal claim to the island in 1612 by issuing a charter to the Somers Islands Company that gave British settlers a right to land backed by British law. Bermuda was subsequently declared a Crown colony in 1684. As was the case with the colonies established in North America by British settlers in the same period, the island began to develop its own institutions of self-government. A parliament was established in 1620, giving Bermuda the third oldest extant parliament after Britain and Denmark.

Bermuda has been described as an extremely prosperous community with one of the highest per capita incomes in the world and a low unemployment rate. The Island's prosperity is tied to the insurance and tourism industries, and foreign investment through highly favorable tax laws for both corporations and individuals. Bermuda has no individual income tax, corporate profits tax, nor capital gains tax; with most government revenue coming from import tariffs, property taxes and a payroll tax.

Bermuda was for many years a democracy without a constitution. In 1966, however, a constitutional conference was convened under the auspices of the British Government at Bermuda's request, which led to the adoption of a written constitution in 1968. The constitution formalises Bermuda's system of internal government as well as its relationship with Britain.

An overseas territory of the United Kingdom, Bermuda's citizens are not necessarily citizens of Britain, a situation that was somewhat modified in April of 2002, whereby Bermudians could acquire a British passport. However, Bermudians do not vote in British elections. Yet the fundamental democratic principle that adults should not be the subject of law without the right of representation in making those laws is preserved because: 1) Bermuda is largely self-governing, with only limited powers reserved for Britain, and 2) those powers reserved for Britain were approved by democratically-elected representatives of Bermuda's citizenry when Bermuda's parliament ratified the constitution in 1968. The Government of Bermuda may request the convening of a special inter-governmental conference with Britain to consider independence. Britain has made clear that, should the people of Bermuda indicate a preference for

² Much of this description and history of Bermuda is excerpted from Edward Walker's 1995 treatment of Britain's self-governing territories²

independence, Britain would honor that wish. In this sense, Bermuda is “sovereign” but not independent. Bermuda possesses a right to define its own political and legal status and is autonomous in many respects. But, Britain guarantees Bermuda’s external security and domestic order, and represents the dependent territory with foreign governments and international organisations. Bermuda is in practice as close to being fully independent as possible without actually being so (Walker, 1995).

“Ground breaking” Conversations: Slavery, Racism and Requisite Silences

Between 1616 and 1623, a working population was brought to Bermuda as indentured servants. It is unclear when servants became slaves (Simon, 2001) but in 1623, legislation was introduced to control Negroes, who were recorded as being slaves. 1656 saw all free Blacks banished from Bermuda³. Emancipation, the freeing of slaves, did not occur until 1834 but segregation continued until 1959.

These are just a few of the historical events that led up to the establishment of Bermuda’s constitution in 1968. Others, like the campaign for universal adult suffrage and the movement for racial equality, were “closely intertwined and had been spawned by longstanding injustices passed down as historical legacies from earlier administrations” (Smith, 2000, p. 4).

For many years after 1620, white male property owners controlled Bermuda’s Legislature, a state of affairs which accorded them a dominant role in the running of the Island’s affairs. Just prior to Emancipation Day on 1st August 1834, an Act was passed which doubled the property qualifications for voting in elections and from running for parliament and other important public office, making it abundantly clear that the Legislature of the day wanted to protect the status quo and guard against too rapid an assumption of political influence by the ex-slaves. The existence of a property qualification for voting and other privileges was instrumental in perpetuating the colony’s owner structure over the years and went a long way towards explaining why racial discrimination and segregationist practices persisted for so long after slavery had officially ended in Bermuda. Against that backdrop, it is also easy to understand why the greatest impetus for change and progress came from Bermuda’s black community” (Smith, 2000).

³ Beyond the scope of this paper, Bermuda’s legislative and racial history is well documented by: James Smith, *Slavery in Bermuda*”; Dr. Eva Hodgson, *Second Class Citizens, First Class Men*; Virginia Bernhard, *Slaves and Slaveholders in Bermuda 1616-1782*; William Zuill, *The Story of Bermuda and her People*; George Rushe, *Bermuda as a Matter of Fact* and many others.

Since emancipation in 1834, black versus white⁴ issues have continued to figure prominently in Bermuda elections and social life, with the black population experiencing minimal representation until the second half of the 20th century, when in 1953 an unprecedented 9 blacks were elected to the House of Parliament (Smith, 2000).

The 1959 Theatre Boycott, Bermuda

A historical milestone of black pride was the 1959 Theatre Boycott; a protest by black moviegoers that brought about the end of official racial segregation in restaurants, hotels, and schools. The two main movie theatres had segregated seating with the balcony and centre section reserved for those whose skin was white and the rest of the theatre was open to those whose skin was darker. Segregation ran throughout Bermudian society and a then anonymous group, the Progressive Group⁵, decided to organize a boycott of the theatres.

Many of its members were university graduates, including Georgine and Hilton Hill, Carol Hill, and Eva Robinson, who had returned home after studying overseas and vowed to make much needed changes to their homeland⁶. They had been meeting regularly and in secret at the Flatts home of Rosalind and Edouard Williams, where they formulated plans for a total transformation of the society⁷. They decided on a date for the start of the boycott and on the eve of Day One, working under cover of darkness, they blanketed the island with flyers that urged patrons to stay away from theatres to protest the Theatre's segregationist policies. The boycott began on June 15, 1959.

The ticket offices of the Bermudiana Theatre were picketed (Front Street). The picketers all members of the New Theatre Guild, the group that had been formed, in part, with a plan to bring in well-known professional actors from overseas. When

⁴ The white Bermudian population is described in most historical text as divided by class, but ultimately synonymous with wealth or potential for economic prosperity. The class lines demarcated a difference between aristocratic whites (descendents of the first seventeenth century English settlers and the ruling class for more than 300 years) and the English, Irish, Scottish and Americans brought to Bermuda as labourers in agriculture, construction and later civil servants, teachers, police, doctors, nurses and executives. The Portuguese immigrants were among this second-wave of workers, becoming established as another significant sub-grouping of Bermuda's population. The Portuguese have also had a history of second-class citizenship in Bermuda; initially being barred from immigrating with their families. Herein, the country's racial hierarchy is interwoven with hierarchy. Note that the process took into consideration significant discourse on adult suffrage and gender representation through history.

⁵ Members included: Stanley Ratterary, Rosalind and Edouard Williams, Clifford Wade, Marva Phillips, Coleridge Williams, Rudolph and Vera Commissiong, Clifford and Florenz Maxwell, Eugene Woods, Esme and Lancelot Swan, Dr. Erskine Simmons, William Francis, William Walwyn and Gerald and Izola Harvey

⁶ Some references extracted from remarks made by Jay A. Butler, 28th July 2008, during a Friendly Society March commencing Emancipation Day 2008.

⁷ The Friendly Societies of Bermuda had also played a significant role in dismantling discrimination. The first of these organizations were originally created prior to Emancipation (1834) and more created post-Emancipation. Friendly Societies provided support for the Black community in various ways including organising money lending schemes, establishing schools and churches and fostering the performing arts.

inquiring as to how members could purchase tickets, they were told by the Bermudiana Theatre that they had to be members, a category reserved only for those of unmixed European descent. Momentum gathered, slowly but surely, stoked by orators Kingsley Tweed, Robert Smith, Richard Lynch and Kenny Ebbin.

The numbers of people who began mingling outside theatres in Hamilton increased; there were heated debates in Parliament—where blacks were in the minority—and promises that blacks would be able to sit anywhere they wanted when the new Rosebank Theatre was completed.

James Pearman, president of the company that owned the theatres, famously misread the social temperature—he described the boycott as “a storm in a teacup.”

Soon theatres were empty and owners were left with no choice but to close them. Georgine Hill and Evelyn MacLaurin, the President of the Canadian University Women’s Association who was then visiting Bermuda, authored numerous letters of protest and the group’s cause attracted international coverage, with Actor’s Equity in the U.S. voicing their support. The matter was eventually raised in Parliament and in the UK and the Governor of Bermuda was later instructed only to attend on nights open to the general public. Victory came with a dramatic capitulation—owners announced that theatres would reopen on July 2, the next season, and that blacks would be able to sit anywhere they wanted. Hotels and restaurants followed suit.

Two weeks after the boycott began the hotels, restaurants and movie theatres all were desegregating. Movie theatres reopened with open seating after what was described as a fatal blow to segregation in Bermuda.

Crucial to the boycott’s success were soapbox orators, among them Kingsley Tweed, Kenny Ebbin, Richard “Comrade” Lynch and Robert “Jungle Bunny” Smith, who delivered electrifying speeches outside the theatres.

The peaceful revolution marked the beginning of the end of segregation and members of the Progressive Group got on with their lives. They were never officially recognized until the 40th anniversary of the boycott in 1999, when social activist Glenn Fubler organized a tribute for surviving members on the steps of Hamilton City Hall, on behalf of the organization Beyond Barriers. The boycott was also the subject of Errol Williams’ documentary *When Voices Rise...*, which premiered at the Bermuda International Film Festival in 2002, when it won the Audience Choice Award.

On 2nd July 2008, a ceremony commemorating the 49th anniversary of the Theatre Boycott took place at Bermuda’s City Hall, organized by Imagine Bermuda 2009.

Several members of the group had recently returned to Bermuda after completing college studies overseas and vowed to challenge the injustices of Bermuda's society,

including racial segregation, which they had left behind.

The leader was dentist and UBP politician Stanley Ratteray, who died five years ago. After months of secret meetings, members of the Group, under cover of darkness, blanketed the island with flyers, urging people to boycott movie theatres to protest separate seating for whites and blacks.

Over the course of two weeks, audiences dwindled and theatres were forced to close their doors. When they re-opened on July 2, the group had secured a major victory- open seating.

Mr. Fubler said that victory had a domino effect- hotels and restaurants followed suit and opened their doors to blacks.

The boycott was the subject of Errol Williams' documentary *When Voices Rise*, a documentary that premiered in May 22, 2002, which won the Audience Choice Award at the 2002 Bermuda International Film Festival.

The dialogue on race, diversity and the island's rich culture and potential continued with efforts from both public and private sector. On 25th September of 2004, Limey in Bermuda journalist and blogger Phillip Wells reports on a meeting of *Imagine Bermuda 2009*, a community group that aims to inspire change, to celebrate the accomplishments of people in the local and world-wide community and to highlight aspects of Bermuda's past as a way of building bridges to the future⁸, and says,

"There's a reason why I'm a writer and not a politician. I'm much more comfortable debating ideas online than I am discussing them with a room full of strangers. So it was with mounting panic that I realised that the meeting of Imagine Bermuda 2009, which I attended in St. George's earlier this week, was going to involve audience participation.

The initiative's aim is to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the settling of Bermuda and the 50th anniversary of the Theatre Boycott by encouraging Bermudians to come up with ideas for improving their local communities and by extension, that of Bermuda as a whole. The project is just one of a number of Imagine initiatives that have run worldwide, starting with the Imagine Chicago project back in 1992. Thursday night's meeting was the first of many that are planned to take place across the Island over the coming months and years....

... it soon emerged that the purpose of the evening was to initiate a dialogue on how to improve life in St. George's. Facilitator Janet Ferguson passed around a

⁸ Glen Fubler, Chair, *Imagine Bermuda 2009*

set of handouts containing four questions to provide some structure to the discussion; first we answered the questions on our own, next we discussed our responses in pairs, then finally the pairs came together in larger groups to summarise the suggestions and present them to the whole audience. It was like being back at school. **We were encouraged to focus only on the positive, listen to each other respectfully and engage our imaginations.**

*Initially, I was disappointed by this emphasis on the local: I had been expecting to consider the bigger picture. But as the evening wore on I began to realise the merit in this approach. The purpose of the Imagine Bermuda meetings is to get local residents excited about improving their own neighbourhood. **It's about motivating people to change the things they can**, about making a thousand small improvements to improve the quality of life rather than trying to solve one or two big problems Island-wide. There was certainly no shortage of ideas about how to improve St. George's. Introducing a ferry service to Hamilton was a recurring suggestion, as was reopening the old Club Med hotel and pedestrianising the Town Square. People suggested creating a youth centre, running a treasure hunt for children, having more al fresco dining and adding planters to make the town greener.*

If Imagine Bermuda can inspire enough people to campaign for change, the Island stands to benefit enormously..."

The political scene in Bermuda changed dramatically in 1998 when the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party won the General Election with a total of 26 out of 40 seats, and the United Bermuda Party assumed the role of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition for the first time in their 35 years of existence. Given that Bermuda is a country with a black majority; the Government employs a majority of Black employees. Numerous senior and executive management positions are held by women. The 1998 election results meant that for the first time in Bermuda's history, the government of the day was actually racially representative of the historically disadvantaged black working class. This change in power meant that Black people were represented by a black and purportedly working-class party for the first time in the country's history. In fact, so great was the described phenomenon of a change in focus on race, that discussions on race prior to 1998 have been anecdotally described as the "black monologue". A fairly common belief amongst some is that it was only post 9th November 1998 that "*race relations*" became an issue for the population as a whole, black, **white** and other, to tackle.

A Narrative Tradition... a Tradition of Silence?

Thus, the social, cultural and racial history of Bermuda has played an instrumental and relational role in the content and means of community discourse. Simon (2001) refers to a 'trend of silence' as a resultant phenomenon of the way people in Bermuda relate their experiences. She describes Bermudians as private people, a probable consequence

of the challenges to the “linguistic historicity” taking a rightful place amongst the Bermuda’s holistic national space. The social tensions between Bermudians and non-Bermudians, blacks and whites have been defined by historians, such as Margaret Straight, as an undefined phenomenon (Simon, 2001).

Tom Vesey, a prominent journalist in Bermuda, writes in a column in 1998,

"When I moved back from the States to Bermuda a decade ago, I was absolutely amazed how scared people were of speaking" and "it would be interesting to hear... from some of the speakers... what price do they think they have paid, if any, for speaking their minds..." He hints that we can never underestimate the significance of Bermuda being a small place and that "of all the methods of reprisal... they may keep their mortgage and they may keep their job... But they fear reprisal—and they won't speak again... the most common is just being criticised... How can we expect honest talk if we berate people for speaking?"

The narrative tradition has been one where the nation’s space (media, literature, arenas of public and private discourse) has begun to echo refrains of the historical oral but privileged narrative tradition. Soundings of what was once inhibited or suppressed appear quite frequently in the local media, giving voice to a number of Bermudian perspectives, incomparable in some ways to any other country (Burchall, 2004).

On nationalism and the consequences of becoming a fully independent country, privileged narrative in the media speaks volumes (Cox, 2003). The pros and cons of independence are debated in the media. Some link the need for Bermuda’s independence to enhancing feelings of national pride. John Zuill (May, 2004), social commentator submits that the debate of independence is truly a race issue; a response to slavery and the “deep rifts it made in [the] culture”. Zuill (May, 2004) also refers to the consequences of a cycle of blame and mistrust, which ultimately begins and ends with everyone who participates in the dialogue. The will of the people, which will ultimately determine Bermuda’s status, echoes multiple sentiments, grounded in all manner of relational interactions⁹.

Race issues are voiced in similar ways by members of the public. In describing his new vision for Bermuda, former premier of Bermuda and prominent businessman John Swan

⁹ Racism may now be about intelligent and powerful people of all races choosing to ignore equality policies and imperatives (Gonzalez, 2002; Jacques, 2003), perhaps believing that the policies themselves or their actions are insignificant. Mark Gonzalez writes powerful commentary on racism in the face of constitutional duty and breakdown; making an argument for how public opinion, individual or corporate interest puts the integrity of jurisprudence at risk. This situation can occur even with standing legislation enacted specifically to protect racial minorities.

criticises the Opposition for lacking representation consistent with the population demographics while he commends the Government for doing a better job of embracing all Bermudians (2004). Tying the race issue with politics, he calls for open scrutiny/transparency in government processes through more dialogue. Senator Kim Swan (2003) accuses the Government of associating the Opposition with 300 years of overt racism, even though many of [the] early founders played key roles integrating Bermuda. Zuill (June, 2004) illustrates the cross-sectional nature of race and politics in Bermuda with the following observation:

"There was a time in Bermuda when factions were of one race [white] or the other [black]. That made sense because people's racial lives were profoundly different and laws and social practice deliberately divided people into races. This political tendency among Bermudian citizens is still strong today. The habit of congregating in racial groups before dividing into groups based on opinion necessarily divided the power of any political cause to race. The two races develop distinct political vocabularies and by this division a governmental party effort can easily subvert the intent of any faction of ordinary citizens. Both parties rely on racial division to breakdown factions into easily manipulated parts. ...Party politics in Bermuda has stultified the natural expression of political movements, of which its factions, should have worked in the production of good government".

This rich cultural context of Bermuda, the landscape of dialogue, drove change in the form of revolution, the adoption of legislative freedoms and protections, policy and programme initiatives. In 2000, the Government reported:

"As regards the positive advancement of good relations among persons of different racial groups, and specifically the promotion of multiculturalism and the elimination of barriers between races, the Committee's attention is drawn not only to the functions exercised directly by the Human Rights Commission and by CURE but also to the work which the latter has done, and is doing, with a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Among these are the Department of Education (whose Multicultural Education Committee assists with the implementation of a multicultural school curriculum that builds acceptance of others and dispels racial and ethnic myths and stereotypes); the Department of Health (whose Health for Success Committee promotes racial and ethnic considerations as important aspects of the promotion of health in public schools); the Bermuda College (whose Future Search Planning Committee has assisted in organising a workshop to bring together 2—participants of diverse backgrounds to discuss various aspects of Bermudian life and gain consensus on plans for Bermuda's future); the Racism Committee of the Anglican Church; the National Training Laboratory; the National Association of Reconciliation; the Baha'i Community; and the "Beyond Barriers". The four last-mentioned organisations and groups co-operated with CURE and a number of other interested groups and individuals in jointly sponsoring a "Day of Dialogue Committee" which helped to bring together more than 100 persons to focus on the issue of race. The establishment of CURE has itself led to the growth and development of a

variety of multiracial organisations and movements. In this connection it may be mentioned that, some four or five years ago, CURE, in partnership with the Bermuda College, the National Training Laboratory and members of the business community, created and funded a Diversity Skills Development Programme which, in the years 1995-1997, operated intensive sessions in the course of which some 90 persons were trained as facilitators.

These persons in turn conducted a series of diversity training courses throughout the community. In 1998, the graduates of the Programme, together with interested persons, formed the Diversity Institute of Bermuda, a non-profit organisation committed to creating, through education and research, an environment that promotes awareness and appreciation of human diversity”.

-as reported in the United Kingdom’s Fifteenth Periodic Report under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Part II: Overseas Territories, February 2000.

From the late 60’s to the late 90’s, Bermuda was host to over 50 dialogues and conversations, including the dialogues that led to the formation of Bermuda’s only statutory agency tasked with dealing with race issues, the Commission for Unity and Racial Equality or CURE (see annexes for a summary on the “origins of CURE).

For example, the Diversity Institute of Bermuda pioneered the Diversity Skills Development programme. Its objective was to produce a core group of profoundly aware and well-trained individuals who could present programmes examining the dimensions of diversity in their workplaces and community organisations. Intensive sessions were run each year from 1995 through 1997 and ninety-one people successfully completed the programme. At the end of the 1997 programme, graduates from all sessions along with members of the community held a dialogic-based Future Search conference to determine next steps. They decided to establish a Diversity Institute, and an Action Planning Team was formed with a mandate to make it a reality. In doing so, the participants essentially agreed that each time they meet a friend and offer their story; they want to involve them in the learning and the discovery— understanding and valuing the differences amongst people. DIB contracted with the Ministry of Education and the police service to provide training in diversity; providing volunteer facilitators from among the graduates of the earliest Diversity Training Programmes and over time, launching a programme in the high schools and collaborating with the Government of Bermuda on a leadership forum.

Despite these efforts, a fundamental burning issue remained with Bermuda and its people- a narrative of unresolved racial tension and claims of life stories unheard.

The Issue and a new Challenge: CURE in 2004

A new vision of equality recognizes that a common and inclusive principle of equality unites and underpins all of the protected diversities, and many of the unprotected and unacknowledged ones, and is fundamental to participation in Bermudian society. Attacks on a problem require only that people of good will desire a solution.

Unknown author

In January of 2004, in collaboration with Stir Fry Seminars and Consulting, CURE hosted a Leadership Diversity workshop, the second of its kind in Bermuda. The first, an event held in the 1990's, invited leaders of the community to engage in discussions on how to improve race relations on the island, and to then take action in whatever sphere of work/life space they could¹⁰. The opening communication stressed that diversity and equality are human and deeply personal issues and asked participants to recognize that discrimination of all kinds is experienced in largely different ways, with largely different outcomes. The challenge for the event, a challenge to leaders, "to demonstrate an understanding of the needs and sensitivities of all Bermuda's communities; to respect and honour past sufferings and to welcome racial diversity" (Event promotional material). The commitment from the CURE team, in describing the event was summarized in the following statement:

"Dealing with issues of race and ethnicity can be intimidating for many. Some people can become anxious because this subject deals with deeply held values and assumptions. Creating a safe environment is paramount to the success of these sessions. We will do this by modeling respect, assisting you in exploring your own values and perspectives, and managing conflict productively".

The Leadership Diversity Training programme of 2004 was a three day experiential programme in which participants, again from positions of leadership, were asked to "stay in the room" to explore and problem solve on the real and perceived challenges of eradicating discrimination and enhancing relationships between people of different races, ethnicities and diversities.

Participants were guided through a series of dialogic processes aimed at broadening personal perspectives on culture, bias and internalized messages, knowing what an ally is and how to become one and learning how to openly talk about diversity issues. They talked about how conflict was dealt with in their families of origin, pain, anger and fear. They asked questions of themselves and each other. From person of African/Irish descent came the question of "why do you feel that all black people think the same" for

¹⁰ The planning guidelines for the 2001 forum indicates that the organizers were aiming to help participants experience a spiritual shift in how they conduct themselves, through dialogue; to get leaders in the community involved in the discourse so that they can "move" the issue of conduct in the community and to encourage reflection on the dimensions [diversities] that they felt most shape their sense of who they are at a deeper and fundamental level (Code of Conduct Roundtable "Prep Session" Agenda, 13th March 2001).

a response from a white person. The same person expressed a wish to be asked or to say, "I would like to tell whites that I want to embrace all sides of my heritage and I don't hate them". From a white person to a black person, "Will it ever be possible for a black to look at a white without resentment and for a white to look at a black without guilt? How do we get there?" And from a Cuban/German/American to black people, "What can I do, if anything, to cease being the enemy?", who also wished to be asked "How does it feel to be feared or deemed to be intimidating, when it is the last thing you want to be?"¹¹.

As outcomes, participants indicated that they want to see the Bermudian community operating from a principle of equity for all human beings. There were several wishes for open communication, future dialogue and more community forums from which to continue to ask and receive responses to "burning questions". Participants made the following remarks:

- *"This [workshop] was necessary and went right to the root- it has to go to the whole community"*
- *"I wish for more than one day or a small group to continue the discussion. Let's get more of the population involved"*
- *"I broke out into tear a number of times, feeling total empathy with some of the [participants] and people in the film"*
- *"I was hoping that as community leaders, we would leave with a strategy and a way of dealing with specific issues. In positions of leadership, we will ensure that there is a minimum standard for what is acceptable [in our organisations]. We didn't get that".*
- *"We should have a full public debate on the issue- in the press, on TV, radio and the institutions".*
- *"Our leaders must sit down and agree to remove racism and [racially discriminatory] references from their daily dialogue. We cannot make comments that are insensitive or offense".*
- *"We need more of these sessions, more participation and more acceptance of the existence of the problem. We also need to get the folks who would not want to come, to come".*

Described as a stunning success, the CURE team collated the feedback (annexed) of over 100 participants and began to make plans for other initiatives.

What Next?: The Premise for Facilitating Conversations

¹¹ A full list of participants' "Burning Questions" and feedback on the event can be found in the annexes.

If you are serious about tackling race issues, what do you do? Well let's consider what we do when we are serious about achieving anything. We define what it is we want to achieve. We break down the steps that we will have to do to achieve it. We may list some obstacles and we make a plan. So, as messengers for change, as change agents in the racial landscape, we need to do the same things. What are we trying to say to people that will make a difference in how they think and behave on race issues. What else can we say about racism that will have meaning? What would you, personally, need to hear to feel motivated to become part of a change process? What captures what we do and resonates with people in their everyday lives.

-CURE team meeting discussions that led to the development of the "Conversation Project"

Following the Leadership Forum, and reviewing the participant feedback, it was clear that there was a call for more dialogue in and amongst the community on race and diversity issues. Upon reflection, CURE team members realized that CURE had initiated several programs that had children and youth as their focus, leaving an opportunity to develop an initiative for adults. "As a team, we spurred ourselves on, trying to think of ways that we could change our world from where we stood", said team member, Darnell Harvey.

The questions, concerns and areas for further potential dialogue had been clearly identified by Leadership Diversity participants. These individuals had participated in an exercise facilitated by diversity trainer, Lee Mun Wah of Stir Fry Consulting Seminars, entitled "The Burning Question". Some of the burning questions were adapted to become the premise of our first "conversation", of what was to become, the "Conversation Project". They were:

- *What is your perspective on race issues in Bermuda today?*
- *What will have to happen for people to stop stereotyping?*
- *What is a Bermudian? What does it mean to be a Bermudians?*
- *What role does class play in the lives of blacks amongst blacks?*
- *Do we really want to integrate or would we be satisfied with segregation as long as there is economic equality?*
- *How has "race" played a part in your life- if at all? Is racism a problem in today's Bermuda?*
- *Will it be possible to look at each other without guilt or resentment? How? How can white people cease being the enemies?*
- *To what degree do you think racial discrimination is a problem for Bermuda?*

- *If so, how is it experienced?*
- *Do people really care about race issues? If not, what will it take for people to care? Why do you think racism, or the perception of, still exists?*
- *What should be done to move forward, in your opinion?*
- *Why, in a small place like Bermuda, can we not solve this problem of racism?*

These were but a few (see annex for the complete list of questions derived from the “burning question” exercise). The people who eventually joined us for the “conversation” were asked to reflect on their racial lives. We challenged them with the task of engaging in open, honest and authentic dialogue- and, to stay in the room with the other people, who may be very different from themselves. Their sincerity and courage helped us to encourage other members of the community to join us in upcoming sessions.

The planned “conversation” was also loosely structured around work that had been done in 1989 by Laura and Richard Chasin, Sally Roth and their colleagues at the Public Conversations Project in Watertown, Massachusetts¹². The project group attempted to bring together committed activists on opposing sides of the abortion conflict; a debate that has led nowhere, “largely because the opponents construct reality and morality in entirely different ways” (Gergen, 1999, p155). Activists who were willing to discuss the issues with their opponents were brought together in small groups. The project guaranteed that they would not have to participate in any activity which they found uncomfortable.

*“The meeting began with a buffet dinner, in which the participants were asked to share various aspects of their lives **other than** their stand on the abortion issue. After dinner, the facilitator invited the participants into “a different kind of conversation.” They were asked to speak as unique individuals- about their own experiences and ideas – rather than as representatives of a position – to share their thoughts and feelings, and to ask questions about which they were curious. As the session began, the participants were asked to respond – each in turn and without interruption – to three major questions:*

¹² Gergen, K. (1999). An invitation to social construction, ‘Dialogic Potentials’. Thousand Oaks, CA, London: Sage Publications.

1. *How did you get involved with this issue? What's your personal relationship, or personal history with it?*
2. *Now we'd like to hear a little more about your particular beliefs and perspectives about the issues surrounding abortion. What is at the heart of the matter for you?*
3. *Many people we've talked to have told us that within their approach to this issue they find some gray areas, some dilemmas about their own beliefs or even some conflicts... Do you experience any pockets of uncertainty or lesser certainty, any concerns, value conflicts, or mixed feelings that you may have and wish to share?*

Answers to the first two questions typically yielded a variety of personal experiences, often stories of great pain, loss and suffering. Participants also revealed many doubts, and found themselves surprised to learn that people on the other side had any uncertainties at all.

After addressing the three questions, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions of each other. They were requested not to pose questions that "are challenges in disguise," but to ask questions "about which you are genuinely curious ..." After discussing a wide range of issues important to participants, there was a final discussion of what the participants had done to "make the conversation go as it has." Follow-up phone calls a few weeks after each session revealed lasting, positive effects. Participants felt they left with a more complex understanding of the struggle and a significantly re-humanised view of "the other." No, they did not change their fundamental views, but they no longer saw the issues in such black and white terms or those who disagreed as demons.

Source: Ken Gergen in An invitation to social construction, 1999

A Process and the Vision

In planning the "Conversation Project, Bermuda", we wanted to create a space where people from a wide range of experiences participate in a lively, spirited semi-facilitated dialogue or conversation to:

1. Share and challenge perceptions and increase understanding of issues that "divide" the community;

2. Increase public knowledge and awareness on issues that arose from the diversity workshop and ultimately to;
3. Engage both participants and the public in an ongoing dialogue on the personal experience of race, diversity & discrimination.

And with these ideas in mind, the "Project" came to life for us.

The "Conversation Project Bermuda": the conversations begin... again

"Dear Brenda, I enclose a DVD copy of CURE's 1st episode of "The Conversation Project", executive produced by CURE and directed by Tim Darrell of Creative Force Productions. We would like to air this show within the first week of April, 2005..."

There are three episodes of "The Conversation Project". The other two are being edited and will follow shortly. There is a possibility that these episodes will be aired during the public forums CURE has been asked to host, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, during the visit of Amistad America in May 2005

-Memo to the Director of Human Affairs from the
Executive Officer of CURE, Myra Virgil, 4th March 2004



"And so, we have gathered a group of people together today, and more for upcoming months, to continue these conversations on our understandings of our racial lives. We've challenged them with the task of engaging in open, honest and authentic dialogue- and, to stay in the room with these people, who may be very different from themselves. We challenge, you as viewers, to respond with your questions, comments and feedback. So on behalf of the Commission and the Diversity Institute of Bermuda, we present to you, "The Conversation Project". -
excerpt from Introductory Remarks, Myra Virgil, Executive Officer, CURE

The Conversation Project was a facilitated dialogue. The program ended up becoming a joint effort between the Diversity Institute of Bermuda and the Commission for Unity and Racial Equality (CURE) - a team of employees and volunteers that described themselves as having as their focus: to promote best race relations between people of different races; to tackle institutional and workplace discrimination; and to promote equal and fair employment opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged in the workforce.

The initial communication to potential participants invited people to speak freely and openly:

"I can not emphasize enough how much of a free-flowing conversation we hope this to be. You do not have to prepare anything. We have asked you to participate because you are important members and voices of our

community- in and of yourselves. We hope that you will simply come as you are and speak from your hearts. ...the ultimate goal is to have members of Bermuda's community hear your conversation and want to become a part of it.

- Letter to participants from Myra Virgil,

1st October 2004

We aimed to challenge personal biases and prejudices; to deliver on the requests from members of the community for more opportunities to dialogue- on Bermuda, on race issues- **with** residents of Bermuda. To have conversations amongst community members and to have these individuals represent a perspective of their lives, as racial beings in Bermuda.

At the very beginning, the excitement around the project was evident. Jo-Ann Pully, a volunteer conversation facilitator writes a friend and former Diversity Institute colleague, Mike DeSilva after the first filming and says,

"...please accept this [email] as a belated thank you for agreeing to become involved. The session on Sunday was GREAT! It was videotaped at ACE, 9 participants, 2 facilitators (bBrenda Dale and myself), and we talked about race and diversity for nearly 3.5 hours. Just plain talk, talk if you know what I mean – sharing stories, experiences and the like..."

(12th October 2004)

The participants took some time to "get into the conversations", making initial comments like, "in Bermuda, it's [presumably the community, the social networks and political affiliations] split along racial lines" and speaking on the social climate, "hey, do you want to keep having that uncomfortable feeling? You know."; and "We owe it to ourselves as a community [to have this conversation]. By session three, there is much more intimacy. Says Theodore Francis, "I would want the privileged child's parents to teach them not to lean on an open door [because of the privilege that is available to them], to speak up about the advantages [you have] and don't take them, and to challenge the perspectives [of prejudice]".

The program was filmed and aired on local television broadcasts. At the conclusion of Part III, the last of the series, participants wrote the producers to say...

"I know you have had tremendous feedback on the 2nd showing. It has provoked lots of comments from family members and people on the

street. People were impressed with Colwyn and Theodore's comments. They recognised them as educated young men, with ability to speak on the reality of race relations. Let me know date (sic) and time of 3rd showing- I have told lots of people there will be another showing. Thanks for allowing me to be a part of it and thanks again for all your hard work!"

-Yvonne Smith, Part II

participant, 12th July 2005

"... I just saw most of the "Conversation" in video, I have been traveling. I really think you guys did a super job! Those kids were Special!!! The production exceed my personal expectations, it really has made strides in stimulating conversation & thought on the race topic. We discussed it as a family & I have had great comments as I walk about... You should repeat it again & also on other stations etc... THANK YOU, & Keep up the Good Work, well done. Peace love & Unity... Jose. PS, do you have the production on DVD?? I would like to purchase one. (Can you imagine watching this in 10 years & comparing the Evolution differences?)

- Jose Cabral, Part
I participant, 5th June 2005

"This is an excellent tribute to the good work of CURE! Great job.

- Dr. Derrick Binns, Permanent Secretary, Ministry
of Community and Cultural Affairs, 8th June 2005

At the meeting of the Honourable House of Assembly, Friday, 3rd June 2005, Mr. Neville E. Darrell, JP, MP asked the House to congratulate CURE on the launching of the outstanding initiative "The Conversation Project" – free flowing, frank conversations on race and racism in Bermuda. In carrying out the wishes of the Honourable House, the Speaker of the House, the Honourable W. Stanley W. Lowe, OBE, JP, MP, added his congratulations.

The Conversation Project, Bermuda led to a string of other initiatives such as the Conversations on Race forums, the _____, and ultimately an advertising campaign geared at being conversation starters. The ads featured people telling a story about a piece of their lives when they are working their hardest at something they are committed to; what it is, how it makes them feel and an outcome.

The Amistad Neighbourhood Conversations on Race AKA the CURE Conversations on Race Forums- May 19-27, 2005

The Freedom Schooner La Amistad¹³ visited Bermuda, from the USA from 9th-29th May 2005. A re-creation of the schooner that sailed in 1839, the educational vessel and living museum symbolizes and pays tribute to the struggles by Africans and African Americans for equality and human rights. The port visit was intended to foster unity among peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, and to promote the legacies of leadership, cooperation, perseverance and social justice inherent to the Amistad Incident of 1839¹⁴.

In collaboration with Amistad America and the Bermuda Local Port Organizing Committee, CURE hosted a series of public forums at the request of the Bermuda Local Port Organising Committee to convene forums under the general themes that conversations on race and equality are conversations worth having and that Bermuda would be engaging in 'neighbourhood conversations on race'. The Conversation Forums were public events aimed at increasing race awareness and promoting leadership and individual action on addressing racial inequality.

Bermuda Leader's Power Breakfast, 19th May 2005, was entitled: "A Vision for Conversations on Race Equality". This forum was designed to serve as a

¹³ La Amistad was a coastal trader doing the same work that tractor-trailers do today. Generally, she carried sugar-industry products Guanaja, her home port in Cuba, to Havana, making a round trip about every two months. She often carried people: Spanish ladies and gentlemen and sometimes she carried people bound for lives as slaves on sugar-cane plantations. At the same time that La Amistad sailed, there were vessels known as slave ships, such as Tecora, that were engaged in trafficking illegally captured African people from Africa to the Americas. La Amistad was not such a vessel. (Source Amistad America website FAQ's).

¹⁴ The Amistad Incident of 1839 is an international story rooted in Connecticut that reflects a unique struggle for equality and human rights. It is one of the first human rights cases in United States history to be argued in the American court system on behalf of Africans. In 1839, fifty-three Africans were illegally kidnapped from West Africa and sold into the transatlantic slave trade. Shackled aboard the Portuguese slave vessel, Tecora, the forty-nine men and four children were brought to Havana, Cuba, where they were fraudulently classified as native, Cuban-born slaves. They were illegally purchased by Spaniards Jose Ruiz and Pedro Montez, who transferred the captives to the coastal schooner, La Amistad, for transport to another part of the island. Three days into the journey, a twenty-five year old Mende rice farmer named Sengbe Pieh, or "Cinque" to his Spanish captors, led a revolt. After sixty-three days, La Amistad and her African "cargo" were seized as salvage by the United States Naval Revenue Cutter USS Washington, near Montauk Point in Long Island, New York and towed to Connecticut's New London Harbour. The Africans were held in jail in New Haven on charges of mutiny and murder. The case took historic proportions when former President John Quincy Adams successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court on behalf of the captives. In 1841, the thirty-five surviving Africans were returned to Africa (Source: Amistad America's FAQ's).

refresher and follow-up to CURE's Leadership Diversity forum of January 2004. Leaders of all types were identified as critical to long term change and a vision for enhanced race relations. During the ½ day session, participants were called to model, encourage, influence and promote race equality and equality of opportunity. A presentation on the current-day issues of promoting race equality and various presentations on a vision for race equality was made by the Chairperson of CURE at the time, Mr. Clevelyn Crichlow. Business owners Sacha Baptiste and Bruce Barritt offered key strategies for enhancing the roles as leaders for equality of opportunity. Political leaders, heads of businesses, civil servant executives and department heads, members of the judiciary, lead community activists and advocates for race equality attended, numbering upwards of 60 participants. Space is limited. Upon receiving an invitation, participants must register. Tentative venue: La Coquille

Friday, May 20, 8:30- 9:45am: Bermuda Community Leader's Forum: "Facilitating Community Conversations on Race and Equality".

At CURE, we know that community leaders come in many forms and every member of Bermuda's community brings a unique, diverse and valued perspective to dialogues on race. CURE has worked with members of the community as employees, volunteers, trainers, advocates and individuals simply invested in making a difference. This forum is an opportunity for people who define themselves as leaders to hear about present initiatives on race equality in Bermuda. It is also a forum where individuals are encouraged to embark on conversations (formal and informal) in their own communities (home, schools, churches, places of work, social gatherings) from within their own levels of comfort and skill. Participants will be provided with a "conversation guide" and resources for engaging in meaningful conversations on race awareness in any one of their communities. Space is limited. Potential guests must contact CURE at 296-0613 or kmwilliams@gov.bm to request to participate. Tentative venue: The Royal Bermuda Yacht Club

Saturday, May 21 (Sat.), 9:00- 11:00am: Bermuda Youth Leader's Forum and Show Case: "Continuing the Conversations on Race Equality, Awareness and Empowerment"

Whilst there are debates on the best approach to tackling race equality, young people continue to be the focus of anti-discrimination awareness activities. CURE has embarked upon many programs geared towards heightening awareness on race equity and access to opportunity. This has meant facilitating discussions on treating people with respect, being fair and supporting youth in devising personal strategies to challenge discrimination. Coinciding with the Opening Ceremonies for the Town of St. George, this breakfast forum highlights youth participation on anti-discrimination. It is a vehicle for reflecting on the struggle for race equality and the importance of each person's role in improving race relations. Participants from CURE's recent youth initiatives (Creativity Contest and Awareness Forum 2004) are invited to attend as

special guests and they are asked to invite a guest whom is quite different from themselves and whom they may not have built a relationship with in the past. By invitation only; schools will be asked to assist in additional participant selections. Tentative venue: Carriage House, St. George

Friday, May 27, 5:30-7:30pm- Public Premiere: "The Conversation Project Bermuda".

Advertised as, "For the mildly curious!" a screening of CURE's short-film production, the Conversation Project Bermuda was held. The Conversation Project BERMUDAA presented scenes from a dialogue between community members, who agreed to participate in an honest, open and authentic exchange on race in Bermuda. Beginning with a short reception and cocktail, and followed by a discussion of the film on-board the Amistad Freedom Schooner dockside. Work currently being conducted on race and equality is presented. Testimonials of participation in conversations on race are presented as "talks worth having". Participants of each Conversation Project program are invited as special guests. Tentative venue: Royal Bermuda Yacht Club.

In a letter dated 8th August 2005, it is reported that at the meeting of the Honourable House of Assembly on Friday, 20th May 2005, the Hon. A. David Dodwell, JP, MP asked the House to congratulate CURE on the forums held in association with the arrival of the schooner "Amistad". Dr, the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons associated himself with Mr. Dodwell's request. The Speaker of the House, Hon. Stanley W. Lowe, O.B.E., JP, MP added his congratulations.

Adaptation of a resource book for community members in Bermuda willing to host a neighborhood conversation on race;

Conversations with Tim Wise, Bermuda

The "Conversations with Tim Wise" were a series of community forums and an awards presentation on anti-racism, white privilege and promoting equality of opportunity. As part of its 10th Anniversary celebrations, CURE collaborated with the National Association for Reconciliation to bring international speaker Tim Wise to Bermuda. Tim Wise is the author of the internationally acclaimed books, "White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son" and Affirmative Action: Racial Preference in Black and White"¹⁵.

¹⁵ At the time, Wise was also the Director of the Association for White Anti-Racist Education (AWARE) in Nashville, Tennessee. He lectures across the United States about the need to combat institutional

The objectives of the project were to:

- 1) Promote dialogue on white privilege and what both white and black people can further do to combat racism and promote equality of opportunity;
- 2) Provide a forum where residents of Bermuda can have these conversations;
- 3) Document ideas and strategies that arise from the dialogues;
- 4) Collaborate with an organisation in Bermuda doing similar work;
- 5) Promote CURE, in its responsibility for promoting good relations between people of difference races.

On 9th October 2005, Tim Wise arrived in Bermuda and was escorted by Co-host Dr. Eva Hodgson for briefing on the Island's history and dynamics. Myra Virgil joined him in the evening to brief him on the upcoming events and for further consultation on the racial dynamics of Bermuda.

Press interviews and introductions to Bermuda's advocates and interest groups were scheduled for 10th October 2005. Mr. Wise conducted a TV interviews at ZFB/ZBM, followed by a radio talk show on VSB's 1340. He joined Hon. Minister Dale D. Butler, Minister of Community Affairs and Sport, CURE Chairperson Mr. Clevelyn Crichlow, Permanent Secretary Derrick Binns, Director of Human Affairs Brenda Dale, CURE Reps DeAndrea Easton and Myra Virgil for lunch. He then toured the Island with host Dr. Eva Hodgson. In the early evening, Tim joined a dinner discussion with people from Bermuda's white community to dialogue on issues related to the different perspectives on race.

On 11th October 2005, CURE hosted an Excellence Awards presentation and a its co-sponsor, NAR, a "White on White" Forum

Morning session launched the "Conversation" events, and was opened by Hon. Minister Dale D. Butler. Awards were announced by Chairperson Clevelyn Crichlow and presented to recipients by Minister Butler.

racism, gender bias and the growing gap between rich and poor. He has written many commentaries and essays on white privilege, racism, the "race" card and ethics which can be viewed on www.lipmagazine.org or www.zmag.org/bios/homepage

Wise then participated in an early-evening consultation with representatives of Bermuda's black community on their perspectives of race in Bermuda, in preparation for the community forums.

The "White on White" Forum, held later that evening, was used as an opportunity for Tim to describe his journey as an advocate and the parallel between the civil rights issues and White Bermudians' challenges of racism/ how has white Bermuda's perspective been shaped in part by events occurring in the U.S. Reports indicate that some where between 130-150 people attended the forum. The session was not recorded but participants have submitted transcripts detailing the evening's presentation and discussion points. These transcripts were available on CURE's website at www.cure.bm.

The following day, on 12th October 2005, CURE hosted a lunchtime "Conversation" and Community Forum at the Bermuda National Gallery. Some 60 people attended. The forum was lively and people attendees asked many questions and began to dialogue with each other. The session was recoded. The forum commenced with a key note address, followed by a Q&A interview led by Ms. Judith Edwards and Myra Virgil. Promotion for the event included a request to the community to prepare questions that should be "put" to Tim Wise- burning questions! These pre-prepared questions became a part of the Q&A interview.

Questions for Tim Wise from participant Tina Nash and... questions to consider for folks wishing to get involved in anti-racist work!

1. What do you believe is the central task for anti-racist work is to "fix" the negative attitudes of white people?
2. How can we go about "fixing" the attitudes without making white people defensive and/or "shut down"?
3. What should be other key tasks for anti-racist work?
4. What have you found to be the main reasons that draw white people into fighting against the very system that bestows upon them unearned but guaranteed rights and privileges?
5. What roles and responsibilities do you feel educational institutions, both Government and Private, should have in the fight to eradicate institutional racism?
6. Are there any forms/models of restitution and/or reparations for past and current atrocities/inequities that you might recommend?

7. This question is not intended to offend everyone present today, but I always see the same friendly faces whenever I participate or facilitate in Diversity Training Sessions, Workshops and/or Demonstrations. Do you have any recommendations or suggestions on how we can continue to attract the “converted” but begin to attract the members of our community who often go unrepresented in these discussions? i.e. Black or Brown young men and white people in general?
8. What tangible actions and goals would you recommend for whites and people of colour, both independently and cooperatively, to work towards accomplishing in the short-term (within the year)? In the near future (within three years)? In the long-term (within the decade)?
9. Can you share with the group your opinion on the role and responsibility of mainstream media in anti-racist work?

The “interview” was followed by a spirited open question and answer/ dialogue opportunity¹⁶.

The final event, a public meeting hosted by NAR, presented the topic of how one)Tim Wise, for example, would arrive at a perspective of white privilege and what white people can be doing to challenge a system of racism and white privilege. Held at St. Paul’s Centennial AME, reports indicate that between 150-160 people attended this forum. The session was recorded. Subsequent dialogue via the press and letters to the Editor indicate that the forum fueled many sentiments and that the issue has much currency for future work.

On **October 13th, 2005**, given the reception of Tim’s presentations and some of the sub-topics, CURE calls for a **Special Meeting of Educators** to hear about anti-racism and education. Representatives in attendance included: Bermuda High School, Somersfield Academy, Mount Saint Agnes, Saltus Parents, Community members at large, and Bermuda College.

OVERALL FEEDBACK ON THE “CONVERSATION” FORUMS

Each forum was reportedly quite successful and well-attended, specific to the target audiences. Additional meetings that were arranged, as a consequence of the positive feedback that grew as the programme progressed were:

¹⁶ “A Conversation with Tim Wise” Potential Questions for Tim Wise, Questions to which Tim Wise responded and discussion questions for groups is available from the offices of CURE, as is the “CURE Conversations on Race” Questionnaire.

- 1) 4 stakeholder sessions (White interest-group and community members, black interest-group and community members), consultation meeting with Executive Officer, CURE Reps, and NAR organizers; Luncheon with Minister and special guests;
- 2) 1 TV interview at VSB; 1 at ZBM TV, 1 on 1340 with Shirley Dill;
- 3) A Commissioners' cocktail, which also resulted in cocktails with Dame Lois Browne-Evans; Minister Michael Scott and Diane Little;
- 4) Rotary Club Luncheon attendance to hear Teddy Blacher from South Africa's SIDA City Free University, speak;
- 5) A Meeting with the Ombudsman of Bermuda;
- 6) A Special Educators meeting held October 13th, 2005;
- 7) 7 separate consult meetings/ discussions with individual community members
- 8) 1 presentation/ meeting with Primary Coordinators of Government schools

Headlines from that time also tell a bit of the story on the types of community discussions that raged during the Wise visit and amongst forum participants.

- "Some Wise words indeed from Lecturer Tim", Mid-Ocean, Nov. 10, 2005, p21
- "Cable can't get beyond the pale", Eugene Robinson, Royal Gazette, Aug. 18, 2005, p. 4
- "A Growing sense of weariness is emerging among black people over bridging racial gap", Mid-ocean, Fri., Oct. 21, 2005, p7
- "Eradicating Racism", NAR Committee, Letter to the Editor, Royal Gazette, Dec. 6, 2005, p4
- "How to tackle racism: Hold a whites only meeting, L. Furbert, Bermuda Sun, Sept. 28, 2005, p5
- "Author challenges whites to acknowledge their privilege in society and help dismantle it", J. Bergman, Associated press, Royal Gazette, March 18, 2005, p. 42
- "Activist optimistic Island can move forward on race", Race Relations Forum, Dan Jones, Royal gazette, Oct. 13, 2005
- "Who is Tim Wise- and why is he saying these terrible things about Tony Brannon?", Wire Services, Mid-Ocean news, Oct. 14, 2005, p2
- "Race Expert: 'There are some very deep divisions here', James Whittaker, Bermuda Sun, undated

CURE then needed some extra “hands” for the Excellence Awards and so they extended a request to the community organization, **FOCUS**¹⁷. The team members said of that collaboration, “we were thus able to enhance our team with assistance from two of its members- Mr. Clarence Hill and Mr. Clinton Simons and we felt by getting people from the community to work with us, people who have been pretty much excluded, we were bringing everyone in—this is something we always wanted to do”.

The CURE organizing team and its Commission when retelling the story of the events have said that they believe that the success of these events was attributed to the team’s efforts and the contributions of each team member, Kim Williams, Darnell Harvey and DeAndrea Easton (who stepped out of their official roles entirely: administrative assistant, survey officer and receptionist turned assistant coordinator, project lead and project assistant respectively); and extended team members, Brenda Dale, Judith Edwards, Tim Darrell, Mr. Clevelyn Crichlow, Dr. Eva Hodgson, Robert Clifford, Tina Nash and many valued others.

As a consequence of the success of “Conversations with Tim Wise” Forums, several initiatives were proposed:

- 1) Bermuda Government should fund the revitalization of Citizen’s Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB)- a community-driven initiative with a mission for strategizing on anti-racism and equality of opportunity activities;
- 2) The CURB strategies related to CURE’s mandated should be highlighted and undertaken in 2006;
- 3) CURE’s Workforce Empowerment Strategy should continue to be operationalised with emphasis on both informing and empowering workforce leaders and participants; and
- 4) Efforts to extend CURE’s “Conversation Project” programming should continue.
- 5) CURE’s Special Report: “From Survey to Practice: Equality of Opportunity Initiatives in Bermuda 2004 should be re-distributed as a qualitative example of how stories can inform workforce practices and that the rich detail of stories can be recorded and used as a tool for change.

What follows is what came of those recommendations.

CURB: A Government of Bermuda 2005 Throne Speech Initiative

¹⁷ This effort is significant in that Focus is a drug rehabilitation programme and by specifically seeking to work with programme participants, CURE was extending an invitation to people who are often marginalized in the community.

"We believe that together we can finally make a real difference in the ongoing challenge of uprooting racism in Bermuda",

- Mission of
CURB 1998.

The Citizen's Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB) project was a community-driven interest group of community members, representatives of community groups, Government and Government-affiliated bodies. Its objectives were envisioned to be those of every person who became involved. In 2006, the Government of Bermuda, through the Commission for Unity and Racial Equality (CURE), made funding available to revitalise CURB, of which its collective community vision had originally been conceived in 1998.

The History of CURB

On June 30th, 1998 nearly six hundred Bermudians and residents converged on the campus of the Bermuda College to brainstorm and recommend solutions for uprooting racism in Bermuda. These persons were divided into three racial categories: "Blacks", "Whites", and "Others".

After an intensive brainstorming session, all participants convened in the college gymnasium to hear extensive reports from splinter groups. Under the general direction of a Steering Committee, these reports have been reduced to strategies by a volunteer Implementation Committee. Seven sub-committees were formed from this Implementation Committee: Economics, Spirituality/Religious Beliefs, Education, Legislation, Political, Social and Personal Responsibility. In addition to these, 'Media' and 'General' categories for action were created to accommodate other strategies and comments. Members of the Implementation and Steering Committees met on a regular basis to review the "raw data". They later produced the sentiments of those original participants as 'strategies' and 'recommendations'.

A Vision for the Future

It was hoped that other agencies (Government and non-government) would liaise with CURB, so that all available resources could be combined to achieve a common goal. CURB organizers at the time, thanked the public for their initial support in the CURB endeavor, and encouraged the entire community to join CURB at the next Public Forum. They also asked community members to study the strategies document, and to bring it with them for discussion at the next Forum. Another meeting was held October 7, 1998. However, the group received little support at that time and could not continue.

CURE's CURB-related Activities

Since 1998, 3-4 years after its inception, CURE has steadily been acquiring community involvement in its initiatives.

- 1) In 2002, community members from across the Island met in three concurrent meetings (Dockyard, St. Georges, and central) to dialogue on race issues and to make resolutions. The outcome was a brochure which published the "Community Resolutions and is still in distribution to this day.
- 2) In January 2004, its Leadership Diversity Forum attracted almost 100 participants. Feedback from the forum indicated that more community members wanted to have the more opportunities to dialogue. This feedback saw the development of several new projects which essentially give rise to and revitalize the need for a program like CURB.
- 3) "The Conversation Project" was a three-part program which involved 8-10 participants at a time, speaking to each other on their experiences and perspectives on race in Bermuda (October, November and December 2004);
- 4) Mindful Facilitator's Diversity Training (MFDT) in March of 2005;
- 5) Amistad Conversations on Race followed in May of 2005;
- 6) Adaptation of a resource book for community members in Bermuda willing to host a neighborhood conversation on race;
- 7) MFDT group meetings;
- 8) CURE's workforce survey follow-up interviews and report;
- 9) Annual Youth Race Awareness forums (Youth Perspectives 2003; Youth Strategies 2004; Classroom to Career 2005);
- 10) The 4-part "Conversations with Tim Wise" forums.

Each of the community forums had been followed by ongoing requests for more like-opportunities, but with allowances for far more in-depth discussion.

Finally, the Bermuda Independence Commission (BIC) released its report with a recommendation for the establishment of a "Truth & Reconciliation" program, perhaps something that could be modeled after work being done in South Africa, but truly reflecting a request for more painfully frank dialogue amongst the community.

The Government's commitment to the revitalization of the community-driven project, CURB, seemed a timely solution to several of these and other recent race-related events. CURE acknowledges that people in the community wish to have an organizing

body in which to encompass the new and renewed interest and concern for race issues in Bermuda. These efforts, to have long term impact and efficacy, have to be community-based, rather than Government-driven and with direct Government oversight. Previous efforts to establish a community-based organization did not receive support and quite possibly, as a consequence, failed.

Potential Implementation

Given that new program initiatives can be quite costly, CURE envisioned CURB operating through the establishment of a grant. The grant funding could go towards supporting the basic administrative and support needs of a community-based, operated and driven organization. The organization, which could for now be referred to as CURB would have the support of CURE, and could use its offices as a base, and its Officers as resource people- only as a means of "jumpstarting" the initiative. On the other hand, to ensure that CURB maintains its community focus, other administrative/ resources could be sought, such as the shared used of space with the Diversity Institute of Bermuda (Bermuda College offices). CURE would call upon recent participants of its programs and others who have worked on race and diversity issues in Bermuda, to further develop a vision for CURB.

For example, the Diversity Institute of Bermuda, Amnesty International, NAR, the Human Rights Commission and other representatives from the community have been active on many levels of advocacy, motivation, awareness and education. People from these organizations might very well be interested in becoming involved with CURB. The group would be self-managed and would only be required to submit a brief report on its activities to CURE. CURE would then review and include this report in its Annual Report.

CURE hoped that in providing support to CURE, CURB might convene round tables of interest groups of:

- Community Members
- National Association for Reconciliation (NAR)
- Commission for Unity and Racial Equality (CURE)
- Human Rights Commission (HRC)
- Diversity Institute of Bermuda (DIB)
- Mindful Facilitators' Diversity Group (MFDG)
- Amnesty International (Bermuda)
- Global Arts Entertainment (Peace & Tolerance Initiative)

- Conversation Project participants and other community members who have become involved in one of CURE's projects.

Or that it would hold community meetings with and without Government/ Government-affiliated programs. CURE also hoped that CURB would provide a medium for:

- Mediation
- Peer Empowerment
- Group/ peer facilitation
- Lobbying
- Community voices on race issues- publishing perspectives on race, to the press
- Conversation and Dialogue groups
- Community forums
- School Education (at a level of involvement similar to a PTA or class parent)
- Loose affiliate resource and network groups, i.e. book clubs, social clubs
- Blog pages

The people who attended the 2006 meetings, did indeed, "get to work". CURB members drafted a Constitution and Bye-Laws in early 2007. CURB became a registered charity in 2007 and driven by a core of committed people, headed by President, Lynn Winfield.

In her statement, which saw the official launch of CURB, Ms. Winfield says,

We are here today to launch CURB an antiracist, interethnic movement dedicated to the elimination of racism in Bermuda.

CURB stands for Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda and was originally formed in 1998 following a historic antiracist conference held at the Bermuda College attended by over 600 people from all walks of life, race, ethnicity and religious background. This extraordinary day was promoted by the Human Rights Commission partnering with Amnesty International, the National Association for Reconciliation and the Commission for Unity and Racial Equality. It was an inspirational event at which passions and hopes ran high. People spoke honestly and truthfully about their perspectives on racism.

Following the historic election of 1998, attention to the issue of racism in Bermuda was put on the back burner. The prevailing attitude, it seemed, was that the problems associated with racism would go away following the election of the PLP government. Attempts by CURB to move forward with a raft of objectives received little support from Government and, unfortunately, the initiative dwindled after a couple of years.

Sadly, eight years after the election of a PLP government, racism and stereotypes continue to be divisive in our community. The need for CURB still exists and it is now receiving the support of the government. CURB is back and is ready to tackle racism in Bermuda.

CURB consists of PEOPLE, people who believe in the fundamental human right of equality and who understand how racism continues to divide us. We are determined to ensure that the issue of racism stays in the forefront, and that ongoing, honest and open dialogue takes place.

It is about understanding the difference between white perception and black experience. It is about educating the community about white privilege and how it works. It is about educating the community about the subtle and various forms of institutional racism. It is about reaching an understanding of how these issues continue to affect everyday life decisions and choices for persons of colour.

CURB will act as a Watch Dog organization, reminding people about racial issues and stereotypes that occur within our everyday lives. We will encourage and if need be bring pressure to bear on Government, the media, organizations, businesses, sports clubs, and churches to confront racist stereotypes and behaviours. We will organize events to educate and bring people together.

Nelson Mandela in accepting his Nobel Peace Prize said that "we must act together in defense of justice and common human decency and to recognize that an injury to one is an injury to all."

So what can WE do as a people to live up to such a noble ideal?

The commitment to working towards the elimination of racism starts with the individual and to this end CURB has brought in to the island 10,000 wristbands to be distributed around the island. These wristbands are black and white, symbolizing the two major Bermudian races on the island. They also symbolize people's commitment to working together to eliminate all forms of racism in our community. By wearing a wristband, people will not only be demonstrating their solidarity with the ideals of a just and equal Bermuda for all, but will also wear them as a daily reminder that it is their behaviour that makes a difference.

Nelson Mandela saw, the inevitability of "mutual interdependence" in the human condition, and that "the common ground is greater and more enduring than the differences that divide."

By wearing these wristbands the people of Bermuda will signal to each other and the world their commitment to uprooting racism in Bermuda.

In July of 2007, CURE published a list of all of the stakeholders- the community participants, the steering committee members, the initial 'Strategies and Sentiments' of the community on the work of CURB and the direction it could take and the history of CURB as told by the communications, publications and public relations-- to preserve and honour its history and to acknowledge the work that is ongoing.

UNFINISHED CONVERSATIONS

I've found strength in speaking in the various groups, just getting to know someone in brief meeting, impacted in my personal experience apologizing to me for pre-judging in their job arena that's personally impacted me. It made me feel better without prejudice in accepting their apology sincerely so it was from the heart. As it takes a man to say I'm sorry for judging you unfairly. In an environment my honesty as another person was revealed and admired for the person I am, not imagining to be. I thank you both for allowing me the opportunity to release with humility a part of one that's impacted from this time.

-Participant's feedback, "Unlearning Racism Retreat", 17th June 2006

As a follow up to the Mindful Facilitator's Diversity training in March of 2005, CURE hosted a series of forums on race, Wednesday June 14th, 2006 to Saturday June 17th, 2006. The sessions were facilitated by StirFry Seminars' trainers, Mr. Lee Mun Wah an internationally acclaimed diversity lecturer and trainer, filmmaker, community therapist, poet and educator, and Ms. Rainbow Markell, a master trainer whose expertise in training ranges from race to sexual orientation.

The Mindful Facilitator's Diversity training was a partnership event between CURE and the Bermuda College and StirFry. Certification in diversity training was available to three levels of participants: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. The impetus for the 2005 training was to build CURE's bank of trainers as well as provide a professional development opportunity. We hoped that the forum would serve as a vehicle for individuals who wanted to explore their racial lives further and the impact that race has on their perspectives. "From past experience, we also suspected that the events would drive more conversations on race and the impact of racial discrimination on our community", reported Darnell Harvey, project lead of the programme.

Four events were scheduled over a five day period: a public forum, a training session and a retreat.

The public forum, 14th June 2006, '**An Unfinished Conversation**', was described by participants as an intimate session where they actually got to talk about some of their experiences.

The intermediate training session, "**Mindfully Resolving Conflicts**", held 15th through 16th June 2006 was "where participants shared ideas and thoughts and by the end of the session a bond had been formed". "At one point a latecomer entered the session and was immediately rejected by the group!", Harvey reports. She goes on to offer

"The individual's invasive attitude disturbed many and there was an automatic distrust and retaliation directed towards this person. Lee Mun Wah demonstrated how the situation should be handled by a facilitator, giving participants a further insight into the role of the facilitator. In the end, the new participant left the setting early, but promised to return the next day. In his absence, the group was able to articulate how they felt about the situation that had presented itself".

In the **Training Debrief, held 18th June 2006**, these sentiments were re-enforced.

At the **Unlearning Racism Retreat**, the third of four events, held 17th June 2006, numbers were small but the session animated and highly informative. "Participants said that the experience was one they would never forget", says Harvey. Lee Muh Wah demonstrated the techniques needed to successfully facilitate dialogue between individuals experiencing discord, in this case two of the training participants. It was an emotional experience but one worth observing, a statement which was made by the majority of participants present. Here were other's comments...

What did you value or appreciate about this workshop?

- I valued the opportunity to hear and share experiences with colleagues and to learn to hear without trying to "fix" them
- Learning more about Bermuda and its social problems and that people are doing something to bring change/ facilitators understanding and help find root of problem
- I value the honest conversations
- The honesty and openness of the participants. This was due to the "safety" of the environment.
- The dialogue was authentic
- I valued and appreciated everything! – The opportunity to learn more about my racist self and the opportunity to learn more about me and dialogue with new people
- The opportunity to revisit my own issues – to expand my appreciation
- I appreciate the changes that were taught for facilitation – the exercises, the feedback, the opportunity to try again
- Listening to others' stories – group/pairs – getting to know a little more about others in the room
- I appreciated the significances to life and to value differences in others, not to take sides and how not to be judgmental

What had the most impact for you?

- The facilitation of the dialogue between [the two friends who were having a conflict]
- Allowing me to be aware of my own prejudice/learning how to ask questions
- the very intense dialogue between [two participants]
- The willingness [of two participants] to share their dialogue with the group. It was both painful and enlightening to witness
- The experience of being still, be present when the work became to hard
- Getting to know myself and the art of listening waiting and when to intervene or to speak. Also the art of touch with the right hand.

What are you taking with you from this experience?

- Each person has her/his perception of 'racism' based on their personal experience and each is valid
- The most important thing I learn from this experience is to have an open dialogue.
- Being able to discuss the problem openly and honestly will be healthy and beneficial in future
- The art of listening
- Hope, commitment to continue
- A drive to continue to work against intolerance and to further develop my understanding of racism
- To continue to talk
- Understanding how and to ask and share more
- More questions [and] discussions about asking
- Try to get to know other cultures
- The importance of the observation of impacts. The challenge to remain with the conflicts. It is so much easier to leave the conflict
- A reminder that Pearl and I are the same and different at the same time
- Conflict can be positive – people can experience personal growth by telling the truth
- To be open to learn other's stories
- I take away a renewed patience in recognizing body language and when to run

Courageous Conversations for Immigration and Border control: A Facilitated dialogue training session

Customs Training- a new and appreciative approach: applying aspects of appreciative inquiry into a training experience.

Research- social constructionism and an appreciative application—what is said in the workplace has greater meaning and impact beyond race. How can we navigate meaning in the workplace to move towards an experience of genuine relationship

Thirty law enforcement Officers agreed to participate in a dialectical training process¹⁸. The workshop was time-limited (2 hours), held at the request of the Department Head. Participants were voluntary, but paid overtime salaries to attend the session.

In order to establish the training format, we had a meeting, followed by several e-mail communications with the team's supervisor. In these communications the supervisor highlighted some of her concerns and wishes for training. The initial proposal was met with significant concerns and questions, which are explored and negotiated throughout a series of e-mail communications. The process and the design of the workshop itself was a social construction. Introductory remarks were developed to preface the issues that were highlighted by the supervisor as potential sources of conflict and an introduction to some of the concepts related to having a respectful and appreciative conversation.

Box 18

Facilitated Dialogue Proposed Training Outline- AB Works

Introductory remarks

We have been invited here today, not for "sensitivity" training, as you may have heard, but to engage in a dialogue, really, about our organisation's work and people. In a previous session, members of your department told us that customer service is really important to them and that race and diversity issues are not

¹⁸ All participants were advised that this workshop piloted a new approach to race relations training and that at some point, members of our staff may be publishing aspects of the work. All identifiers of participants were removed from any publications. Participants were also advised that if they had any questions, concerns or wishes or to ensure that their contributions are not published, to please contact us at CURE.

separate from excellent customer service. This rang true for us with an added element. That element is the issue of power and authority.

The issue of authority and power is an important one. As Officers, you have power and authority over people- the right to go into people's most private spaces. This right is granted to you for no other reason than it has been vested to you through employment.

Yet, when we do our jobs, we can not simply "turn off" who we are as people. We bring into our jobs our personal experiences, our happiness, our sadness, our anger about life events. We also bring into it, our perspectives about people- how they are different from us- better off, worse off, more powerful, less powerful, linked to oppression or that they remind us of what we or our families don't have.

Bermuda has a distinct history of tensions between foreigners [also referred to as guest workers or ex-patriots] and locals. This history ties into all sorts of issues of the "have" and "have-nots" and of the differences in experience for blacks and whites. Every organisation has a culture which is unique in some way and reflects the countries culture.

We've been asked to meet with you on the issue of being Officers, the power you have and how the power is used with people who come from different places, and are guests to the Island. We ask you to reflect on how this organisation offers their services with respect to diversity. Is there a difference in treatment and whether it is possible to aspire for "best customer service" or "best customer treatment" in the face of our personal experiences?

From this backdrop, we would like to engage in a dialogue on this particular type of authority and your views on how your team offers its services. We ask you to speak as unique individuals- about your own ideas and experiences- rather than as representatives of AB WORKS. We thought we might start this discussion by posing some questions and asking each of you to respond. We ask that no one interrupt any one else, for the time being, and let them speak to each question.

The participating Officers were divided into two training groups, representing their two primary work teams. Each group received the same introductory remarks. The remarks were strategically devised to evoke appreciative responses¹⁹. The dialectical

¹⁹ The questions were adapted from the Public Conversation Project in Boston described in Gergen, 2001.

and appreciative approaches represent an extreme divergence from diversity training previously conducted by the researcher (and with this group). It is highly participatory and interactive as opposed to the presentation/ Power-point format of the past. Participants were asked to identify their agreement to have their responses recorded and reported upon, in session, and in follow-up requests for feedback. The session is recorded.

Each participant was asked in turn to respond to the introductory remarks via these questions:

Box 19

Facilitated Dialogue Training Session: Group Inquiry

1. What is your personal relationship, or personal history with this issue? (What has been your experience or your approach to this work?)
2. Please tell us more about your particular beliefs and perspectives on this issue? (Do you have a perspective on the treatment of visiting and guest working foreigners? What is your perspective on the type of service your team should be offering?)
3. Many people we've talked to, with similar job experiences, have told us that within their experience with this issue they find some gray areas, some dilemmas about their own beliefs or even some conflict... Do you experience any pockets of uncertainty or lesser certainty, any concerns, value conflicts, or mixed feelings that you may have and wish to share?

Now that each person has had a chance to speak, we invite you to ask questions of each other. However, we ask that these questions not be 'challenges in disguise' but of 'things, which you are really curious'.

Follow-up questions:

4. What needs to happen from your perspective?
5. From your perspective, how close are you to offering this best service?
6. What offering can you personally make to help this happen going forward?

The training session was transcribed by both the interviewer and a co-facilitator. During the session, the participants were advised that their offerings would be recorded and that some of the material would be published in aggregate form but in a way that the participants would be unidentifiable. Participants were also advised that although they had been asked to be in attendance, they could leave without repercussion; but also, to stay meant that they agreed to participate in their own ways and to have their offerings recorded. At the end of the session, feedback forms were distributed. The forms indicated that as well as requesting their feedback, the information and submissions from the training might be used in research.

The final training experience described in detail below, was transcribed and summarized, and essentially captured as feedback sent to each of the participants in the form of a letter.

CURE was invited to your teams to engage in a dialogue about your work and its people. In a previous session, members of the department told us that customer service is really important to them and that race and diversity issues are not separate from excellent customer service. This rang true for us with an added element. That element is the issue of power and authority.

The issue of authority and power is an important one. Officers have power and authority over people- the right to go into people's most private spaces. This right is granted to Officers for no other reason than it has been vested through employment. Yet, when COs do their jobs, they can not simply "turn off" who they are as people. We bring into our jobs our personal experiences, our happiness, our sadness, our anger about life events. We also bring into it, our perspectives about people- how they are different from us- better off, worse off, more powerful, less powerful, linked to oppression or that they remind us of what we or our families don't have.

Bermuda has a distinct history of tensions between foreigners (tourists and guest workers) and locals. This history ties into all sorts of issues of the "have" and "have-nots" and of the differences in experience for blacks and whites. Every organisation has a culture which is unique in some way and reflects the countries culture.

CURE was asked to meet with your teams on the issue of being Officers, the power you have and how the power is used with people who come from different places, and are guests to the Island. We ask you to reflect on how Officers offers their services with respect to diversity. Is there a difference in treatment and whether it is possible to aspire for "best customer service" or "best customer treatment" in the face of our personal experiences?

From this backdrop, we engaged in a dialogue on this particular type of authority and your views on how your team offers its services. We asked you to speak as unique individuals- about your own ideas and experiences- rather than as representatives of AB WORKS.

The perspectives the two groups of team members shared were generous and genuine, leading new discoveries and understandings about what each brings to the job.

Perspectives of AB Works Team Members

Initial Thoughts and comments on the topic of inquiry

1. Over the years, the role of an Officer has developed to become a critical "first point of contact" for visitors to the Island
2. Some visitors are surprised to be received and questioned by Black people in authority and respond with disdain, contempt or challenging behaviors.
3. Professional and informed, Officers remain committed to enforcing the law, which sometimes mean coping with, and suppressing, very real feelings of anger and resentment, stemming from being disregarded, disrespected or challenged.
4. Officers have a job to do and will do it professionally, regardless of the attitude that people "come to the table with".
5. The colour (of passengers) is not so much an issue, it is their culture. Americans have one attitude, the British have another; and the Canadians have yet another. There seems to be an increasing number of Asians arriving on the Island, and they too have their different attitudes and perceptions.
6. With the racial and cultural diversity Bermuda sees now, the work is more of a challenge- linguistically and culturally. The stereotypes are not as consistent with past beliefs as once before.
7. As well, "it is your own fleas that bite the hardest" and Bermudians themselves, can give Officers a hard time- wanting a break, feeling like there is a class difference between the Officer and themselves, as passengers.
8. The colour (of Officers) is very important in the organisation. Some feel that promotions, transfers and other benefits are granted not only because of an affinity for one's colour, but by gender preferences and "cliques".

9. "This job will make or break you- you have to find a way to balance things"

Concerns

1. Sometimes the power of the uniform can be taken too far and there is a generational difference in how that power is perceived and used. It used to be that you (Officers) earned a stripe and through time, you came to know exactly what that meant and it was valuable- now, it is simply given to you along with power.
2. Knowing when to "back-off", take a break or seek some assistance from a colleague is part of the difficult task of working with people (both passengers and colleagues) - it comes with experience, but is very much related to who each Officer is as a person. "It can be a struggle that takes all of your personal coping skills not to use the power". "You need to be able to let things go and to be one person at work and another at home".
3. Balancing the belief that people coming to Bermuda need to respect the country's customs and people while recognising that some people don't and won't- but yet need to receive excellent customer service, is a challenge.
4. It seems that females are "more prepared" in terms of applying and getting jobs in the organisation. It used to be that it was enough to have a high school diploma, common sense and street smarts. But now, with the upgraded degree requirements, need for excellent interview and presentation skills, black males may be missing out on the opportunities.
5. "We are damned if we do, and damned if we don't". If we don't command respect for the laws we are supposed to uphold, and apply them as we are required to do, we won't get it". But, some people want special treatment or feel that they are receiving "special" treatment.
6. That white Officers seem to do their time at the Airport and then transfer (whether they ask for it or not) to the Hamilton office where they can do "normal" hours. Some Black Officers, who have similar needs that could be alleviated by working "normal" hours, have not had the opportunity or even known about opportunities available at the Hamilton Office. Another concern is that some believe that employment opportunities have been "created" in Hamilton, which sees the ratios of Whites to Blacks (with Whites being predominant in Hamilton) in the Hamilton office being much higher than at the airport.
7. There needs to be a better link between the Department and other Departments- acknowledgement of the Officers' authority and abilities to assess situations, and have a means of feeding the information to other Government Departments. For

example, sometimes it is obvious that a contract worker has come to the Island is under-qualified according to the ad that was placed in the paper. Officers sometimes make these connections between "theory and practice". Some times Officers are asked to use a double-standard for access to the Island; and people who should be stopped and deported, are allowed into the country by making a phone call to a person in power.

Wishes

1. Senior Officers command the respect of the more junior Officers, for the knowledge and experience they bring to the job. However, Junior Officers wish for praise or acknowledgement for when they do their job well- for they feel critiques of their tasks are readily forthcoming.
2. For more communication from the "top down" on promotional opportunities, commendations and "all-around" happenings.
3. For more male Officers to become part of the Airport teams.
4. To have people from Officers from different levels of the organisation sit on the hiring panels of potential team members; and to make sure that a good mix of people are on the hiring committees.
5. To have the public become more informed about what the organisation does and why; to have a promotional/ public relations campaign that will educate the public on the mandate and requirements of travelers. "I wish for us to have our own Public Relations person to do both national and international information sharing".
6. For people to be more willing to listen so that we can have honest communication going both ways".
7. To bring back the employee merit awards and make sure that the nomination process is well-communicated and accessible to everyone- so that every one knows about it and gets a chance to be considered.
8. Those trainees whom come out of the training are more prepared for what it is really like to do the job. Perhaps we could include more Officer's personal stories and experiences in the orientation phase of training.
9. Those passengers whom end up facing the full extent of the law better understand that this happens as a consequence of their own actions. This would happen through more public relations activities.
10. We will all recognise the humanity in each other and in the people we serve.

Commitments and Encouragements of the AB Works Team Members

1. "One can catch more bees with honey than with vinegar and so I keep trying to use the honey" I hope others will too"
2. "When I approach a team member because I am concerned about how they have handled a situation, I want to be able to say, "you are right, but you are wrong" and that they can hear that and not be hurt, angry or offended".
3. "Take people as you find them- and work with them".
4. "Everyday, something is going to happen to tick you off, but I want to let go of the little things". "Take people one-on-one, each day, everyday- yes, they will disrespect us sometimes, but it is not everyone or all the time".
5. "To model encouragement even if it does not always come from the "top"".
6. "Kill them with kindness" and tell them to "have a great day"
7. "To continue to use the experiences and skills of Officers who have them".
8. "Use power respectfully and you will know that you are doing your job to the best of your ability".

Great stories, wonderful offerings and thank you for your time.

Conversations and silences that speak in the civil service

This study asks participants to explore a relationship they have had with someone different from themselves, to consider the relational attributes they bring to the workplace and to reflect upon best policies functioning in the organisation.

Box 3

A provocative proposition: decision-making practices and the reproduction of race, class & gendered relations in the Bermuda Civil Service

This dissertation propels inquiry in the areas of social constructionism, relational theory and appreciative inquiry, in organisational life. The Bermuda Government civil service provides an enriching backdrop to this study, for its Bermuda resident participants represent a range of diversities.

Organisational participants co-construct a working reality on the infinite basis of their experiences. Some of these experiences may be understood through a lens of post-colonialism, patriarchy, matriarchy, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, equality of opportunity policy, organisational mission and vision and other theoretical constructs of human life.

What many of these constructs imply is that the issue and interplay of people's diverse identities is lost in the language and notions of best practices. Invariably, working relationships and decisions are guided and more reflective of people's fundamental beliefs about, for example, race, gender and social class, than of the guiding principles, the ethical and moral underpinnings, of the organisation.

This inquiry invites participants to reflect upon how their fundamental belief systems, as influenced by their experiences as, and with, members of different racial groups, genders and social class constructs for example, impact their working relationships and decision-making practices. The cross-disciplinary participants' "stories" on how aspects of identity, both their own and others, mediate between the organisation's fundamental philosophies and how people in the organisation relate, function and task on a daily basis. The participant's stories reflect not only their own identities, but of the individual in relation to other organisational participants within a co-constructed system. They give meaning to what is alive in all organisations.

Fundamental premises

It is human nature to reflect upon, interact and work from our understandings, experiences and beliefs about people. We acquire these beliefs from many sources, our life experiences, our families, our communities, religion, daily interactions and anticipation of daily interactions. What we believe about others, influences how we relate, and the decisions we make in concert with others. Beliefs may be an underlying factor in many organisational processes, such as interpersonal and intra-personal relationships and decision-making practices. The underlying presence of beliefs about diversities means that people may think about them, act from within an understanding of their beliefs about themselves and others, but it is not usually overtly expressed as part of the co-created organisational world. Beliefs about race, may be stated, but may also be transmitted through practice (decisions that are taken) or through a tone of interaction.

An appreciative framework suggests that to probe the influence of race, gender and social class relations in the workplace, inquiry is directed at respondents' experiences or connections with someone who is different from them. There are options as to whether the differences or diversities (i.e. race, social class, and gender) should be delineated in the questioning, or whether respondents are encouraged to construct their own understandings of diversity. Further, if we want to expand an understanding of meaningful workplace relations, how race, gender and social class diversities, often considered the most prominent on a scale of diversity hierarchy, are experienced and perceived would be an important direction for inquiry. These perceptions influence equality of opportunity policy and strategy, and are fundamental, but must also be understood from within a context of other mediating diversities, such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, or political opinion.

–Excerpted, "From Policy to Practice"

Participant selection for interviews

This portion of the study's inquiry considered the offerings of interview participants from across Bermuda's Civil Service sector. Given that research participants to a large extent create the study outcomes- providing the content, discussion, vision and commitment to organisational life (Weisbord, 1986); I considered participant selection quite carefully. I aspired to interview individuals in the organisation that represented a diagonal slice of participants; not only in the range of primary diversities (i.e. race and gender) but representing: key power positions to front-line workers; higher and lower employment levels; people with varied lengths of experience; those with some degree of diversity in socio-economic class via income; and individuals from different vocations or trades, indicated by industry.

Therefore, in part five of the study, there are contributions from 12 civil service workers. The racial make-up of the participant group as they categorised themselves was: 5 Black; 1 Mixed Race (Black and White); and 6 white. The gender composition of interview participants was: 6 males and 6 females. They represented 10 Bermuda Government programs or departments. The participants were selected with regard to specific characteristics and qualities which included their race, gender, Bermudian status/nationality. I next considered a mixed-range of diversities such as: their economic status as determined by their pay scales, age, occupational category, marital status, children, and ethnicity. Race and gender were my initial considerations for selecting people for the participant list; followed by an objective of achieving balanced representation by race, gender and Bermudian/Non-Bermudian nationality.

I then considered the mix of other diversities using a test of pay scales; requesting interviews with civil servants from amongst the full range of published government pay scales. I hoped that multiple differences in life experience and perspective would present themselves within the interview process. These multiple differences might be sexuality, marital status, children or ethnicity, for example. I did not sample specifically for these diversities.

I had an unanticipated struggle with the concept of "class", which I referred to extensively throughout the literature review. When I considered the class construct from a Bermudian perspective, I realised it was virtually impossible to designate a participant to a specific class label. The lines that typically designate social class distinctions are blurred in Bermuda. Specifically, income levels, occupations, geographic locations, or level of study have very little relevance to what I have known as "class constructs" such as earnings and income or level of education. Taxi drivers can be some of the wealthiest people on the Island. Construction workers, if they own their own companies, can do very well. Manual labourers, although less frequently, can be wealthy. If an Administrative Assistant owns his or her own home, they can be fairly well off, as well. People, who may not have acquired formal educations, have done well in the trades. Therefore, I was challenged by the task of designating a lower, middle or upper class participant identifier.

As a consequence of this challenge and as a novice social constructionist, I decided against making any selections affiliated with the class construct, aside from a range of pay scales. I opted to include an optional "pay scale level" (See Appendix N for full listing of pay scales) query on my interview face sheet because pay is an indicator of the type of income coming into a household. As well, because employee's pay scales are a matter of public record, I did not feel that I was asking too much of participants to have them indicate their pay ranges.

As for the analysis of the data, I believe the collection process and my approach to the topic to be consistent with social constructionism. The class construct is a difficult one to develop and perhaps should not be developed in great detail in a qualitative process. However, I have documented some of the specific indicators of “class” (income, occupation) for future reference and study²⁰.

I developed a grid to identify the best possible mix of participants for the interview segment of this study. I completed the grid using the information on race, gender, nationality, position and area of service. I then requested interviews from people based on these identifiers. Therefore, the participating employees were approached for interviews, initially, as a consequence of their race, gender, nationality (British or other) and national status (Bermudian or non-Bermudian), position and work area within Bermuda’s civil service. Again, my interest was to reflect the best mix of diversities amongst these factors.

From this initial categorisation, I reviewed the list and sought to connect with people who were not reflected in the initial list. For example, my first interviews were with two Black British Bermudian women and one White British Bermudian women. Their ethnicities were varied, some describing themselves as African Bermudian and another as White Portuguese. I then determined that to improve the representation of the interview outcomes, I would need to interview several males; Black, White, and from different parts of the Civil Service system. I listed potential participants and alternates from these categories and areas. Ultimately, this process resulted in a group of participants that reflected the following diversities (Table 5).

3.1.2e.i. Quantity and quality of interviews.

I constructed an initial list of 15 civil service employees representing 10 government departments with the intent of interviewing 10-12 people. I approached these candidates and requested 45 minute to 1 hour interviews with them. If they were unable or unwilling, I asked them for referrals- using the referral if the potential participant met the initial vetting criteria. In my research proposal, I had indicated that there was a possibility that former civil servants might be interviewed for their experiences. This codicil was a hedge in the event that there was a situation where current civil service workers were unwilling to participate. This was not the case. All participants were employees of Bermuda’s civil service. A final participant list saw the

²⁰ Using income as an indicator for class has some interesting, but limited, potential. For example, Bermuda’s Census Report constructs: an “upper class” of household incomes over \$100,000; a middle class of incomes \$45,000- \$99,000; and a lower class construct of \$15,000-\$44,000. Persons earning between \$36,000 and \$45,000 per annum are considered near poor, by Bermuda’s Census 2000, and may barely meet living expenditures in Bermuda with its high costs. Any household earning \$36,000 per annum or less is considered poor. Nineteen percent (19%) of households were classified as poor; 11% of households were near poor (Census, 2000).

exploration of the narratives of 12 people from 10 areas of service within the Bermuda Civil Service.

3.1.2e.ii. Interview Procedure.

I called each participant and briefly outlined the study. Once the participant agreed to be interviewed, I forwarded (via post or e-mail) an interview package containing: a consent form (Appendix P); interview face sheet (Appendix P); research introduction and contextualisation (Appendix Q)²¹; form outlining research involving Bermuda Government employees (Appendix R); and letter from the Taos Institute/ Tilburg University introducing me as a student researcher (Appendix R). We established a time to meet, either at my office, which is private, or theirs. The participants were asked to complete the consent form and interview face sheet and bring it with them to the interview. The participants kept the remaining documentation from the interview package.

Upon arriving at the each interview session, I greeted the participants and offered them a drink. I asked their permission to tape the interviews. All but one consented. I then asked the participants if they had had an opportunity to read the contents of the interview package. If they had not, I reviewed the package with them. Next, I asked them if they had any questions. I then asked them if they would mind if I framed the project for them before starting to ask them some questions. All consented. I presented the project to each participant by doing a verbal synopsis of the research contextualisation. I prefaced my interviews with a brief explanation of my interest in the research and how I came to the research topic.

Following, I presented four of the basic premises of appreciative inquiry as they applied to interviewing: describing the constructionist, poetic, positivist and wholeness principles. I felt that hearing my perspective on the construction of experience would provide a framework for the participant to begin to think and respond in terms of stories and lived experiences. I explained that the experiences I was asking them to reflect on would be positive; and that part of the reason they had been selected for interview was because of their locale and occupation within the civil service. From my perspective, this introduction was critical to relationship building and expanding the participants' level of comfort. I responded to the queries that arose out of this brief presentation.

I then proceeded to engage the participant in a quasi-interview/narrative process using the interview protocol, carefully crafted for this purpose (Appendix C: Interview protocol) and detailed in the next session).

²¹ For the information of my employer, I also prepared a sheet entitled, "

As described in Chapter 1 of this study, applying appreciative inquiry techniques to research was of great interest to me (See Appendix N on tips for conducting interviews, gathering information through interviews, and locating themes in the data). So coincident with shared understanding and thematic discourse analysis approaches, I informed this study with appreciative methodological influences: identifying themes/ "life-giving forces" that appeared in the stories; and expanding on the dialogues and narratives with consideration of the substantive cultural and theoretical contexts (more on this process in Chapter 5: Findings).

I taped the interviews and took notes. I had originally adopted a form of note taking utilising appreciative inquiry. This method suggests that the "interviewer" note the themes, "life-giving forces" or key points of interests from the speaker's stories. Whilst this was effective, my growing concern for "missing" a relevant portion of the participant's story provoked me into abandoning this short form of note taking. I elected to tape and fully transcribe the interviews. In retrospect, while more comforting, the "note-taking" recording of "life-giving" themes and highlights amply represented the critical aspects of participant's stories.

Therefore, I finally settled on a recording method that was involved handwritten script supplemented by audio recorded interviews. This "scripting" process is a variation of an approach used in the appreciative inquiry design. I documented what appeared to be the highlights of the participants' stories. These highlights are described by appreciative inquirists as "life-giving forces". To verify my understanding, I would probe, reframe and even feedback some statements made in the interview.

I then transcribed interviews in preparation for mining the data and seeking out themes. To simplify the analysis, I color coded the interviews, so that when I wanted to make reference to a specific offering, I might also be able to refer to aspects of the speaker's identity.

From there I highlighted what I believed to be life-giving forces of the narratives, leaving much of the participants' stories intact. This was a strategic choice made as a consequence of the limited availability (time) of study participants.

As noted in the review of the literature section on appreciative inquiry research considerations, I diverged from appreciative practices post-interview. I reverted to the more traditional method whereby a researcher "analyses" the data and produces the results in the form of a report. The participants were not invited to mine the data with me; a result of logistics and participant availability. Therefore, I left the data in much

of its raw form, as a testament to social constructionism and with the hope that readers will feel that they have the opportunity to make meaning of the data for themselves as well.

3.1.2e.iii. Crafting the interview protocol through an appreciative paradigm.

As indicated above, an interview package was developed to provide participants' with information on the study. A cover sheet was developed to provide a simple basis for reflecting on the participants' diversities. The participants were asked to identify their employment levels, job categories and service industry within the Bermuda Civil service. This request and distinction of participants was meant to allow for reference and further analysis if warranted.

In devising the interview protocol, selecting an affirmative topic choice and how best to conduct one-on-one interviews to discover a narrative description of the "best of what is", were very much present for me. The appreciative focus of the questioning was meant to encourage participants to dream and explore "what might be" in a practical and ideological sense. I aimed to design a set of statements (provocative propositions) that outline possibilities for "what could be" and to formulate a set of inspired actions that support ongoing learning and innovation on "what will be" as central to this process (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 8-9). Because the 'art of the question' is an essential component to appreciative outcomes, I put much focus on question development.

The research aspect of appreciative inquiry draws from one approach within the change strategy: that of core group inquiry. The core group process was adapted for this study to include topic identification, the crafting of questions and the conducting of appreciative interviews. In this study, workshop and interview participants themselves assisted in the orientation, formulation, and modification of the topic and questions (see Appendix F for a fuller description of the methodological journey).

The resultant interview protocol (Appendix C) asked participants to envision specific scenarios as they responded to the questions. Constructionist elements of this study weighed considerably in this process. Revised multiple times in its development as a framework, I attempted to craft questions that would contribute to a feeling of inclusiveness, regardless of race, class, gender and the multiple other diversities. I aimed for questions that each participant could own, congruent with an aspect of their lives. Therefore, regardless of employment level, diversity, roles, etc., each interview participant was encouraged to find some meaning, interpretation and response to the questions, for themselves.

The constructionist notion was further augmented by my desire to allow the interviews to become free-flowing conversations (Franklin, 1997). I recalled references in the literature that suggested that participants respond less positively and productively, if at all, to a series of pre-formulated questions (Franklin, 1997). A 'spontaneity of exchange', that might enable participants to articulate half-formed thoughts, which might later prove illuminating, was encouraged. Such an exchange encouraged the use of story-telling and metaphor and aimed to provide the participants with opportunities to introduce and develop his or her lines of thought. Behind or in partnership with this premise was the sentiment that interviewing provides an opportunity for participants to be heard, to build relationships or relational understandings, and for participants to story and dream (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

The following example illustrates why spontaneity and flexibility through the data collection process is beneficial. Some of the study participants are responsible for: supervising a group of employees; offering professional services to clients with special needs or members of the public who seek services; or for providing service to internal customers. Some, the executive civil servants, are primarily those whom influence or participate in policy development. The participants were selected for the possibilities of their varied perspectives, rather than by educational or experience qualifications: the job categorisation and employment levels would have some indicators of qualification. Therefore, the interview protocol needed to be malleable enough to allow for the varied experiences.

Of and within relationships, participants' say that, regardless of identity, the way to an enhanced organisational culture is to explore colleagues' and customers' experiences and to be curious about the qualities that comprise their experience. They suggest that these qualities are generated from racially, culturally and from the constructions of gendered experiences. Participants told of times when they sought each others strengths and encouraged colleagues before judging them. Other participants' offerings describe seeking the personal qualities they value in themselves, in other people. They hope for those qualities in their working relationships and they describe aspirations and experiences occurring at a relational level. These qualities would then have to be echoed in the organisational culture.

Along similar lines of working towards shifting understanding within the relational network to promote change in the organisational culture, a Bermudian civil servant suggests that understanding and acceptance begins with a reflection on the self. Describing an experience where she meets a man from Africa, so different from any one she knew prior, she says:

*"I had never met an African man before. I only had an image based on TV- meaning poor and this type of thing. I was struck by how I had such **great respect** for him, not because I had an impression that Africans were dumb, but just by speaking to him. I found he was really intelligent. His "take" and perspective were so much bigger than my own; and **he had such respect for me**. I was more like, "wow", I really like this person and I thought that had I seen him outside, I would never have gotten to know him or converse with him. It was a cultural difference. Because I had an impression but yet I had an impression that I could relate to him, **I liked him for how he thought (5)**.*

As the civil servant reflects on this interaction, she acknowledges that her impressions have been limited by her experience. She indicates that the relationship broadened her scope and understanding of another person and culture. Last she indicates that outside of this opportunity, it was unlikely she would have met this person. All of these reflections link to a theme of increased communication as a means of increased alliances. These increased alliances are reflective of an organisational culture where people have the types of relationships they want to have with each other.

There seems to be evidence that relational interactions have very real consequences and meaning for participants. A civil servant working in human affairs describes a shift in camaraderie at the relational level, when moving to a group setting. She attributes the shift to a culture of organisational narrative that separates civil servants by race. She expressed a wish for better alignment between the dialogues at an interpersonal level and those at an organisational level:

*"They [Blacks] are treating me in ways that they have been treated because they think that I am going to do it [to them] and it took me a while to realise why I was being alienated. **[But] dealing with anyone, one-on-one in the social setting was very pleasing. We immediately could bond on a number of levels. I have to try and make my awareness more tempered to stay in business"** (15)."*

Like others above, these sentiments suggest that to align the discourse of organisational culture with that occurring amongst relational networks, civil servants' awareness of each other, and of each other's perspectives, must be heightened through reflexive activities. This might mean sitting back from a situation and examining it. This reflexive activity might mean considering a person from the number of levels on which you know them; marrying that knowledge with action.

4.1.2a. Policy that speaks to the personal.

In a discussion on the professional development of civil servants and the implications for policy, a senior manager outlines a wish. The wish is for incorporating highly relational attributes and approaches into the decision-making and supervision process. The powerful narrative clips he would like to see incorporated into dialogues on policy are:

*"Primarily, that the civil service can **be a place where persons can develop career objectives that bring out some degree of personal and professional satisfaction.** What it takes [to make that happen] is **the consistent process of instilling in leaders of the civil service that we need to have an eye and discernment for the unseen attributes for those who work for and under them.**" "The unseen attributes, the unseen desires. A concern for the unspoken, it's not unseen, it's unspoken, career hopes and objectives. And somehow translating that into something that is spoken.*

Continuing with a privileged narrative on why infusing a relational element of 'strategic caring' into a policy of professional development is important to him, the Manager offers that:

*"...I guess the reason that I have been in the civil service as long as I have is because I have been a recipient of that type of development or that type of mentality, especially early on in my civil service career. I was fortunate enough to have the type of supervisor who didn't have to have a long conversation with you, to see what your inclinations were. But with very little communication, **find ways to make the job suited to the individual to the extent that it could and that individual would need to stay in the civil service and to guide that.** Now it hasn't always been that way and it won't always be that way for each and every individual but my wish would be for the **Civil Service to have managers and Directors that would discern the individual objectives, wants and desires of those who work for them and then find ways, win-win solutions, for them to pursue those objectives.**"(11)*

4.5.1. Race

On 'race', participants commented on whether it is a factor in their work. They said, quite explicitly, that the relational issues they face are "*about race in their department*" (2). Yet there are challenges to the construction of race as simply conceptualised by

colour. They say that *"with the racial and cultural diversity Bermuda sees now, our work is more of a challenge- linguistically and culturally... the stereotypes are not as consistent with past beliefs as once before"*(2). Illustrating how the concept of race quickly becomes multi-faceted, a participant offers that race issues are not simply along colour lines, but are connected to social ties and affiliations:

*"I mean, how are you going to tell me individually, that I am going to have the same Project Management credentials as the two they just hired. **These are two black guys, don't get me wrong- race don't go straight to white you know. Race cuts into your friends- they have their little cliques.** (12)*

4.5.4. Beyond Traditional Understandings of Identity

In addition to these more traditional notions of race, class and gender, participants described experiences involving very textured understandings of identity. One such understanding of race comes from a civil servant working in land development. He suggests that race has nothing to do with skin colour, but with social class. He believes that access to money transcends a construction of skin colour:

*"Races, to me, race, racism, to me are over-publicised. People are really into making money now. **If you want to talk about race, you talk about money versus no money. That is race.**" I don't classify race as black and white no more. It is such a diverse opinion now on race. Like I said, I see now the biggest issue is money. Who has it and who don't. Some people don't want to hire people that have money; and visa versa: **It's just not black and white.**"(12)*

Supporting this notion, another civil serviceperson suggests that a construction of race goes beyond a definition of colour. He says that he can not always allocate a person's position to the issue of race, but that there is something related to race that is functioning in the relationship:

*"Yes, being a white guy has had an effect on my work and how it is here. Not so much my relationships at work but when I am dealing with outside contractors. I am very cognizant of that fact; then again it tends to go back to the political arena: Some people are awarded contracts to give them the opportunity to develop. **And I have seen over the last years, quite a few of these contracts have gone to small Bermudian business people who, the majority of them are black. And when things don't go right, we have a difficult time addressing this with our Minister. And it puts you sometimes in an uncomfortable situation. It is nothing as visible as a black and white issue, but you can sense it and know that there is something underlying it". (9)***

One example of how racial identity has been experienced in a newly-conceptualised way is provided by a civil servant. This civil servant, working in transportation, says that his experience in the civil service has been largely influenced by his race. However, his experience is one of a non-traditional perspective of privilege. Where it is assumed that because of his race, he has been privileged, he feels he has not. He tells a story of being a member of a group perceived as privileged, but not truly a recipient of the privileges:

"I feel I have to prove myself more in Government with a government job because I am white. Prime example was recently. I have been promoted, but you had to go through the whole interviewing process and all of that. And I was the recommended candidate and was offered the position. I took it. But you just have that feeling of, "Look, the white boy just got promoted again." "Here we go, another senior manager who is white." Which in our department, is not a problem, we have four senior managers- two white and two black. So it is not an issue really but quite often I wonder and feel that maybe people look at me and say, "Okay, maybe you got promoted because you're white." But I feel that I have had to work hard to prove myself to get to where I am. Well, let me clarify, that is in Government. Because I know outside, one of the first jobs I had, it was easier, because I was white. I think it was because the person who was in charge had that thinking."(10)

Another civil service officer tells a similar story of how his experience dispels or contradicts a perceptions of white privilege and says, "People see me as white male, and not needing the money but it's not true"(2). Typically, understandings of privilege, of white privilege, have been constructed as whites having advantages to opportunities primarily because of their colour. Yet, another perspective is offered here. This perspective (captioned above) is derived from a white male who has worked hard to get promoted and is not granted acknowledgement for his accomplishment because it is perceived to be unearned.

The description of this experience may have consequences for understandings of identity and enhanced reflexive and narrative activities. By this statement I mean that an understanding of one racial experience or another can no longer be confined to traditional notions of what it means to be 'white', i.e. privileged, or 'black', i.e. powerless or underprivileged. Enhancing understandings of race might require becoming more reflective and reflexive. Becoming more reflective or reflexive may require engaging in spirited interpersonal exchanges. These interpersonal exchanges might acquire the look and feel of narratives of experience. These exchanges may occur in relational networks but have significant consequence for the organisational culture, policy and best practice.

Overall, the experiences offered by civil servants, on identity, speak to 1) how meanings of identity are co-created, dependent on the people who are in the relationship; and 2) that layered and fluid manifestations of identity mean that people and systems would have to respond to these identities in layered and fluid ways. In other words, the civil servant aspiring to become more reflexive in practice may have to account for this 'situatedness' of identity when relating to others and when attempting to make sense of organisational behavior.

4.7.1a. Transcending difference.

One example of how to engage in reflexive activity is offered. A civil servant, who identifies herself as white, describes a relationship she had with a black woman. Although their differences in racial identity are in the forefront of their interactions, the civil servant suggests that what gave the relationship meaning for her, was finding a way to move past the differences. Moving past the differences meant having an exchange about each person's experience of identity.

*"How are we different? Predominantly when she first met me, she was very shut down. So **again it was that one-on-one, I could reach her; like crossing the divide.** Again, she brought to the table, "Well*

*you're white, what would you know? I cannot work here. My own community is blocking me out." And I say, "Well, that doesn't just happen to you girlfriend, let me tell you what I've just been through." **By the sharing my story and my experiences, it stopped it being about her being a black woman, about it being about not being a part of the power scene, about it being about her not being good enough and that her earning opportunities are less than"**((15).*

By sharing their stories, the civil servants found ways to connect with each other in a way that brought new meanings of experience for both of them. In doing so, they may have also created a new way of relating to each other and for outlining a strategy for interpersonal reflexivity in organisational practice. This form of reflective interaction, of sharing stories of experience, may also change the tone of the narratives occurring in their relational networks.

4.7.1c. A spirit of acceptance.

The wish for open, transparent communication was paired with a wish that civil servants would approach each other with a spirit of acceptance and openness acquired through some process of reflective and reflexive activity. It might be helpful to recall that reflective and reflexive activity, in simplistic form, meant stepping back from a situation, reflecting on one's perspective, and grappling with how that perspective fits with others. Below, are several examples of how civil servants envisaged and experienced a good exchange in the sphere of relational networks.

- 1) *"My daughter goes to a school where there are a lot of Black Bermudians. It is essentially a black Bermudian school. For her, I have come to see her language change- she has black friends. I have come to see my daughter as a Bermudian "girlfriend". I think of it as funny. Anyways, I had a work colleague and we were discussing our children and I told her about how my daughter had become and we talked about the differences in culture. "But it was in the spirit of observation- no pros or cons."(Pilot interview)*

- 2) *"I was telling her about how polite the youngsters are. 10 kids say good afternoon to me and then ask me for a lift home. We actually enjoyed the differences and for once, I didn't feel like a white expat [foreign worker], which I am socially and at work. There was an authenticity and an openness" (Pilot interview).*

- 1) *"My old boss, I still remember him from 13 years ago". "He was really nice to work with. I felt I was part of a team. He was from a different country, but he was fun loving and I never got the impression that he was prejudiced..." "Sometime I look to see if I get a vibe from a person of a different color. I am always kind of tentative. When I was growing up, I didn't know many people. Deep down, I still look for it whenever I meet them. I didn't see that in this man. He took me at face value. I took them as not seeing color, or if they did, it didn't matter. With others, I felt there was a barrier and it was that they noticed a difference. I don't think they are prejudiced, I think that they just knew there was a difference. I don't know. But people like my supervisor, obviously he knew there was difference, but it just didn't matter. Perhaps it was personality- he was outgoing. Like alcohol, it seems like it breaks down everyone's defenses. That's how he worked; he broke down defenses. To a large a degree, it depends on personality, people have a certain personality. Open. Open enough to appreciate that everyone is different and not be bothered or defensive by the differences" (5).*

- 2) *"Everyday, something is going to happen to tick you off, but I want to let go of the little things". "Take people one-on-one, each day, everyday- yes, they will disrespect us sometimes, but it is not everyone or all the time". "Those trainees whom come out of the training are more prepared for what it is really like to do the job". 'Perhaps we could include more Officer's personal stories and experiences in the orientation phase of training". [In this way, we might] "all recognise the humanity in each other and in the people we serve" (2).*

These four interview excerpts typify participants' suggestions for enhancing the tone of relational interactions in the civil service. They suggest that a shift in narrative activities will require a high degree of openness and acceptance, a suspension of judgment on others experiences and practice in accepting people at face value. They indicate that they believe in the possibility of having some form of transformative dialogue occurring amongst their networks. They have lived these experiences and can attest to how new understandings were created for themselves, at those times.

However, these findings illustrate that there is room for the tone of these dialogues to shift in ways that demonstrate a high regard for the people who give meaning to policy and practice activities. When this shift occurs, and incorporates the offerings on aligning activities between narrative spheres, we will better align policy and practice. As such, we will have also moved one step closer to the 'relational realisation of policy in practice'.

Participation in these types of authentic dialogues might make it is easier for individuals to accept that their privileged and/or internal narratives have consequences for organisational practice. As we become more accustomed to listening for, and seeking out, the hidden, removed or silent messages, it may become possible to hear the absence of the privileged narrative in policy. It may also become possible to experience how regardless of what is stated as an organisational mission or best practice objectives, the exercise of opening what is privileged to a wider audience. Authentic dialogues open up possibilities for support in relational networks, and an opportunity for checks and balances within the organisational culture.

In becoming inquisitive about privileged meaning, we may discover that the challenge for, and to, organisations is to create a space in the professional narrative for the privileged one to occur. This is not to say that a 'best practice' or 'policy ideal' would ultimately change, but that as it stands, the two are too disconnected from each other. They may be competing for the same space and energies, and telling competing stories.

Organisations and their employees will be able to speak about their best work when the narrative process is informed by individuals' most privileged stories. It is only then, in my opinion, that the possibilities for excellent workplace relationships, good employment experiences, sound policy and excellence in practice can be comprehensively narrated.

These stories may have much better outcomes if they are co-constructed with high regard for the situated experience of identity. These respectful, accepting and diverse exchanges increase the potential for alignment between workplace culture, policy and practice.

The Bermuda Race Relations Initiative: How a big conversation got bigger

...Mr. President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly. The success of the Bermuda Race Relations Initiative's Big Conversation will continue. People of Bermuda of all races have seen the benefits of talking about those things that divide us, of bringing into the open the scars caused by racism, through conversations that are at times painful, illuminating and a source of healing. The Government will enable those Bermudians who seek to engage in this vitally important conversation on race relations to take ownership of the process through the newly emerged organizing committee drawn from participants. Government will not only fund and support this committee, but will also assist other groups, such as Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB) and the National Association for Reconciliation (NAR), who share a common vision.

In addition, the Government will premier a feature length documentary entitled "The Big Conversation" currently in production that will not only chronicle the work of the Bermuda Race Relations Big Conversation in 2007, but will also provide a more thorough examination of race and privilege in Bermuda. The Bermuda Race Relations Initiative will also sponsor a half hour monthly series on CITV and will launch a web site to better enable a wide cross-section of the community to participate in this vitally important process... On behalf of Her Majesty The Queen I now declare this session of Parliament open.

May Divine Providence continue to bless Bermuda and to guide this Legislature in all its deliberations.

-Excerpt from the Speech to the Throne, Sir Richard H.T. Gozney, KCMG

Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Hamilton, Bermuda, 1 February 2008

Launched by Premier Ewart Brown in March of 2007, the Bermuda Race Relations (BRR) was established "a series of dialogues and panel discussions aimed at unearthing the cancer of racism which has affected the Bermuda psyche for generations". Co-facilitated by American Professor Robert Jensen and Dr. Bernestine Singley, organised by Rolfe Commissioning, with the support of CURE, one participant shares,"

"I am obviously disappointed that there aren't more people here that look like me, but as we say in race relations, 'surprise, surprise, surprise'. This has been an incredible experience and fantastic opportunity. I want to inspire white people to open up, take risks, be uncomfortable and start the healing".

Another participant, Haga Markham, tells attendees that "whites owe blacks an apology". "You don't want to be like us". "Don't try to be like the white people are or were". "Seek healing not just economically, but in your own self image and your own soul, in any deep invisible way that you need"²².

²² Additional Participant feedback can be found in the report entitled, "A Verbatim Report by Participants: "What the Initiative has Meant to Me", presented to Dr., the Honourable Ewart F. Brown, JP, MP (16th November 2007).

The Questions- Tools²³ used to guide the BRRRI process...

From "Hanging Tough in a Rough Conversation"; an exercise conducted during on of the first BRRRI Sustained Race Dialogue sessions (16th- 17th April 2007).

On starting a Conversation...

1. How do you have a conversation?
2. How do you have a conversation about something that's taboo?
3. How does the number of people in the room affect the conversation?
4. What do you need to go deeper?
5. How do you open up the conversation to others without losing intimacy or momentum?
6. How fearful, hurt, or angry are you willing to become?
7. What are you prepared to do when you become fearful, hurt, angry or disappointed?
8. How committed are you?
9. What happens if you start feeling good?
10. How deep are you willing to go?

On developing trust, comfort and connectedness in preparation for conversations on race in a work group setting...

1. Who was your first ancestor?
2. Why did they come? How did they get here?
3. How are you privileged by your ancestors?
4. How are you disadvantaged by your ancestors?
5. What is your responsibility in the areas where you are privileged?
6. What is your responsibility in the areas where you are disadvantaged?
7. What do you tell your children about the ways in which they are advantaged – historically and currently?
8. What do you tell your children about the ways in which they are disadvantaged – historically and culturally?
9. What do your children know?

²³ These tools were presented by Professor Robert Jensen and Dr. Bernestine Singley while facilitating Bermuda's BRRRI forums.

10. To whom are you accountable?

On moving a dialogue on race forward...

1. Why am I/you here?
2. How did you/we get here?
3. Where are we going? (What's the point of this conversation?)
 - a. What will a successful race dialogue look like to you?
 - b. How can you measure progress?
 - c. What are you prepared to do to achieve this?
4. What am I willing to do to get there?
 - a. What needs to happen for you to be willing to come back again?
 - b. What will you do to keep the conversation going?
5. Where am I stuck?
6. What can I do to get unstuck?
7. What resources among us?

And some reflections from Bermuda on these questions

Where do we go from here? Where are we going?

- Involvement through multiple approaches and settings, ie., church, work
- Bringing initiatives together towards a structured and unified national advisory on race relations including race conference
- Council to embrace all key groups with goal of communication, awareness, collaboration and change, ie., concrete action
- Identification of areas for change to guide strategy and action plans
- Commitment to continuing process of dialogue with patience to ensure desired positive and systemic change and outcomes
- Teaching video on race/racism on Bermuda for wider use in facilitating dialogue, understanding and change
- Racism survey of substance to be widely published/distributed

- Education as a non-violent vehicle for mind revolution requiring curriculum and classes (books, etc) for adults and children
- Reflection on macro/micro systems, ie, criticism → constructive, for change (Political, Economic, Education, Class, etc. Religion)

Why are we here?

- Curious – want to understand the “issue”
- Increasingly obvious there is a division
- Increased awareness of race
- Always undercurrent of racism
- Talk about race – go deeper – may be passionate – hard things have to be said
- “Honest” conversation
- Ultimate goal of reconciliation and unity
- Have to accept that there are historical disadvantages
- Creative thinking to bring people together
- Micro grants to fund activities
- Lack of tolerance for others
- Mistrust in the community (communities)
- Few more meetings – need to keep group together and build trust – one on one meetings
- Frustration about wanting “action”
- I was invited to hear the Premier – and my wife is here
- Representing work with person of opposite colour & feel privileged to represent my place of business since there was a time when blacks couldn’t even work there
- It’s important to forge a way forward
- These discussions move the participants forward to next level
- Came expecting frank discussion and open
- This will impact the community, race is important issue that has been watered down
- I believe racism is high on our list of social ills and intend to support efforts that make a difference

- Rest of life will work with this
- I am taken with Bernestine's skill
- The fact that it is the Premier's Initiative
- The subject interests me
- I am back because this workshop is different – The whites here are not limited to those already into this cause
- I want to know I did all I could to make race work
- I came because I feel white people need to get involved in this area
- I want to be part of the ongoing dialogue
- Impressed with Premier's dedication to this
- The train is leaving the station with all of black Bermuda onboard and I can choose to join in or choose to be marginalized
- Improve Race Relations in Community
- Encourage process
- Dialogue
- Relevant for job
- Listen to experiences of others
- Help to accept differences
- Want to make a difference
- Curiosity
- Understand differences in Race Relations
- Appreciate
- Self Awareness

Where do we want the Race Dialogue to go from here? What's next?

- Reflection of dialogue
- Encourage dialogue with peers
- Improve own relationships, work, family, ie. Youth
- To be a risk taker
- Encourage understanding
- Being honest

- Open (encourage)
- Modeling
- Coaching
- Long term ongoing process
- Book discussion
- Want sessions to gain momentum
- Bring white people along with me who would not attend
- Active move towards concrete solution – beyond discussion
- Raise sensitivity through knowledge of history, esp. 20th century
- Commitment from attendees to actively DO SOMETHING before next forum that brings awareness to the larger community so it gains momentum
- Get others excited to attend forums
- INTENTION → arrive with energy for this each time
- Inform us what all of the race organizations are and what they are up to
- As individuals speaking to kids about race and portrayals of blacks in literature, popular culture
- TV reaches young people – investigate resources existing in other countries that we could use
- Having this dialogue on the job (black & white)- we could have businesses do this
- Give out cards to have in wallet with 5 tips on how to get rid of racism

At what was described as an “emotional close to Race Relations Initiative meetings (Royal Gazette, 19th November 2007, p6), participants gave testimonials.

Conclusions

The only way we are going to be able to sustain ourselves, as a society, locally, globally and spiritually, is to get to a place where people and relationships have meaning. We will need to live and navigate our lives in spaces where we hold each other in genuine regard; where we are curious about each other and treat each other with caring and consideration.

The conversation projects of Bermuda were truly a series of 'conversational actions that seemed to help people in going on together'²⁴. From "burning questions" to a sustained conversation on race, each initiative led to another, adding context to the conversations, transforming and enriching the ensuing dialogues.

Dialogic discussion topics:

- 1) Reflecting on your community, as you define it, have there been similar types of transformative dialogic activities that resonate with you. What was your involvement? What did the process or activity look and feel like? What was the outcome?;
- 2) Reflecting on the work conducted in Watertown or in Bermuda, what might be some possibilities for dialogic work in your community, as you define it? What might be the issue to consider? How would you like to see it approached?;
- 3) Is there room for courageous conversations, inquiry and deep respect in the workplace... in our communities? What types of dialogues are occurring in the workplace? What are their implications for and about race, gender and other social constructs. How is it possible to dialogue and aspire to more successful working relations and decision making practices?

²⁴ Gergen, K. (1999). An invitation to social construction, 'Dialogic Potentials', p54. Thousand Oaks, CA, London: Sage Publications.

"Unfinished Conversations"

How "the conversations" continued... a postscript

CURB is now an established watch-dog group, with meetings open to public and wide circulation of meeting minutes, information about community events, and resources for the developing anti-racism advocate. Since 2006 Lynne Winfield has been President of Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda, which describes itself as a non-governmental, grassroots, anti-racism organization, and continues to work alongside other anti-racism activists on the CURB Council. In August of 2008, CURB released the findings of a study they conducted on perceptions of race and race relations in Bermuda. An interesting dialogic finding of the study, which surveyed 400 residents of Bermuda, was that the top three suggestions on how to improve race relations was to have more dialogue. 56% of the respondents said that they talk about race-related issues weekly or more frequently. Over 24% of white respondents and 22% of black respondents talk about these issues daily.

BRI now gets substantive funding. From its approval from the Premier of Bermuda in 2007 to present, it has brought together well over a 1000 participants in monthly dialogue sessions. These sessions are facilitated, and tackle a different subject area and its impact on race, each month. The core organising group has organized several panel discussions on race and related themes, i.e. "*What is Racism: A Current Perspective*". By January of 2008, an offshoot of the BRI, the Dialogue Group, began to hold discussions about the panel topic on the following day, allowing participants to further explore the ideas raised by the speakers and discuss how they relate to our local context.

Imagine Bermuda, has resurfaced organising events to bring the community together to celebrate and commemorate both local and international interests- Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday, the celebration of newscaster...

The **Diversity Institute of Bermuda** has remained a charity but is essentially inactive. It maintains its status as a charity and a holding-pattern structure available to any person or group that wishes to continue its work.

CURE is re-strategising, placing emphasis on coordinating the activities of groups and becoming a central resource centre for activity. CURE continues to offer train-the-trainer opportunities for people in Bermuda who wish to advance conversations on race in the places where they work, live and play.

On Sexual Orientation?

Now, as we approach work in other areas of human rights, many of us who were involved in the "Conversation Project Bermuda, find ourselves drawing on those experiences and the language of understanding we developed to discuss homosexuality and the need for protection on the basis of sexual orientation with members of the religious communities. In a most recent discussion, we were able to say, "I never thought of this issue from your position; whilst I maintain my own, for my own reasons, I now understand how I can better talk to you about your concerns". And we leave those conversations and willing and prepared to meet again.

Women's Rights?

Our work and policy development on women's rights and gender equity has been strongly influenced by the principles of dialogic activity. Now, not just about women and equality about gender equity and the young black males we would be leaving behind if we only talked about one sex.

"Foreign" influence, limited resources and the land we wish to call our own...

We no longer just speak about race equity without thinking about the implications and contributions of guest workers to the country. Perhaps we can not guarantee access to all benefits, but we can take them into consideration and try to negotiate a path that is transparent and as equitable and fair to all parties, as possible. We can tell them the story of Bermuda's past and where the hurts have come from, and why they resonate today.

As a country, we seem to agree that in some areas, we have moved forward collectively on this issue of race and that there has been a degree of transformation in how we dialogue on race issues. We have moved from a climate of relative silence, to, for some of us, the most open and honest dialogue we have ever had; acknowledgements previously never heard, from whites and frank expressions of hurt and injustice for blacks.

Despite annual requests, CURE never got more funding or support to continue the "Conversation Project, Bermuda" but its spirit lives on in all of these new initiatives. The conversations continue...

- 11) In 2002, community members from across the Island met in three concurrent meetings (Dockyard, St. Georges, and central) to dialogue on race issues and to make resolutions. The outcome was a brochure which published the "Community Resolutions and is still in distribution to this day.
- 12) MFDT group meetings;
- 13) Annual Youth Race Awareness forums (Youth Perspectives 2003; Youth Strategies 2004; Classroom to Career 2005);

Annex: The Origins of CURE

In the 1993 October elections, the then UBP Government promised to proactively address the lingering issues of race in Bermuda. In January 1994, the Department formerly known as Community and Cultural Affairs held three "Circle of Unity" meetings (St. Georges, Somerset, Hamilton) to discuss race matters. The more notable advocates on the issues needed to be addressed, such as Dr. Eva Hodgson, were prominent panelists. In addition, an attempt was made to expand the range of conversation to people who were not already on the public stage. As a consequence, the Baha'is were invited to participate; possibly because of the race analyses and practical work that had been done by this community, globally since 1912 and in Bermuda since 1952.

The Baha'i committee assigned to work on this project included: Dr. Fred Ming (then at the Bermuda College), Anthony Ball, Jordy Walker and Arlene Brock. The Baha'i determined that many panelists would review the history of race relations in Bermuda or analyze the current situation. So, they decided to consider what, in practical ways, could be done that was different from what was being done at the time. Hence, the idea of a permanent body that would be tasked with education, research, and practical work with various sectors of Bermuda – not just identifying what is wrong but also patting organizations, businesses on the back when they were doing the right thing – was launched. The Baha'is primary concern was that the focus had been on moving towards racial equality and they wanted to articulate that their belief was that racial equality was in service of unity; referencing the work of Nat Rutstein and other Baha'is in the US who had termed racism as "dis-ease". To note, it is believed that the acronym CURE (Commission for Unity and Racial Equality), came from the association of racism with disease as well as the UK's CRE (Commission for Racial Equality) association.

The Circle of Unity meetings were reported to have gone quite well and in mid-February, the then Minister, Jerome Dill, asked that the Baha'i working group to flesh out the idea of how CURE would operate. The group submitted a more extensive proposal to the Minister, who met with them in April of 1994, indicating that he was considering creating CURE. The notion behind CURE at that time was that a non-partisan approach was imperative. Therefore, the idea of CURE was also broached with the Shadow Cabinet Minister at that time, Renee Webb, JP, MP. She was enthusiastic and it is believed that she consulted with Jerome Dill to offer her support.

In 1993 and 1994, there had been a survey and preliminary work done on race in the workplace by a UK consultant. In order not to lose the momentum, the Department decided to follow that up with another initiative that would be under the CURE umbrella (although CURE was not yet properly established). Therefore, around June of 1994, a

request for proposals went out for a Train-the-Trainer program on race in the workplace. A Train-the-Trainer programme was held in November of 1994, with great representation from a variety of employers. A second Train the Trainer program was held in March 1995.

On 19th December 1994, the CURE legislation was tabled in the House of Assembly. CURE was never intended to focus primarily on the workplace. CURE has evolved and was anticipated to evolve as needed, quite independently of the original vision. Workplace "work" happened to be the focus of the initial work – for obvious reasons it was necessary to tackle workplace issues that had been bubbling over. Workplace activities also gave CURE an immediate focus, and allowed the organisation to have ownership of the previous training initiatives.

Participants of the CURB Forums

The Dialogue Group Committee

Suzanne Mayall

Yvonne Smith

Sarah Clifford

Dr. Eva Hodgson

Margaret Downing-Dill

Denny Richardson

CURE staff 2003-2006

Diversity Institute of Bermuda Initial Board of Trustees

Ernestine De Graff

Kathy Hykes

Colette Lundy

Stephen Emery

Cummings Zuill

Members of the Progressive Group

Stanley Ratteray (Leader)

Rosalind Williams

Edouard Williams

Clifford Wade

Marva Phillips

Coleridge Williams

Rudolph Commissiong

Vera Commissiong

Clifford Maxwell

Florenz Maxwell

Eugene Woods

Esme Swan

Lancelot Swan

Dr. Erskine Simmons

William Francis

William Walywn

Gerald Harvey

Izola Harvey

The Conversation Project Production participants

Marla Smith

Aran McKittrick

Yvonne Smith

Brenda Dale

Jo-Ann Pully

Frances Eddy

Jose' Cabral

Brian Bean

Theodore Francis

Dennis Martin

Valerie Dill

Mickael "Mike" DeSilva

Colwyn "junior" Burchall

Kristen White

Julita Jordan

Charles Riley

Geovanni Simon

Nikkita Scott

Debbie K. Martin

Leadership Diversity Forum 2004: Questions Participants Wished to Ask

Ethnicity	Questions For	Question	Question I'd like to be asked
African/Irish	Whites	Why do you feel that all black people think the same?	I would like to tell whites that I want to embrace all sides of my heritage and I don't hate them?
Black	Whites	Why would you feel that as a black person, I should be stereotyped into black organizations? Why shouldn't I be free to choose?	Why would you as a black person join they UBP?
Black	Whites	(1) Why is it that all the physical characteristics I love about myself (dark-skin, kinky hair, thick lips) and find are beautiful, so threatening to you? (2) Why are you genuinely surprised when I present myself as the intelligent, articulate, young man I am?	Why don't you seem relaxed when you are around us?
Black		What will it take for people to really care?	What parts of you do you value the most?
Black	Bermudians	DO we maintain a hierarchy for Bermudians ourselves?	Do white people care, other than the "humanitarians"?

		Why?	
Black	Whites	Why do you believe that you are superior to blacks?	What will make you happy?
Black	Whites	(1) Why are you afraid of me- a black man? (2) How many whites/blacks will leave this seminar today with the intent to meet others of the opposite races?	
Black	Mr. Grant Gibbons	What do you see when you look at a black person? Are you a racist?	
Black American	Black Bermudian	If economic equality could be realized, would racial segregation in Bermuda be viewed so badly?	How do you feel about ghetto fabulous glorification?
Black Bermudian	Blacks & Whites	Why am I perceived as a racist because I insist on addressing the issues of racism and race relations?	
Black Bermudian	Black Bermudian	Why is it that some blacks make such grand attempts to be accepted into a class race that seems disassociates themselves from other blacks?	When did you first experience the victimization of racism?

Black Bermudian	Whites	How do you really feel about socializing with blacks after the regular 9-5 work day?	How do I define myself?
Black Bermudian	Whites	What are your pre-conceived notions about black people?	What do I like about growing up in Bermuda?
Black Bermudian	White Men	(1) Do you believe everything would be okay if blacks would simply "take the shackles off"? (2) Why blacks only get positions of power because of who they know or their political affiliations- because blacks aren't intelligent enough to get them on their own? (3) Do you think you are racist? (4) Tell us one racist thing you have done?	What is it like to be publicly discriminated against?
Black Bermudian	Whites	(1) What do you think when you see a black person? (2) Why do people in power-policy makers don't seem to care by what they do?	How does it feel to grow up without knowing my birth parents?
Black Bermudian	Whites	What do you think when you see a black woman with their hair braided or	

		locked?	
Black Bermudian	Whites	Do you feel black people in Bermuda are comfortable with the way of life in Bermuda?	Am I a racist person?
Black Bermudian	White Men	Why can't you say you're sorry to people of color?	What is your vision for the black people in Bermuda?
Black Bermudian	English/ Bermudians	When will you stop judging intellectual capacity against Bermudian dialect. It has been my experience that the stronger the accent, the dumber a person is viewed.	Why do you conform?
Black Bermudian	Blacks	When will blacks sit down and talk about 'black on black' racism?	How does it feel like to be discriminated against your own race?
Black Bermudian	Politicians	Bermuda has a problem on their hands with these international companies. Is it anyway possible that they keep there company as long as Bermudians do the employee recruiting. Doing that can decrease this bias recruiting by foreigners.	What is it like being a young black female, trying to get ahead in Bermuda, when coming from nothing?

Black Bermudian	St. Georges Prep Board/Govenors	Would they be willing to amalgamate with East End to form a new school?	
British/Portuguese/ Canadian	Bermudians	(1) What was it like to live through segregation in Bermuda? (2) What is it like to a be black woman in Bermuda today?	What was it like coming back home to Bermuda?
Canadian	Bermudians	Bermuda has such rich cultures based on a unique and fascinating history of conflicts and cooperation, between many groups, why isn't taught to your children? Why isn't that a part of the open dialogue in this phenomenal country?	How do you feel when people try to include you in their groups (female, black, white) based on how they see you and not how you see yourself?
Cuban/German American	Blacks	What can I do, if anything, to cease being the enemy?	How does it feel to be feared or deemed to be intimidating, when it is the last thing you want to be?
East Indian/African/ Bermudian	Whites	(1) Why do the benefactors of slavery and racism deny that they have no responsibility for their ancestor's behavior? (2) In the Bermuda	Why do white people have a fear of people of color when we have historically done nothing to oppress you?

		experience, when are the white Bermudians going to start joining institutions in Bermuda that are predominantly Black?	
French/Portuguese/Indian/Black/White		What is it going to take for you to understand that I have more to offer from my experiences?	What does it feel like to be told you are not qualified for a job, when you have completed every exercise mandatory to qualify for the position?
German Bermudian	Everyone	Why can't we solve this racial differences in this small place?	
Jamaican/ Bermudian	White Females	Why do you feel intimidated or angry about admitting to feelings of in superiority or jealousy when you see a white male with a black female?	
Multi-ethnic	The Politicians	What needs to happen in order for us to move forward and to get beyond the hate and disrespect?	What is it like to be constantly confused as a heterosexual woman in Bermuda?
White	Black Bermudian	Why is it often assumed that white residents are not Bermudian?	What do you enjoy about being in a multi-racial community?

White	Blacks	If I am to blame for all the problems of race/ racism, what can I do to improve/solve it?	
White	Blacks	What has it felt like growing up in Bermuda being black? Did you feel differences as a child; do you now as an adult?	What does it mean to be a white man? How does it feel to be a white man in this society?
White	Black Male Bermudians	Do you really see white expats as a threat?	
White	Young Black Bermudians	In which way has racism affected you or held you back?	Do you believe that you treat black and whites the equally?
White	Lee Mun Wah	How does Bermuda differ from the US in the content of racism?	
White Bermudian	Blacks	Do you think racism is purely a white disease?	
White Bermudian	Black Bermudian	How or why do successful black Bermudians become white?	
White Canadian	Blacks/Whites	Will it ever be possible for a black to look at a white without resentment and for a white to look at a black without guilt? How do we	Do you mind being called a "Newfie"?

		get there?	
White/Irish/Welsh/ Scottish/ English	Bermudians	Why do heterosexual say they are not homophobic?	Why do you say that you don't mind gays/lesbians as long as they don't flaunt their sexuality?

Leadership Forum 2004: Participants' Input, Wishes and Feedback

How would you describe this workshop	What did you enjoy about this workshop?	What do you wish for in a future workshop, forum or other initiative?	What of this experience was moving or shifted your perspective on how we negotiate race issues in Bermuda?	What more do you want to know?	In your opinion, what needs to happen next? What are your beliefs about the way forward in addressing race issues for Bermuda?
Interesting, particularly since I have never been exposed to a person of Chinese origin.	The extent to which the Chinese facilitator shared himself.	I would wish that this government and white business would give the same support to local efforts, even though we lack the skills of those who have had an opportunity to exercise their skills, as you have.	I have been involved in this issue too long to have any major perspective shift.	I would like to know, when this black government is going to recognize these policies are as important as personal relationships.	Bermudians, particularly a black government, needs to acknowledge and support those of us who have been struggling with these issues for fifteen years as much as they do for expats.
Powerful, moving, emotionally draining and refreshing- all at the same time.	The ability to speak freely.	More of the same, with commitment to change after the session.	While this forum allows for free discussions, I won't leave here feeling as though things will change.		Continued actions on this topic of discussion.
Excellent.	We were all on the same page, vulnerably exposed.	More of the same.	In debt- going right to the root. Is it necessary on	In dept- going right to the root. It is	2

				necessary onward going to react the rest of the community.	
Stimulating but it left a lot of unfinished business.	The frankness and openness of the dialogue.	More of the same but involving the man in the street.	The diversity of the group was probably the most towing and left a level of serenity shown by all.	Where to go from here?	The whole country must buy into the process.
Very insightful and illuminating.	The warmth and fellowship amongst all the attendees. The openness and freedom of speech.		The film brought certain issues to life.		To keep what we learned today alive by building on today's event.
Fantastic! Informative and very enlightening. I was extremely pleased to be apart of such discourse.	The energy and willingness of people from various backgrounds (class and ethnicity) to participate.	Similar topical discussions.	The attempt to open the discourse to individuals who have the ability and opportunity to effect change in their areas of work and social life.		The discussion needs to continue and be taken and implemented on a larger scale.
Very interesting insight into perceptions of diversity in culture and race.	Listening to others thoughts rationalization.	Initiate a conversation relating to whites being treated unfairly.	How some people are very deeply and emotionally traumatized by how they have been treated.		Talk to children and educate them- diversity is a wonderful thing, cultures make the world interesting.
Useful.	A chance to interact and get a wide range of opinions about racism. Made me re-examine myself.	Perhaps more smaller groups as well.	To be reminded of how deeply racism has affected some people.		Individuals have to take ownership of the issue and politicians have to stop beating each other with it for political points.
Excellent.	The chance to talk honestly with members of the community from diverse backgrounds one-on-one.	To have these seminars on an ongoing basis. These forums should also be taken directly into the workplace.	The film called "The Last Chance for Eden" was particularly moving and helped to bring clarity into the way people of color are really made to feel.	What can we do to help remove the 'fear factor' of diverse groups reaching out to one another in Bermuda.	Train people such as myself to take this message back to our organizations and institutions so that it can spread and affect change.

Interesting.	Interaction between members/attendees.		Not accomplished.	What is racism?	Describing racism and separating it from preference.
Challenging and interesting.					
I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop and feel we need to continue this type of conversations.	Good blend of information and audience participation.	That we take these types of forums out into the community.	That we encourage discussions and understanding from a wide perspective and within the limited time.	There is so much more to learn- need to keep on.	We need to encourage a real dialogue and conversation in all Bermuda's communities and sustain the dialogue.
Very thought provoking; instigated serious soul searching; very beneficial to my social development.	Openness and honesty.	Definitely worthy of repetition; preferably at a different venue.	The reflection of past experiences as they related to how I had socially developed over the years.	How many unresolved racist thoughts do I have.	A continuance of the discussion in earnest continual dialogue.
Very enlightening.	The openness.	More opportunities for each participant to express themselves.	The people still don't realize racism still exist in Bermuda.	A white man's perspective.	More open dialogue.
One that provokes introspect to be truthful about feelings/issues that you have pushed to the back of your mind.	The thought provoking questions initiated by the facilitators.				
Enlightening and thought provoking.	Ability to speak without feeling embarrassed.		The movie.		More event more often. Ask for more participation (ethnic wise)
Refreshing.	Openness of the participants.	Participants look for ways and means of finding solutions.	We are at the crossroad of change. We are the administrators of managing this change.	How to manage change.	The people of Bermuda come together and deal with the issues.

Not bad.	Exchange.	More focused exchange.	Perspective of blacks and how they view me.	What the purpose was of the organizers.	Keep trucking and moving forward.
Good.	Talking about an important topic in Bermuda that is not often talked about openly.	More workshops films should be shown on TV and at schools.	It opened up dialogue.	More open dialogue.	Films should be shown on TV and in schools.
Excellent.	The first exercise, one-on-one dialogue with a partner the first night.	More discussion time.	The fact that none of us talks openly to each other just about each other and here we had a chance to do so.	Whether we can have this an on-going thing in Bermuda.	The historical aspects of what happened to each group in the country must be discussed, taught and spiritually dealt with i.e. blacks, Jews, Irish, Native people, etc.
Powerful, stirring, timely.	The actual dialogue between participants. The film was very powerful and showed us how we could talk to each other.	More discussion time with each other. Follow-up so that this becomes a process -vs- an event.	The film was moving. I think we really need more consistent dialogue.	What things are planned? What other like this are coming up?	Dialogue! First getting comfortable in forums like this and then resolving present day conflicts through them.
Much needed excellent content and well presented.	The interaction and ability to share and to listen.	Another opportunity to continue the dialogue.		What is the next step?	Public awareness starting with public figures highlighting of any comments that are insensitive and offensive.
Eye-opening, wonderful.	Dialogue learning.	More!	We need more feelings talk.	How do I/you feel?	More workshops.
Thought provoking and emotional riveting.	The experimental nature	Follow-up how to operationally the dialogue.	It drove home the importance of listening and taking the risk to truly listen and share.		Accepting and affirming that race relations are directly attached to economic prosperity and the perception that only the gap is widening fast.

Positive but some of the format seemed to ensure only few participants-large group open tended time volunteer participation.	Meeting some new people and getting some new insights into myself and Bermuda's racial situation.	Smaller groups of committed persons and other sessions to get more of the population involved.	No one thing- as always- an open dialogue between black and white, male and female is illuminating.	How can I make a difference and help Bermuda get better?	More sessions, more participation, more acceptance of the existing problem and hopefully an agreement on how to solve it.
Informative.	The opportunity to get feedback.	More than one day, smaller groups to address everyone.	It don't hurt that I am in a position to say at the moment.	More advise on intervention techniques.	Put seminars directly in the workplace so that everyone is aware.
The most thought provoking and testing workshop I have ever been on.	The emotions that were brought to the fore front within me.	More on sexuality and class.	I broke out into tears a number of times feeling total empathy with some of the contributors and people in the film.	Sexuality and class.	A full public debate on the issue in the press, TV, radio and the institutions.
Very valuable.	The honest sharing of personal feelings.	More of the same.	The group examination of stereotype views held by both racial groups.		Try to get more groups.
A true personal journey-thought provoking.	The experience of asking the question I wanted to ask and help with the process of asking.	More opportunity for learning skills in opening the conversation process.		Skills in helping me lead the process.	Me taking the opportunities in my life to have the conversation.
Well organized-needed more white male Bermudians.	The movie "Last Chance for Eden".	Organizational development, multi-cultural.			The dialogue with black and white Bermudians.
Excellent-dialogue that is needed.	The openness of people and fact that they felt "safe" enough to say what they felt.	A continuation if the discussion and help putting together a personal plan to be part of the change.			The political parties need to sit down and agree to remove racism or references to it from their daily dialogue i.e. disrespect for each others opinions and always making race the reason.

Very thought provoking and moving.	Everything.	More time or race issues.	The directness, breaking the barriers, so much more work to do.	Need more time and more workshops.	We definitely need to continue the dialogue.
Very dynamic and interactive though provoking.	Good participation and facilitators expertise leading the process.	More Time!			A beginning-need more focus groups, etc. to keep momentum.
A good exchange but could be focused a little more on Bermuda. I can't change the U.S., U.K., but I can change Bermuda.	Not a bad cross section of business/civil servants and government.	How do we lead from here? Instill positive momentum.	A recognition of racial beliefs between us all.	How to move forward more aggressively?	Next forum needs other faces, younger people.



Dr. Earl D. King, chairman of the committee, is seen here with other members of the committee in the Cadogan Building yesterday.

Govt. expands its 'Big Conversation' initiative

By Matthew Taylor

The Big Conversation, the government's initiative to encourage people to talk about their views on the economy, has been expanded to include the social dimension.

Mr. King, who is chairman of the committee, said that the government was keen to hear from people on a wide range of issues, including the environment, education, and health.

He also announced an expansion of the initiative to include the social dimension, which will allow people to discuss their views on issues such as the environment, education, and health.

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