

## What Happens In an ASDIC Circle?

ASDIC dialogues invite participants to

- (1) Actively explore the meaning, construction, and social purpose of racialized identity;
- (2) Examine the roots of structural domination and social oppression that confer or restrict power, influence, and privilege;
- (3) Recognize how the legacy of racism and contemporary structures of domination shape interpersonal and intergroup relationship;
- (4) Build dispositions to become aware of and acknowledge racism and to recognize taken-for-granted racial privileges;
- (5) Learn communication skills and language to effectively discuss contemporary racism;
- (6) Develop empathy and the capacity to listen and to hold a 'double consciousness' in cross/racial interactions;
- (7) Become acquainted with civic and activist leadership engaged in social justice change activities, and
- (8) Cross barriers of difference to form friendships, coalitions, and networks to take action for dismantling racism and creating a just, equitable society.

ASDIC dialogues, as a pedagogy of reconciliation, embrace Mary Elizabeth Mullins' four principles for teaching reconciliation: The ASDIC dialogues address

- (1) the fear of knowing and the fear of being in relationship-the fear of not finding answers and the fear of knowing what we do not know;
- (2) the yearning to know-the yearning to find life beyond conflict, to face questions without answers, and to know what we do not know;
- (3) education as searching-the practice of truth-telling, of living with questions, and of searching for what we do not know, engaging in experiencing, exploring, deconstructing and reconstructing cultural symbols through storytelling and social analysis;
- (4) education as reconciliation-the practice of posing alternatives, the practice of reconsideration, the practice of remembering and covenantal eating, and the practice of meeting in our ordinariness, our "as-we-are" humanity.

M. E. Mullins, in Park and Nelson, eds., 2001:19, modified.

## ASDIC Circles® on St. Paul's West Side. September 9 – December 12, 2008

### *Antiracism Study Dialogue Circles*



*Fostering wholeness  
Spinning webs of relationship  
Untangling knots of oppression*

*The Antiracism Study - Dialogue Circle (ASDIC, "azdek")<sup>™</sup> is a community of twelve to fifteen people who gather as a "Circle" to create supportive relationship as they explore the ways their social behaviors and identities have been formed in the context of "race" and the practices of racism in the United States.*

*The relationships are built around honest and deep dialogue. Circle participants, representing a range of faith and humanistic perspectives come from many walks of life-including teachers students congregational leaders activists artists, attorneys, civic leaders, college and university faculty, and school administrators.*

*Binding them together as a Circle are values about the importance of relationship, shared life stories, the desire to eliminate personal and institutional racism, and a willingness to engage in an extended dialogue process that leads to an Action Plan.*

*ASDIC facilitators work with Circle participants to identify the negative influence of certain values, institutions, and practices in the larger culture on their lives and relationships so that the participants may become advocates for relational values and stand against values harmful to themselves and society, i.e., racism.*

## ASDIC Circles®

As a community dedicated to mending the brokenness of racism, ASDIC fosters wholeness, spins webs of relationship, and untangles knots of oppression.

The ASDIC program promotes honest and open dialogue and study concerning the ways racial socialization informs our sense of self and place, images, values, and relationships. And it promotes an understanding that study and dialogue can contribute to self understanding, create empathy for ourselves and others in our complicity and injury, and empower us to take responsibility for personal and social transformation. This work takes place as the ASDIC collaborates to:

- Organize and host antiracism study dialogue circles
- Create and sustain partnerships and networks
- Create, identify, and provide resources
- Develop antiracism curriculum
- Provision, enable and empower participants
- Train new facilitators
- Build capacity for on-going antiracist transformation within institutions and communities
- Reconcile through social and racial justice

### Testimonial

Certificate of Achievement Award  
Hamline University, Division of Student Affairs, May, 2007:

*The ASDIC experience is rigorous, compassionate, respectful and non coercive. ASDIC participants undertake an intellectual and emotional examination of the historical social, political, and economic factors that continue to divide, limit, and exclude. Patient, kind, and supporting, the ASDIC Facilitators invite each participant to walk with them to explore the bitter and ugly places that are typically denied or avoided, Out of this process participants experience glimmers of a society beyond denial, shame, guilt, and rage - a society constructed on compassion, community, justice, hope, and love.*

Honoree of The Saint Paul Foundation:  
Facing Race Ambassador Award 2008

### Participant Testimonials:

I have waited thirty years to witness and participate in circle tackling racism. I am so proud and feel complete to move forward in my journey to creating an anti-racist community.

- **Kia Moua**, Resident St. Paul's West Side

The ASDIC Circle has been a rich experience for me. Developing a mature understanding of how racism impacts all of our lives, is an important obligation we owe ourselves if we are committed to building communities based on justice and peace with one another. ASDIC challenged me at a deep level but always within a spirit of hope and joy for the world we can build together.

- **Rep Carlos Mariani Rosa**

ASDIC is a challenging, but always safe and mutually supportive meeting of differing but kindred minds. In ASDIC, you discover how devastating racism is economically, socially, and spiritually, but you also get to know wonderful people who believe we can fight racism and win.

- **Eric Paul Jacobsen**, College Professor,  
Resident St. Paul's West Side

By providing more than an empathic awareness of the ills of racism, ASDIC equips participants with an advanced knowledge of racism and history, builds personal resilience, and encourages relationships to be developed and maintained.

ASDIC is a means to make a difference by providing practical tools needed to enable us to eliminate racism.

- **Graduate School faculty person**,  
Hamline University

**ASCIC** is sponsored by Cherokee Park United Church, with support from Emmaus Antiracism Team of the Minnesota Conference UCC, and The Saint Paul Foundation.

### **One or more ASDIC Circles or Classes have been offered at the following locations**

**A total of thirty ASDIC Circles offered since fall 2004.**

**Carleton College**

For-Credit Course IDSC 230

**United Theological Seminary**

For-Credit Course TR331:

**Cherokee Park United Church, Saint Paul**

**Mayflower Church UCC, Minneapolis**

**First Congregational Church of Minnesota**

**Calvary Baptist Church**

**Peace UCC, Rochester**

**Peace UCC, Duluth**

**Wesley Center, Hamline University**

**Hamline University (Saint Paul)**

**Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching**

**ASDIC Youth Circles**

**ASDIC Conocimientos After-School Program**

**Location for fall 2008:** Cherokee Park United Church, 371 West Baker St., on St. Paul's West Side, (1/2 block East of Smith Ave.)

**Dates:** The Circle will meet once a week for twelve weeks. Two separate Circles will be offered at Cherokee Park United Church. *Participants need to commit to participating in all twelve sessions in one of the Circles.*

One Circle meets on Tuesdays, 6:00 pm to 8:30 (dinner at 5:30 p.m.). The other Circle meets on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (breakfast @ 8:00 a.m.). A more detailed schedule is available.

**Cost:** The cost is \$150, which includes meals and all resources. *Pay what you can, scholarships are available. All are welcome without regard to financial circumstances.*

**Registration:** contact **Pastor Tim Johnson** at **651-227-4275** or **[cpuc@usfamily.net](mailto:cpuc@usfamily.net)**. Enrollment in each Circle is limited; please register early. The study dialogue circle is open to the community.

### Participant Testimonials:

As a community member who is deeply troubled by the continuing instances of racism and racial disparity in the Twin Cities and across the nation, I was grateful for the opportunity to participate in a program that was safe, challenging, uplifting, and truly profound. In our daily lives, there is little opportunity to learn and reflect in a way that is as substantive as ASDIC provides.

**Cesia Kearns**, Twin Cities environmental activist

The ASDIC experience is transformative because it encourages participants to engage deeply and honestly on a topic we have been socialized to avoid. Through the readings, videos and dialogue, I have found renewed hope that by building "beloved communities", we can and will confront and dismantle systemic racism. Our ASDIC Circle lasted twelve weeks, but the knowledge and insight I gained will last a lifetime. Thank you!

- **Maria McNamara**, Member, CPUC, St. Paul

Most of my life I have lived in multi ethnic and multi racial communities without realizing how much white privilege has given me. The ASDIC circle experience brings to focus what we as descendants of Europeans have gained materially but lost in human terms from the perpetuation of racism. The need for justice is not an abstraction. We need not only to rethink our role in perpetuating the edifice of racism, but to actively change it. ASDIC has helped me in this.

- **Sandy Settevig**, Founding member WSCO

### Additional Information on ASDIC Circles:

**[www.cherokeeparkunited.org](http://www.cherokeeparkunited.org)**

**651-224-2728**

**Herb Perkins: Executive Director**  
**[hperkins@asdic-alliance.org](mailto:hperkins@asdic-alliance.org)**