

# Get Involved: Pray



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## EMBRACE Prayer Group April 2014

We are all racists – at different levels – so said the American novelist John Grisham in a BBC Newsnight interview last year. We all think our own ‘race’ is the best. With a bit of Romans 7:19 honesty Grisham also admitted that he struggles with racism every day.

Could it be that in Northern Ireland our sectarianism fosters racism? The two phenomena are closely related and hide behind class differences equally well. Respectable middle class sectarianism fosters working class sectarian violence and hides behind it. The same is true of racism. Though harder to spot, racism can be found in the leafy suburbs when neighbours come face to face with newcomers to our society. What does this all say of us and of how we live out our Christianity?

Individual Christians and Christian churches should continually be protesting against racism and sectarianism – with no spurious justification, no weighing of economics, politics and morality in the balance. And the actions of churches must match their statements. Some are already doing this well but the work of Embrace and other para-church groups to challenge is much needed for we continue to create barriers to the gospel and the love of Christ.

So let us welcome the stranger and alien for they can enrich us. Their presence here might challenge our local preoccupations with what are, on an eternal scale, small minded ‘under the sun’ (Ecclesiastes 1:14) issues. In light of the positive view of cultural diversity in scripture Christians can expect benefits from the mixing of tribes, tongues and nations (Revelation 7:9).

*Contributed by Noel McCune*

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### This month we give thanks for:

- Individual Christians and Christian churches who are tackling racism and sectarianism
- People who are actively involved in making Northern Ireland a welcoming and safe place for everyone

### We pray for:

- People who experience racism: ‘hate speech’, avoidance, discrimination or physical attacks
- Our own attitudes towards others
- Those who perpetrate racist attitudes and actions

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### Responding to Racism

EMBRACE has developed a resource, called ‘A Stitch in Time: Responding to Racism at a Local Level’, to stimulate thinking and discussion around issues of welcome and integration, racism and the process of escalation. A series of four postcards are used to promote discussion. The cards, along with Leader’s notes and Bible Study ideas are free and available on request from the EMBRACE office.

