

**Report to the ABCUSA Board of General Ministries Executive Committee**  
**Anti-Racism Convening Table**  
**March 1, 2022**

An Anti-Racism Convening Table was the recommendation from ABC Past President Karen Podsiadly as a first step in beginning the establishment phase for an ABC Anti-Racism Commission, following a Board of General Ministries vote in their November 2021 meeting approving a proposal to establish an Anti-Racism Commission prompted by the 2020-2021 Anti-Racism Task Force.

General Secretary Jeff Woods extended an invitation to the National Executive Council members to consider participating in defining what a denomination-wide anti-racism effort can look like and to appoint a staff and/or board member to be a part of the convening table. It was recommended by NEC that the Regional Executive Ministers Council also be invited to appoint a representative.

The inaugural members of the Convening Table are (9):

Lisa	Harris-Lee	ABHMS	Staff
Perry	Hopper	MMBB	Staff
Gina	Jacobs-Strain	ABWM	Staff
LaRose	Karr	ABWM	Board
James	McJunkin	REMC	Staff
Marie	Onwubuariri	OGS	Staff
Rodney	Ragwan	IM	Staff
Kathryn	Ray	BGM/OGS	Board
Lisa	Rothenberger	IM	Staff

We had our first meeting on Friday, February 25 from 1-3 PM ET via Zoom. All were present, and Jeff Woods joined the call for the first minutes and provided a greeting and brief overview of how we got to this point. The approved proposal for a commission was also shared prior to the meeting. I facilitated this first meeting, and mentioned that I would be willing to facilitate but remain open to others to help build agenda, facilitate discussions, and other roles.

The meeting included an opportunity for sharing on the following questions:

- 1) "Why is (or What would make...) engaging in anti-racism work with colleagues across the ABC denomination valuable for me?"
- 2) "What would help make a sustained engagement in anti-racism work with colleagues across the ABC denomination valuable for \_\_\_\_ (your org.)?"

...and then discussed what we are discerning from listening to each person's responses to these questions, as well as reading the proposal for a commission, regarding what each needs/hopes for in next steps of what a denomination-wide anti-racism effort could be. Comments varied from expressing cautious hope yet commitment to the process, questions about additional fact-finding, desired outcomes, more discussion about language, etc. Notes will be shared with the

convening table this week, along with a date scan for a second meeting in the latter half of March.

For the next meeting:

- There was a question about the possibility to add people to the convening table in noticing that there could be greater diversity in the group, particularly that there are currently no white males. I responded that since the invitation was to have up to two persons per organization that any organization that does not have two reps would like to add someone, to invite them to the second meeting. If there was a circumstance that would lead to more than two per organization, then raise the question for consideration.
- They requested to see any recommendations that came out of the anti-racism task force subcommittees. I did mention that there were some findings from the congregational sub-group survey and the institutional sub-group final report. I will also share these with them.
- The agenda for this next meeting will take shape from the notes from meeting 1, particularly looking for potential groupings of next steps.

Closing Comments:

In my assessment, there was a good spirit in Meeting 1 with helpful notes to define next possible steps. It may take a few more meetings to continue to digest the proposal and discern a plan that is both manageable and potentially impactful. Naming and learning from our history will be an important component for sustained interest in this effort, as several voiced that “we have been down this road before.” There was strong interest in moving forward, not repeating or continuing what does not have lasting impact. There was affirmation of the effort to consider Board member commitment from the beginning. I am engaging facilitation and inclusion tools to foster a sense that these are meaningful conversations, with intent to foster space for everyone’s input to be offered and valued, plus learning and forward movement to action expected.

I remain open to direction from the Executive Committee, including reporting and timeline expectations.

***Respectfully submitted by Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri  
Office of the General Secretary Staff Representative to the Anti-racism Convening Table***