**Meeting #5 | Thursday, July 28, 2022 | 2:00-3:30 PM ET**

Present: Lisa Harris-Lee, Paul Higgins, Perry Hopper, Marie Onwubuariri (convener), Kathryn Ray, Karen Podsiadly (partial); Robin Stoops,
Unable to join: Rodney Ragwan, Lisa Rothenberger, LaRose Karr, James McJunkin, Gina Jacobs-Strain,

All Convening Table Documents can be found at: <https://www.abc-usa.org/abc-anti-racism-convening-table/> and the password is: **arct2022beloved** (case sensitive).

1. **Opening Matters**
	1. Welcome – Marie welcomed Paul Higgins and Karen Podsiadly from the ABCUSA Board of General Ministries to their first meeting. As mentioned in previous emails, these two new additions are both BGM Executive Committee members and have been added by request of the Convening Table to strengthen direct ties to BGM and to keep convening function within ABCUSA after Marie transitions to ABHMS. Marie confirmed she will continue on the Convening Table and will help as requested to keep a smooth transition and forward movement by the group. Marie also briefly went over:
* WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTI-RACISM

*(Offered by the ABCUSA Anti-Racism Task Force, October 2021)*

*Anti-Racism is the active dismantling of systems, privileges, and everyday practices that reinforce and normalize the contemporary dimensions of white dominance (Crenshaw, 2020). The work of anti-racism actively identifies and opposes racial hatred, bias, systemic racism, white supremacy, and inequitable opportunity established on both individual and systemic levels.*

* Engagement agreements: I Notice/I Wonder; Star That; Mutual Invitation (Please see previous meeting notes for more details.)
	1. Date Scan for remainder of 2022 meetings – previous date scan did not reveal clear meeting dates for future. Another date scan will be created to at least try to have one more zoom meeting in early Fall and one in person meeting before early November. Persons identified dates and times to NOT include in the date scan. We also agreed that we would do hybrid for in person meeting if needed. ***Marie will follow-up.***
	2. No additions were made to the agenda
	3. Devotion led by Perry on Psalm 125 (New English Translation) – expressions of an ideal Jerusalem in the text; related to deep concerns about current day being far from the ideal, particularly regarding Christian Nationalism; referenced Amanda Tyler from the Baptist Joint Committee as a resource on this topic. Encouraged us to stay awake for false narratives about an “ideal nation” in contrast to true Shalom (peace). Reflections included: suggesting the expanded term “religious nationalism” because of the false expression of Christianity; parallel raised to Russian Orthodox church; “false” seems to continue to come up—nagging feeling of false desire to dismantle anti-racism (conscious and subconscious)
1. **Follow up on Meeting #4**
	1. Meeting Notes, Reflections, Follow-up Actions
* BGM Executive Committee report and responses: responded to request by adding two members from EC to the Convening Table; agreeing expenses related to in-person meeting can be funded from money already set aside for this work by BGM; Karen and Paul briefly shared their ongoing commitment to the work and appreciation for what the group has done thus far.
	1. Initial reflections from colleagues from other denominations: **Kathryn – Disciples – tabled; have not heard back.**
	2. Organizational input/bandwidth into future work:
		+ Organizational capacity and interest in engaging in a shared anti-racism effort
		+ What questions remain that might be shape response to previous question?
		+ What might complement your internal anti-racism efforts that an American Baptist Anti-Racism "Commission" [placeholder language] might help address/provide?
		+ What might your organization contribute to this "Commission" for the benefit of other ABC partners/entities?
* For regions, Robin share he’d have to talk more with other regions but can expect that regions will engage in different ways.
* (IM) - tabled
	1. Follow-up on learnings from previous trainings mentioned in Meeting 4 – Marie mentioned that Jeff Woods did find some documents about previous trainings but hasn’t had time to really look through them; will post to the Convening Table page if anything worth noting.
1. **Aligning Anti-Racism Task Force Proposal and our Conversations Continued…**

**Note: First chart was work done in Meeting 4; it’s included here for reference. Next chart is what we focused on in Meeting 5.**

**Commission Goals and Activities**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposal** | **Convening Table** | **Notice/Wonder/Star That** |
| 1. Develop a Common Framework and Language for work of Anti-Racism
 | * Shared Language/What does anti-racism work include? (DEI, etc.)
* What language can be is helpful, not impeding/distracting
 |  |
| 1. Core issues:
* ABC history
* Need/opportunities for repentance, unlearning, relearning
* Identify hindrances for ABC stakeholders to participate
* Collating existing work
 | * Need to do history work to ensure we do not go down the same road with same non-results
* Acknowledgement (we acknowledge great need for education in various forms)
* The Convening table is currently discussing consideration from NEC/REMC perspectives
* Recognize that churches are also on different journeys (different points along a continuum of cross-cultural sensitivity/ability
* “Clearing house” idea / how do we share learning, build synergy, so our overall denominational culture/narrative is transformed?
 | * Learning -> Acknowledgement [good place to start] -> Repentance [calls us to introspection, examination, follow-up action] -> transformation [can’t have transformation without repentance]
* In discussion, Marie referenced “Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” theory and “Intercultural Development Inventory” instrument.
* [IDRInstitute - IDRInstitute](https://www.idrinstitute.org/about/idr-institute/) (DMIS)
* [Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC (idiinventory.com)](https://idiinventory.com/) (IDI)
 |
| 1. Denominational Assessment/Transformation
* Develop strategy/plan for every aspect of denom (hiring, economics, governance, missiology, polity, core values, collaboration of anti-racism work)
 | * We have acknowledged the work is so large and still trying to distill what is the work we can do together; how can we at least impact our own selves (let alone society at large)
* We touched on missiology, partnership, impact of church in society (or vice versa), processing and applying beyond statements, acknowledgement of different journeys and different points on similar journeys; anti-racism work impact on discipleship/evangelism)
* What are effectives models when an org wants to bring change upon itself (vs. external advocacy work)?
 | * Parsing out any one of these areas is huge in itself: such as…
* Economics – socially responsible investing, where we have conferences; what kind of orgs do we engage (vetting)?
* Hiring – how, who, from where
* What are orgs willing to do to invest in this work—staff time? Dollars to implement recommendations?
* Wondering: Because these are so large, can one “low hanging fruit” goal of a commission be to create/provide a checklist of anti-racism-lens questions that can be considered when going through assessment or decision making for any one of these areas? In addition, how can this checklist be also be used in measuring impact? And if impact if self-reported back to the commission, can a goal down the road be developing recommended practices for any one of these areas.
 |
| 1. Advocacy as expressions of ABC commitment
* Reparations, etc.
 | * Identified three potential tracks (narrative, advocacy, activities/education)
 | * Star That: The ability to lean heavily on those who are deep in this work will be helpful going forward; allow on One example of potential partner shared by Lisa: <https://francescocollaborative.org/> Felipe Witchger, a co-founder
 |
| E. Capacity building for the work (staffing, funding, etc.) | * Noted unjust practice of adding responsibilities on staff without readjustment of work/compensation
 | * Clarify staff leadership/support for commission
* Organizations have had in the past Diversity officers; maybe now part of Human capital management/HR
* Orgs have used outside consultants
 |

**Continuing the alignment: - focused on the following chart in Meeting 5.**

**Establishment Phase**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposal** | **Convening Table** | **Notice/Wonder/Star That** |
| Envision bringing together all partners, not just for convening but also valued as necessary partner in key decision-making junctures  | * Noted lack of relational capacity
* Reality-check on organizational bandwidth
* Autonomy – what can “a group” actually impact?
 | * Notice all of NEC & REMC present; missing other partners (though not yet invited)
* What are examples of key decision-making junctures? Budget cuts?
* What is meant by “juncture” – could this mean decision points?
* In our structure, more like topics can be discussed collaborative vs. decision-making that necessarily impacts everyone
* However partnership is built into a new group, there needs to be intentionality to relationship (and recognition that relationships are not a given)
 |
| Proposed AGS for Anti-Racism  | * Wonderings about current staff bandwidth
 | * Budget is a consideration
* Helpful to have someone assigned to forward the work; I wonder if this model, which is often used in other institutions have been successful in bringing change (seek Karen P. input/perspective)
* One made a reference to previous time when partners had Affirm. Action Officers
* No current staff assignments within ABC that we know of (though some variations are in the works)
* Are there models of effective volunteer-carried initiatives? (One member shared items from her experience of an effective model, which includes: Clear leader (1 or 2 people the most) who is passionate and knowledgeable; able to frame conversation and invite people in; there is a clear scope/timeline (6-8 mn vs. years) for the group.
 |
| Training (transition team, new commission members, OGS staff, BGM rep) | * Stay mindful of different educational needs
 | * BGM Beloved Community Action Group identified training needs on engaging in difficult issues
* OGS anti-racism training component in leadership team meetings
* Mission Table
 |
| Short Term Goals/measurements:* Parameters for convening and decision-making
* Funding needs and strategies
* What do we need to consider to fulfill core purposes?
 | * Who is this group accountable to?
* Appeal to larger denom for funding? OGHS?
* How would we do recruitment – appeal to Region input? What skills do we need?
* Potential group work subgroups:
	+ ABC historical research/learnings
	+ Shared framework/language
	+ Various educational paths
	+ What can we learn from other denominations & faith entities (i.e. New Baptist Covenant)?
 | * Helpful to have a clear narrative of how we talk about/name/commit to the work of anti-racism as a denomination? Not only in press releases, but what is the “CALL” to the larger community for all of us to engage/own/ participate in?
 |
| * Quarterly reports submitted to BGM Executive Committee
 | * - Marie submitted a March report to BGM Exec. Committee after first meeting, and will do again after this meeting
 | * What would be the reporting expectations and of a commission?
 |

**Resource people named in conversation:**

* + Dare to Imagine Church (PBA), first lady K Johnson, DE&I expertise
	+ Katie Choy Wong – Cross cultural competence

***In discussion, the group felt that we were up to the task of fleshing out the goals for the establishment phase, working toward a proposal for BGM in November.***

1. **Next Steps**
	1. Questions raised – can someone look into this?
		* Is there any study/assessment on the impact of former approach of partner organizations each identifying an Affirmative Action Officer?
		* Karen Podsiadly – do you have a perspective on whether having a designated staff person for Anti-Racism/DEI/etc. at Higher Ed Institutions have been effective for institutional change?
		* Do you know of anyone who can speak to whether having a named Anti-Racism/Diversity/DEI staff person within an institution has been effective for institutional change?
			+ 1. (Terrell Carter – Central grad/missionary Baptist pastor, former Diversity Officer at higher ed institution ***(Marie will reach out)***
	2. Marie to post learnings from previous denomination trainings, if found to be helpful.
	3. Marie to create a draft template/outline for the group to flesh out some of the details (to include logistic, prioritization of the goals/activities, specific asks of partners)
	4. Once Marie sends out template, team to do homework of filling in the blanks in prep for next meeting discussion.