

Report of the ABCUSA Anti-Racism Task-Force to the BGM Executive Committee, June 2021

I. Summary of the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF)

The Anti-Racism Task Force has begun the very difficult and challenging work of shifting the narrative within the ABCUSA regarding racism and anti-racism. Through monthly newsletter articles, we have invited the denomination to join in this work. We are defining anti-racism, identifying the historic roots of racism, and making visible real world and tested opportunities for dismantling the system as it stands. We seek to rebuild anew with an anti-racist worldview.

*The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox (Isaiah 11:6-7 NIV).*

The Anti-Racism Task Force engages continuously with the vision of a reordered world through the lens of Jesus. The ARTF is supported by three subgroups and several working groups.

- A. The subgroups focus on specific aspects of anti-racism work: individual, congregational, and institutional. The work of the subgroups is on-going and seeks to deepen the transformation of the denomination.
 1. **The Individual Subgroup:** Individual work is some of the most challenging work because it requires the individual to be vulnerable and open to change. This is where anti-racism begins. To end racism we must work individually and collectively to dismantle racist policies at the structural and institutional levels. The individual subgroup is working through "How To Be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi. We are also identifying resources to share with the denomination.
 2. **The Congregational Subgroup** distributed a video clip and survey through the Office of the General Secretary starting May 17 through May 31. They are seeking to gauge where we are as congregations within the ABCUSA and then discern how to efficaciously move forward with this work engaging as many people as possible.
 3. **The Institutional Subgroup** has had deep conversations with several Region Executives with the hope of uncovering the practices, policies, and habits that can be utilized by all parts of the ABC-USA as an organization in order to become an anti-racist denomination.
- B. The working groups will shape and curate a symposium and collect and record resources for utilization to the entire ABCUSA denomination. The symposium is tentatively set to take place in Fall 2021. The goals of the symposium are to:
 1. Define anti-racism.
 2. Ground anti-racism in Scripture, highlighting all humanity as one race created by one God.
 3. Highlight the denomination's role and responsibility, at every level, in advancing racial justice.

4. Educate on today's inequalities and existing wealth gap.
5. Offer advocacy opportunities for the denomination to close inequality gaps.
6. Include moments to repent for our denomination's missteps
7. Provide helpful, usable resources.

We anticipate listening sessions at the Biennial Mission Summit will continue to shape the symposium's program. We are in the process of identifying appropriate speakers and facilitators to lead in each of these topics. This work is all rooted in our existing ABC policy statement on racial justice, and we seek to highlight that and move from statement into praxis.

We realize that providing symposiums and multifaceted resources are essential, and yet the great benefit to these initiatives is the revelation that anti-racism work must be on-going.

The ABCUSA is the most diverse denomination in the United States. We have a role and a responsibility to continue the work of anti-racism if we are to live into what we believe when we make that claim. We seek to become the most anti-racist denomination in the world. The Anti-Racism Task Force requests the commitment and support of the ABCUSA Board of General Ministries to make this prophetic vision a reality.

The ARTF submitted a draft proposal to establish an ABCUSA Anti-Racism Task Force to the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee for their June 2021 meeting.

II. Participants

Task Force Members:

Dr. Natalie C. Wimberly, Co-Chair
 Rev. Justin Thornburgh, Co-Chair
 Rev. Dr. Dan Brockway
 Rev. Dr. Eugene Downing
 Rev. Joan Friesen
 Sandra Lee
 Ethan Medley
 Rev. Rodney J. Lynch
 Rev. Dr. Don Ng

Individual Subgroup:

Sandra Lee, Chair
 Dolores O. Bowles
 Michael Friday
 Rev. Dr. William (Bill) Godwin
 Katharine Hsiao
 Wim Mauldin
 Rev. Dr. Marcia Patton
 Diane Plourde
 Rev. Michael Woolf

Willing to help as needed: Harold and Deborah Van Broekhoven

Congregational Subgroup:

Rev. Dr. Eugene Downing, Chair
 Rev. Dan R. Chadwick
 Rev. Dr. Corey Fields
 Dr. Tahlib McMicheaux
 Lynette Miller
 Rev. Laurel Balyeat Morrison
 Rev. Franklin M. Ruff
 Janice Taylor
 Nancy Willbanks

Institutional Subgroup:

Rev. Joan Friesen, Chair
 Vernon A. Clement
 Michael Feicht
 Rev. Kymberly E. McNair
 Rev. Karen Mendes
 Dr. David Schirer
 Rev. Elaine Thomas
 Rev. Starlette Thomas

ABCUSA Staff Liaison: Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri