

Executive Council Anti-Racism Committee

Diocese of Chicago report

The 172nd Diocesan Convention, 2009, adopted F-172, "the Legacy of Slavery since 1835 in the Episcopal Church in Illinois." This resolution affirmed the action of the 2006 General Convention in Resolution A123; mandated " the creation of a task force on the complicity of the Diocese of Chicago and its predecessor, the Diocese of Illinois, in the institution of slavery and in the subsequent history of segregation and discrimination and the current practices of segregation and discrimination;" resolved, "that at the end of the Task Force's research phase, the Diocese of Chicago use the information gathered by the Task Force 'as the foundation for truth telling', and when necessary, 'confession, apology, forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation' (General Convention 2009 Res. A143: Reconciliation: Extension of General Convention 2006 Res. A123 to General Convention 2012); and "that the Diocese of Chicago use these reports to further its work in becoming an anti-racist institution."

In March 2010 an Ad Hoc Committee representing the Anti-Racism Commission, Diocesan Council, and the Union of Black Episcopalians recommended people to serve on the Task Force. In order to serve on the Task Force members agreed to have completed, or to complete within six months of their appointment, anti-racism training in order to have a common understanding of systemic racism.

The nine-member committee has been working since late July 2010. The first several monthly meetings were devoted to the work of clarifying the task as well as clarifying the relationship between the Task Force and the Anti-Racism Commission. One member of the Task Force is also a member of the Anti-Racism Commission and two other Task Force members are former members of the Anti-Racism Commission. The Task Force is working with Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training's definition of racism, "Racism=Race Prejudice + Systemic Misuse of Power." The Task Force also discussed the concepts of truth telling, restorative justice, reconciliation, and reparations. Members of the Task Force shared articles and books on the legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination and identified the following initial list of resources for documenting the legacy of slavery in the Diocese of Chicago: an initial time line documenting racism and resistance in the Episcopal Church and in the Diocese of Chicago and its predecessor, the Diocese of Illinois, a two-volume manuscript history of the Episcopal Church in Illinois by Rima Lunin Schultz, Richard Seidel's MTS theses, "*Tens of thousands of children*" : *social ministries to the foreign-born in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, 1849-1940*, and *The Church and the City: a social history of 150 years at Saint James, Chicago*, by Rima Lunin Schultz in addition to the Archives of the Diocese of Chicago.

The Task Force is seeking a qualified person to conduct the research over a two-year period and to submit a written report. The Task Force will also be inviting eight congregations in the Diocese of Chicago to conduct their own research on how their respective congregations have benefited or have been adversely been affected by the legacy of slavery.

Respectfully submitted,

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