

The Executive Council The Commission on Racism

MEMBERSHIP

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The Rev. Richard J. Aguilar
Diocese of West Texas
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Diocese of California
The Rev. Henry Atkins, *Co-Chair*
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Joyce Phillips Austin, Esq., *Co-Chair*
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The Rev. Vernella Alford-Brown
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Diocese of South Dakota
Sarah McCrory, Esq.
Diocese of Upper South Carolina
The Rev. Michael S. Yasutaki
Diocese of Chicago
The Rt. Rev. William Wantland
Diocese of Eau Claire

On a sad note, death claimed two members in 1989. Mr. Gerald Wilkinson, Diocese of Rio Grande, a representative of the Native American community, suffered a heart attack in May 1989.

In October 1989, Ms. Karen Graves, Diocese of Western Michigan, representing the Executive Council, was killed in an automobile accident on her way to the diocesan convention.

Although their time on the commission was brief, their effect on the work of the commission and on the lives of its members is enduring. May their souls rest in peace.

The Rt. Rev. William Wantland, House of Bishops, and Dr. Hobart Banks, House of Deputies, are authorized by the commission to receive non-substantive amendments to the report.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Commission on Racism met seven times during the triennium: four times at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City; once in Brownsville, Texas; once in Los Angeles, California; and once in Charleston, South Carolina. Meetings in various provinces of the Church have been programmed to involve the commission members in worship and strategic site visits as an integral part of their own educational experience.

The commission proposes two resolutions for General Convention action based on the data included in the report. The commission anticipates that other resolutions will be offered in response to the Institutional Racism Audit that will be conducted in the House of Bishops and House of Deputies.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION WITH RESOLUTIONS

The work of the Episcopal Church in confronting institutional racism is not insubstantial; however, it is incomplete. Racism, that attitude or action that both consciously and unconsciously subordinates a person or group because of race, is contrary to Christian faith and is a violation of the goodness accredited to life by God. Mission Imperative V calls the Episcopal Church to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being." The struggle against the sin of institutional racism, as it is manifested in the life of the Episcopal Church, has been identified as a priority issue of the Church by the 69th and several preceding General Conventions. The 57th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 64th, 66th, 67th and 68th Conventions adopted measures opposing discrimination and racism within the Church and society.

The Commission on Racism was established as a commission of the Executive Council by the 69th General Convention. The commission is mandated:

- (1). to offer and provide assistance to dioceses, congregations and agencies of the Episcopal Church in developing programs to combat racism;
- (2). to offer and provide assistance in the development of affirmative action programs and monitoring implementation of the same;
- (3). to offer and provide assistance in the evaluation of such programs;
- (4). to report to the Executive Council annually and to report to the General Convention in 1991 and thereafter.

The commission is composed of ten members appointed by the Presiding Bishop, with representation as follows: two Asians, two Blacks, two Hispanics, two Native Americans and two Whites, and an ex officio member from the Committee on the Status of Women.

In preparation for the work of the commission, Church Center staff surveyed each diocese to gather information about anti-racism and affirmative action programs in existence and to learn of those dioceses desiring assistance in establishing such programs. Sixty dioceses responded to the survey questionnaire. Of those responding, 36% had established programs or were making efforts to do so; 55% requested assistance; while 9% were not interested or felt they had no problem.

With this background data, the commission developed a goal statement, objectives and action strategies to guide its work.

Extensive materials received from six dioceses (Southeast Florida, Connecticut, Virginia, Southern Ohio, Delaware and Central Pennsylvania) were reviewed by the commission. An outline of basic steps and principles used in developing programs to combat institutional racism has been prepared based on the experiences of these six dioceses.

Theological reflection is an important component of commission meetings and a theology of anti-racism is being developed. The commission has assisted several dioceses, congregations and organizations with training events, and others are being scheduled. Eleven dioceses have also been identified for in-depth work in developing anti-racism programs.

THE BLUE BOOK

The commission concentrated considerable time at the Episcopal Church Center in an effort to become familiar with its staff, structure and operation. The commission co-chairs were introduced at a staff meeting during an In-House Week and reported briefly to the staff on the work of the commission.

The commission met with the In-House Racism Task Force which had been recently appointed by the Presiding Bishop. The commission also met with program units and divisions at the Church Center to get to know staff, to hear about their work, and to explore ways in which the commission and the unit/division could work together and be supportive of efforts to combat racism. The commission met twice with the Mission Operations Management Team (MOMT), and the team was very helpful in gathering information about the membership composition of interim bodies, commissions, committees and networks. The commission also had a very constructive and informative meeting with the Presiding Bishop.

In June 1990, the co-chairs of the commission reported on its work to the Executive Council in Fresno, California. At this meeting the commission also presented three resolutions which were adopted by the Council. These resolutions (1) requested anti-racism training for the Executive Council, urged such training for future Councils, and requested that the Commission on Racism be utilized as a primary resource in designing and implementing the training and process; (2) requested the Presiding Bishop to insure that the Episcopal Church's Affirmative Action Policy is being implemented, specifically in the areas of recruitment, interviewing, hiring, training, developing goals and timetables, monitoring and evaluation; and (3) requested that purchasing practices be followed in accordance with the Episcopal Church's Equal Employment Policy and Affirmative Action Policy, and that vendors be used in accordance with said policies.

The commission was actively involved in the shaping and focusing of the 70th General Convention on institutional racism within our church life and in the planning and design of the institutional racism audit that will be a part of the Convention's agenda.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT TRIENNium

Among the goals and objectives for the next triennium are the following:

- (1). Equip church members to understand institutional racism and develop plans and programs to combat racism using data resulting from the institutional racism audit.
- (2). Influence and monitor the racial and ethnic composition of interim bodies, commissions, committees and networks of the Episcopal Church.
- (3). Provide anti-racism training for the Executive Council.
- (4). Monitor implementation of affirmative action program, equal employment policy and purchasing practices at the Episcopal Church Center, which must be a model for the whole Church.
- (5). Follow up on recommendations from meetings with Episcopal Church Center units/divisions.
- (6). Continue the development of networks of trainers in provinces.
- (7). Work with a minimum of eleven dioceses in developing programs to combat racism.
- (8). Request a Pastoral Letter on the sin of racism from the House of Bishops.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #A082

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, **That the 70th General Convention**
- 2 **require that all appointments to interim bodies and official commissions and commit-**
- 3 **tees of the Episcopal Church include persons from racial and ethnic groups; and be**
- 4 **it further**
- 5 *Resolved*, **That this Convention urge all of its dioceses to include persons from racial**
- 6 **and ethnic groups in appointments to diocesan commissions and committees.**

Resolution #A083

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, **That racial and ethnic conflicts oc-**
- 2 **curing in interim bodies and official commissions and committees of the Episcopal**
- 3 **Church be brought to the attention of the Commission on Racism for possible assistance**
- 4 **with training, conflict resolution, or other appropriate action.**