

## The Executive Council The Commission on Racism

### MEMBERSHIP

- Josephine F. Abalos  
Diocese of New York
- The Rev. Diana Akiyama (resigned)  
Diocese of California
- The Rev. Richard J. Aguilar, *Co-Chair*  
Diocese of West Texas
- The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins  
Diocese of New Jersey
- The Rev. Daniel Caballero  
Diocese of Milwaukee
- Dawn E. Conley  
Diocese of Chicago
- Tolly Estes  
Diocese of South Dakota
- Delbert C. Glover  
Diocese of Delaware
- Dr. James W. Hampton  
Diocese of Oklahoma
- Sarah G. McCrory, Esq., *Co-Chair*  
Diocese of Upper South Carolina
- The Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson, *Executive Council Liaison*  
Diocese of New York

In addition, Martha Dunn-Strohecker of the Diocese of Massachusetts participated in the meetings as a representative of the Episcopal Urban Caucus. Diane Porter and Ethan Flad provided staff support to the Commission and the Rev. Earl Neil served as a consultant to the Commission.

During the Triennium the Gates of Life Everlasting were opened to another member of the Commission, Jimmie Hosada. We all benefited from his time with us in his ministry on the Commission.

### SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Commission on Racism held six meetings during the triennium. These took place in Rapid City, South Dakota; Little Rock, Arkansas; Washington, D.C.; Miami, Florida; Knoxville, Tennessee; and San Jose, Costa Rica. Another meeting is scheduled for October 1994. This will either be with Church Center Staff or with a seminary. A field visit was an integral component of each meeting. These visits afforded the Commission opportunities to

dialogue with local persons and to learn of manifestations of racism in the communities visited and efforts to address them.

The Commission accepted the charge of the Presiding Officers made during the report on the racism audit to the 70th General Convention and launched its work for the triennium that evening. It is the work of the Racism Commission to remind the Church that changing ingrained attitudes and practices regarding racial and ethnic minorities is painstaking and arduous. Race was, is, and will continue to be the most difficult social issue facing society. The goal of the Racism Commission is to improve relations among diverse racial and ethnic groups and ameliorate the tensions brought on by changing those relations. Making a theological statement against racism is one thing, but removing racism from our midst is another. It has been the work of the Commission during the past triennium to make the linkage between our theology and our practice.

### **THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT ON RACISM**

We acknowledge and affirm that God is the parent of all of us. Holy Scriptures are clear that we are brothers and sisters of one another by being made in the image of God and through the redemption of Jesus Christ. To be brought to Jesus is to be brought to abundant life.

Racism brings spiritual, psychological, and physical death. Our calling is to bring our brothers and sisters to Jesus, to life. We seek to bring those whose souls are tormented by the sin of racism into the fullness of life. We seek to bring those who are the victims of the sin of racism into the presence of the healing power of Jesus.

Anti-racism work, a mandate of our Church, calls us to acknowledge that we are our brother's brother, our sister's sister, to denounce the forces of death, to opt for those who are oppressed by racism, and to bring all—the perpetrators and the victims of racism—into the presence of the One who is life.

### **REPORT OF THE COMMISSION**

The Blue Book Report of the Racism Commission for the 70th General Convention closed with an indication that the Commission was actively involved in the shaping and focusing of that Convention on institutional racism within our church life and in the planning and design of the institutional racism audit that would be a part of the Convention's agenda. That closing is an appropriate place to begin the report of the work of the Commission during this past triennium, for it was the design, planning, implementation, and analysis of the racism audit at the General Convention, the Triennial Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women, and the meeting of the National Altar Guild that shaped the work of the Commission during this past triennium. The findings of the racism audit were used for program design, diocesan consultations, diocesan audits, and for the purpose of determining the stance the Church would take in relation to racism in society.

Essential to the work of the Commission was reaffirming its definition of racism. Defining racism caused considerable difficulty. Those who have been oppressed by racism had no difficulty in understanding the definition adopted by the Commission, but many in the Church believed the definition was too condemning of white society. These challenges came from white people and people of color. However, the Commission stands by its definition of racism and believes that abundant historical and academic evidence exists to validate its

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position and definition. Racial injustices must be confronted and eliminated before we can move on to supporting and encouraging cultural diversity as the new paradigm.

The accomplishments of the Commission during the triennium include:

- (1). Publishing a report on the Race and Ethnic Relations in the Episcopal Church.
- (2). Conducting a national teleconference training event "Defining Common Threads" and producing the video as a training resource.
- (3). Publishing and distributing *The Episcopal Church, Racism and You*; also *A Guide for the Design, Conduct, Analysis and Use of the Episcopal Church Racial Audit by Dioceses, Parishes and Other Church Groups*; and an anti-racism education resource, *Soap and Water*.
- (4). Producing a listing of print and audio/visual resources available for anti-racism work and distributing education materials prepared by others.
- (5). Maintaining and/or establishing ongoing linkages with: ethnic desks and their commissions; the Episcopal Urban Caucus; the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network; the Environmental Stewardship Team; the Coalition for Social Witness and Justice; the Standing Commission on the Church in Metropolitan Areas; the Economic Justice Implementation Committee; the United Thank Offering; the Episcopal Church Women; La Organizacion Nacional de Hispanos Episcopales; the Executive Council.
- (6). Providing assistance and consultation to the House of Bishops' Drafting Committee preparing the Pastoral Letter on Racism.
- (7). Monitoring action on General Convention resolutions on racism.
- (8). Surveying diocesan newspapers regarding their depiction of "the face of the Church" in news stories and pictures.
- (9). Providing resources and conducting diocesan consultations on anti-racism in 23 dioceses; producing a listing of diocesan commissions on racism and their contact persons, and assisting dioceses with their racism audits and interpretation of data.
- (10). Providing funding for a provincial gathering and a two-year study on racism and facilitated racism workshops for the UTO, religious orders and other groups throughout the Church.
- (11). Monitoring Episcopal Church Center affirmative action programs.
- (12). Joining with more than 3,000 people in the Washington National Cathedral on Columbus Day 1992 in jubilant celebration of 500 years of survival by Native Americans, that was both a testimony to their struggle and a defiantly forward-looking and conciliatory event.

The response of interim bodies to 1991 General Convention Resolution A085a calling for a racism and sexism review has been substantial, and documentation is appended to this report.

## GOALS FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM

Racism continues to permeate the life of our Church, especially at the local level. This was made painfully clear during one of our meetings this past triennium. The Commission attended Sunday worship at the diocesan cathedral, which appeared to have an all-white membership. Before the final hymn was finished, Commission members were rudely approached by the celebrant, who challenged their presence at worship and accused them of trying to start a "race riot." The response of the diocesan bishop to the situation was less than

healing and reconciling. We believe that this incident is not isolated to this bishop, diocese and congregation, but reflects deep-seated practices, beliefs, feelings and emotions shaped by the racism that is endemic to our society and to our Church.

Consequently, the major long-range goal for the next triennium is to continue to work unceasingly to eliminate racism in the life of the Episcopal Church. To this end we are challenged to:

- (1). Deepen our theological understanding of racism and our understanding of the interconnectedness of racism and economic, social and environmental injustices.
- (2). Monitor the recruitment, training and deployment of clergy persons of color, working closely with the Board for Theological Education and the Council for the Development of Ministry, which have done much in this area.
- (3). Continue and expand upon those strategies begun in this triennium, including, at the *national* level:
  - (a) maintaining linkages with the ethnic desks and other committees, commissions, caucuses;
  - (b) monitoring interim bodies and commissions regarding sensitivity to racism;
  - (c) monitoring all General Convention resolutions addressing racism and supporting anti-racism resolutions from other bodies;
  - (d) consultation with Church Center staff in monitoring the affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs and minority business policy at the Center;
  - (e) cooperating with the Committee on Trust Funds to support the successful Bank Deposit Program (formerly Minority Bank Deposit Program) to increase the visibility and impact of this program;
  - (f) providing consultation to the House of Bishops, upon request; and, at the *diocesan* level:
    - (g) providing print, audio and video resources, including a racial audit design adaptable to local use for those dioceses requesting them;
    - (h) undertaking further diocesan consultations encouraging and helping to implement anti-racism programs;
    - (i) continuing a media survey of diocesan newspapers.
- (4). Challenge the Episcopal Church at all levels to live up to the commitment to make anti-racism work a priority of the next six years.

These goals will be carried out through the proposed Justice Ministries Commission of Executive Council.

## RESOLUTIONS

### Resolution #A045

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, **That the 71st General Convention move one more**
- 2 **step towards eliminating institutional racism from the Episcopal Church by**
- 3 **strengthening the recruitment, retention, and education of people of color for the**
- 4 **ordained ministry of the Episcopal Church:**
- 5 **1. Recruitment: strongly urge dioceses to actively recruit people of color for the ordained**
- 6 **ministry;**

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- 1 **2. Retention and education:** encourage seminaries to establish as a top priority the
- 2 retention of students of color and to develop a curriculum that will enable *all* students to
- 3 become effective anti-racist change agents within the Episcopal Church.
- 4 **3. Urge that diocesan Commissions on Racism** report to the Executive Council on the
- 5 progress in these areas prior to the 72nd General Convention.

### Resolution #A046

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, **That the 71st General Convention move one more**
- 2 **step towards eliminating institutional racism from the Episcopal Church by**
- 3 **strengthening the recruitment and retention of people of color for lay ministry and**
- 4 **diocesan and parish leadership, including, but not limited to, membership on vestries,**
- 5 **positions of senior and junior wardens, election as delegates to diocesan conventions, and**
- 6 **membership on diocesan executive councils; and urge that diocesan Commissions on**
- 7 **Racism report to the Executive Council on the progress in these areas prior to the 72nd**
- 8 **General Convention.**

### Resolution #A047

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, **That in this Decade of Evangelism, we consider as**
- 2 **an evangelical priority the overcoming of the sin of racism in our parishes, which sin**
- 3 **prevents us from becoming the beloved community to which our Lord Jesus Christ calls**
- 4 **us in the Baptismal Covenant; and urge that diocesan Commissions on Racism report to**
- 5 **the Executive Council on the progress in these areas prior to the 72nd General**
- 6 **Convention.**

### Resolution #A048

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, **That all elected and appointed bodies in the**
- 2 **Episcopal Church be encouraged to establish as a priority overcoming the sin of racism.**

## APPENDIX

### Interim Bodies Legislation Tracking

GC91 A-085a: Racism & Sexism Review by Interim Bodies  
(as of 8 October 1993)

#### Standing Commissions

##### CHURCH IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

The March 1992 minutes noted a "broad representation on the commission." There was an extensive discussion on what it means to be marginalized and that "we [commission members] were called on to model wholeness and hope."

##### CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

Bishop Dennis reported that the commission had recognized a need to be particularly sensitive to issues affecting people not represented among its membership, particularly

ordained women and people with disabilities. Another report was offered to the Women in Mission and Ministry office at the Church Center. It was noted that half of the Lay appointees on the commission were women.

#### HEALTH

The commission notes the challenge of achieving gender and ethnic diversity in small groups with a need for specialized expertise.

#### METROPOLITAN AREAS

Members would like to see representation extended to include the Southwest, and to include Asian and Hispanic members on this commission. Mrs. Chinnis recommended several contact persons to the chairman as possible resource persons, and she reviewed the process for selection and appointment to the commission, based on an inclusive structural model.

#### PEACE WITH JUSTICE

The chair reports that the commission spent time at two meetings discussing the composition of the commission and attitudes, real or imagined, within the group, dealing with both race and gender, and considering how to use this awareness as a lens for examining world issues.

The presiding officers have sought to achieve ethnic and gender balances in their appointments. This was complicated by the necessity of also achieving some kind of geographical balance in all the commissions. Advisors could be brought in to help achieve an ethnic balance where needed. "[We need to] check ourselves frequently and very carefully to be constantly mindful of the existence of a serious unmet need."

#### STATE OF THE CHURCH

The committee held a workshop, facilitated by Dorothy Brittain, noting how racism and sexism might limit the work of this group. Members of the Committee on the State of the Church stated that they "are a group representative of the Church and are very comfortable working together, individually and as a committee".

#### STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

"Racism frustrates stewardship of relationships and a Gospel for all people; vigilance against all artificial barriers such as race and sex affirms the plain truth of human oneness and diversity through baptism in Christ."

#### STRUCTURE

"Bishop Beckham urged the commission to show sensitivity in this area and to monitor itself in this regard. [The Rev. Gayle] Harris expressed appreciation of the discussion."

#### WORLD MISSION

Minutes from the March 1993 meeting reported that the resolution had been discussed.

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### **Joint Standing Commission**

#### **AIDS/HIV**

The minutes reflect discussion at the October 1992 meeting and the request for Hobart Banks to report to Executive Council "on the concern of the commission on racism/sexism in putting together the commission".

In March 1993, Bishop Theuner identified the problem as a "constraint on diversity in membership resulting from canonical requirements about the number of bishops, priests/deacons who must be appointed, since the demographics of our ordained leadership do not yet represent those in the rest of the Church, or society," and suggested the appointment of additional consultants (where budgets allow) when better balance is needed.

### **Joint Standing Committees**

#### **NOMINATIONS**

Austin Cooper, House of Deputies representative on the committee, provided an audit of the 1991 General Convention elections. Of 59 elected positions, Black Episcopalians were elected to ten. At the committee meeting, Bishop Harris offered the view that intentionality should be a major factor in assuring greater inclusivity. An A085a report by the JSCN secretary was requested by the committee.

### **Committees Reporting to Executive Council**

#### **RACISM**

Richard Aguilar emphasized that addressing racism within the life of the Church must be an ongoing process, with no quick solutions, and suggested that as we become more aware of our existing diversity we will become less parochial and more truly Anglican.

#### **ECONOMIC JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

(Dialogue at the 18 March 1993 Interim Bodies Chairs Meeting)

Mr. Eugene Bowens (EJIC co-chair) noted that despite verbal commitments to address racism there were still very few persons of color as interim body chairs. Bishop Dennis noted, however, that the presiding officers have been aggressive in appointing persons of color to interim bodies, and the percentages among members have improved significantly. But only a few groups had chosen to elect persons of color as chairs, suggesting that much more education is needed within the groups themselves. Bishop Browning added that "We are much guided by habit, which easily becomes tradition, and in many groups it has become tradition to maintain as chair the senior bishop, who by canon convenes the initial meeting of an interim body each triennium. This is a 'tradition' that deserves re-examination."

### **Boards and Agencies**

#### **COUNCIL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINISTRY**

The council conducted inclusivity training to explore how racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination based on "difference" may limit its work.

#### **A085a Reports: Notes as of October 8 1993:**

##### **Standing Commissions**

CHURCH MUSIC - discussion held

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS - no report

EVANGELISM - discussion held at organizing meeting  
HUMAN AFFAIRS - discussion held  
LITURGICAL COMMISSION - discussion held

Joint Standing Committees

PLANNING AND ARRANGEMENTS - discussion scheduled for January 1994  
PROGRAM BUDGET AND FINANCE - on agenda for April 1994

Committees for the Triennium

HUMAN SEXUALITY STUDIES (A104sa) - discussion held  
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - included in their development of policies  
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP TEAM - discussion held  
PASTORAL TEACHING COMMITTEE (A104sa) - on agenda for December 1993

Committee Reporting to Executive Council

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - day-long training scheduled

Boards and Agencies

BOARD OF THE ARCHIVES - letter notes discussion to be scheduled  
BOARD FOR CHURCH DEPLOYMENT - "diversity" on agenda for March 1992  
BOARD FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION - March 1993 discussion with Dr.  
Chinnis  
CHURCH PENSION FUND - no report  
GENERAL BOARD OF EXAMINING CHAPLAINS - no report  
GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES - no report  
HOUSE OF BISHOPS COMMITTEE ON PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT - no report

*10/8/93 Report prepared by the General Convention Office*