

REPORTS FROM BODIES CREATED BY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, REPORTING TO COUNCIL AND THROUGH COUNCIL TO  
GENERAL CONVENTION

## COMMITTEE ON ANTI-RACISM

### “What would the Episcopal Church look like without racism?”

#### MEMBERSHIP

The Rev. Dr. Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, <i>Chair until Sept. 2005</i>	Massachusetts, I, 2006
Dr. Anita George, <i>Co-Chair as of October 2005</i>	Mississippi, IV, 2006
The Rev. William H. Stokes, <i>Co-Chair as of October 2005</i>	Southeast Florida, IV, 2006
The Rev. Hilario Albert	New York, II, 2006
Mr. Adeeb Fadil	New York, II, 2006
The Rev. John E. Kitagawa	Arizona, VIII, 2006
The Rev. Anna B. Lange-Soto	California, VIII, 2006
The Rt. Rev. John L. Rabb	Maryland, III, 2006
Mr. R.P.M. Bowden, <i>Executive Council Liaison</i>	Atlanta, IV, 2006
The Rev. Jayne Oasin, <i>Staff Consultant</i>	New Jersey, II

#### SUMMARY OF WORK

After over six years of intense work, the Anti-Racism Committee of the Executive Council has not only complied with the mandates of the General Convention, but has exceeded its original charge. (*GC Resolution 1991–D113, GC Resolution 2000–A047, GC Resolution 2000–B049, and GC Resolution 2003–A003*). An organized anti-racism training program with well-qualified trainers is now available in the Episcopal Church through the well-coordinated efforts of the staff of the Social Justice Ministries Office, the Rev. Jayne J. Oasin, and Ms. Tina Lynch. Our training program continues to be utilized by Episcopal committees, commissions, seminaries and dioceses, and by religious and secular organizations outside of the Episcopal Church.

As of September 2005, 16 CCABs and 63 dioceses have complied with the mandated training program or are scheduled for training. Other groups who have participated in the training include: Provinces I and VIII, and five of the Episcopal Seminaries. To date, there are 46 fully-certified trainers representing 22 dioceses, and an additional 40 in the process of being certified including two bishops.

The generosity of the certified anti-racism trainers with their time and resources makes it possible for us to provide the training at nominal cost. In addition, some congregations, dioceses, and CCABs have availed themselves of alternative training models that meet criteria determined by the Anti-Racism Committee. A list of these criteria is available through the Social Justice Ministries Office.

The diocesan anti-racism committees continue the work of the national anti-racism program on a local level in many creative ways. For example, the Diocese of Mississippi researched and celebrated the history of four black congregations, and held diocesan-wide services at each of the four, culminating in a celebration at the cathedral. The diocese of New Hampshire anti-racism committee recently sponsored a weekend commemoration, including an anti-racism training session, on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Jonathan Daniels. The diocese of Atlanta has held approximately 20 anti-racism training events for new clergy, lay and clergy leaders and parish search committees. The diocese of California has held its second anti-racism training at Grace Cathedral as well as training for the Search, Standing and Transition Committees involved with the election of the next bishop.

As is the case with any mandated program, the strength of the General Convention resolution encouraged many more individuals and groups to participate in anti-racism training than would have participated on their own. On the other hand, particularly when Episcopalians are involved, the degree of resistance to the process escalates when the decision to participate is not entirely of one’s own making. In some of these cases, efforts to avoid participation in the mandated training grew quite complex and very time consuming for the staff and committee members.

Overall, it is the sense of the Anti-Racism Committee that the mandated training has been a positive experience not only from the perspective of the sheer number of individuals and groups who have participated, but also because the experience of a common curriculum has given us some shared vocabulary and concepts about the nature of racism and other forms of oppression. Excellent and accessible resources and trainers have strengthened the church's overall mission in the area of anti-racism. Given the positive comments on most of the evaluations, another gain of the training program is that it has given people a lens through which they can continue to analyze the presence of racism and internalized oppression in their lives, churches, and workplaces. In other words, the conversations have continued past the initial training.

The creation of diocesan anti-racism committees is a testament to the growing level of commitment to racial justice among Episcopalians. As those of us on the Anti-Racism Committee listen around the church, the level of the discussion about racism these past six years has grown deeper, more passionate, more analytical, and more prayerful. And yet, racism remains profoundly entrenched in the Episcopal Church.

Though one of the principal mandates of the Anti-Racism Committee's work is to provide a coordinated anti-racism training program and certify anti-racism trainers, it is important after six years of intense activity to review the intention of this training and the goal of these efforts for the Episcopal Church. Though excellent training and skilled trainers are an important asset to our church organization, the overall purpose of our work in this area is not focused on training as an end in itself, but as a means to bring about the transformation of the Episcopal Church and our wider society. "What would the Episcopal Church look like without racism?" is the question we frequently ask as part of the training itself. To be sure, the answer to that question is multifaceted and still very much in process.

It is important to note that the overall purpose of the Anti-Racism Program is not training but conversation which will lead to the transformation of the Episcopal Church and the wider society. Therefore the question of what the Episcopal Church would look like without racism is a question that we continue to ask ourselves and pose to the entire church community. An anti-racist vision of the Episcopal Church has the power to transform people's hearts and minds, and spirits with a vision of justice and wholeness. Such a transformational vision invites each of us to see the face of God in each other and to work to overcome the costly divisions that divide our church and our society. It empowers church communities to face the truth about the racism with which they have been complicit throughout their history, and to strive to truly change direction through genuine repentance and transformation.

The Anti-Racism Committee has commissioned two resources to be available to a large number of persons who have not participated in training or who need material to use in parishes. One is a Bible study entitled, "Seeing God in Diversity: Exodus and Act." The second one entitled "The God in Each Other," is a collection of brief essays written by notable Episcopalians and edited with discussion questions. In addition to these two new resources, new material is continuously being added to the training manual with special emphasis on appropriate material for specific ethnicities and cultures and young people.

Finally, the Windsor Report was discussed by the committee. Members are concerned about the overall lack of participation in the drafting process of both lay persons and those persons who have directly benefitted from the ministry of the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson. The added impact of this report is that it pits two marginalized groups against each other namely, the former subjects of the British Empire and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities. This report does nothing to transform a historically white, European-American male, and clerically dominated structure into one capable of affecting the reconciliation of all people.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

As we approach the final three years of the second nine year commitment to eradicate racism in this church, we must face the full impact of racism on all the people of color who have been harmed by it particularly with regard to the historic exclusionary practices of this Church. Racism has been incorrectly understood as a black/white problem. In fact, it is a sinful flaw in the character of our culture that continues to impact all people of color particularly new immigrants and those with different religious affiliations. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, that

we seek to address this issue as inclusively as possible thereby avoiding further marginalization of ethnic and religious groups.

Important tools in implementing this intentionally comprehensive process are the principles of *restorative justice*, which provide a neutral articulation of the self-examination and amendment of life that is required, in fact, to fulfill our baptismal covenant of "respecting the dignity of all persons." The principles of *restorative justice* have been achieved when:

- All persons who have been disempowered or targets for marginalization or oppression are shown equal concern and inclusion.
- The community disdains theological and moral judgments and focuses on the brokenness and pain of those who have been harmed by exclusion or stereotypes.
- Persons who have caused harm are held accountable and understand their responsibility to meet the obligations to and needs of those whom they have harmed.
- History is taken into account and thus persons who are the inheritors of unearned privilege understand their responsibility in addressing inequity that has been created in the current society.
- All institutions in the church and society acknowledge and accept their responsibility for any policies, procedures, or structures that perpetuate injustice and do harm to individuals and groups.
- Healing and grace are the outcomes for all parties who have accepted their responsibilities and obligations for the disharmony and pain that previously existed in a process understood as restorative and not retributive.
- Dialogue has replaced debate and opportunity exists for all to participate equally in the process.
- Affected individuals or communities are empowered through their involvement in the discussions and dialogue related to the redress of their grievances.
- Collaboration and reintegration are encouraged while coercion and isolation are discouraged.
- A determination of whether there are unintended consequences of our actions or policies.
- Truth and mercy thrive in an atmosphere of genuine reconciliation, restoration, and compassion.

The restorative justice process must be concerned with local issues and insure that the stories of specific disadvantaged groups be valued and heard. Only after this is done can an authentic process of reconciliation for all of the Church be devised and recommended.

The upcoming PBS documentary, *Traces of the Trade*, which was produced with assistance from the Anti-Racism Committee of the Executive Council, and tells the story of the involvement of a prominent family of New England Episcopalians who were the leading slave traders, is a very helpful resource in pursuit of this goal, but should be used only as an example of the type of truth-telling and facing the painful sins of the past that needs to be undertaken in every part of the church where people of a different color, language, religion, or national origin have been excluded.

### **Resolution A127 Restorative Justice**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church endorse
- 2 the principles of restorative justice as a fresh means of engaging in a deeper quest for wholeness in this church
- 3 and society; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the 75<sup>th</sup> Convention call upon the Anti-Racism Committee of Executive Council to build upon
- 5 its present work to now develop a "Truth, Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice Initiative" that will enable
- 6 the Church to engage first in a process of "Truth-telling" that is based on these principles and is designed to
- 7 be implemented by each diocese with appropriate resources; and be it further
- 8 *Resolved*, That these processes would create mechanisms for both those with historical and present-day
- 9 under-privilege and those with historical and present-day privilege to undertake a joint process of historical
- 10 accounting, story-telling and assessment of the roots and branches of racial and ethnic inequity, marginalization
- 11 and disharmony in the church and in society; and be it further
- 12 *Resolved*, That the General Convention call upon the Anti-Racism Committee of Executive Council to explore
- 13 and recommend to the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention a comprehensive second part process of "Reconciliation and

- 1 Restorative Justice” that addresses the injustices and needs for healing identified in the previous resolve; and
- 2 be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the General Convention call upon the Church to call upon Congress and the American people
- 4 to support a national initiative to study the history and legacy of slavery and possible remedies.

#### EXPLANATION

It is time for the Church community to collectively engage in reckoning with the full impact of racism, historically and in present day. Reconciliation and restorative justice are best achieved when they emerge from an honest examination and shared understanding of inequity and marginalization in Church and society.

This resolution proposes that the Church build on the model of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa adding the third step of Justice to insure that action follows healing dialogue. Because the direct perpetrators and victims of historic injustices such as African slavery and Native American genocide are no longer living, this initiative will focus on the question of what do we as inheritors of under-privilege and privilege need to face together in Christ in order to be made whole.

An important tool in implementing this intentionally comprehensive process are the principles of *restorative justice* which provide a neutral articulation of the self-examination and amendment of life that is required to fulfill our baptismal covenant. Particular emphasis will be placed on inspiring both whites and people of color in ways that recognize and honor their ethnic, cultural and historical backgrounds. Both the healing process and the corrective actions which follow must occur at all levels of the church, both corporately and individually.

Finally, by engaging in these processes internally, the Church will be in a position to take moral leadership in calling on the nation to engage in such processes. In this vein, the Church would specifically call on congress to create a process of exploration, dialogue and problem-solving around the history and legacy of slavery.