

Subject: GC A123 - Western North Carolina

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ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA IN RESPONSE TO GENERAL CONVENTION RESOLUTION A123

October 2008 - Sixteen members of the diocese attended the National Day of Repentance at the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, PA.

October 2009 - After a year of planning, the Commission to Dismantle Racism launched an 18-month process known as "Repairing the Breach" to prepare the diocese for our own Service of Repentance, Healing and Reconciliation, to be held in April 2011.

March 2010 - The Commission to Dismantle Racism sponsored two identical workshops for parish-selected "Parish Partners" who agreed to: (1) be a communication link between their parishes and the CDR in the implementation of Relolution A123, (2) attend one of these two identical workshops for guidance and training, (3) promote the WNC Service of Repentance, Healing and Reconciliation in their own parishes, and (4) continue working, following the diocesan Service of Repentance, for racial justice and reconciliation. (Dain and Constance Perry were invited to these workshops to show the film "Traces of the Trade" and lead a reflection on it. At these workshops, we also showed the 30-minute film entitled "Repairing the Breach" and urged the "Parish Partners" to show it in their parishes, as a way of informing their congregations of the background and purpose of A123. We also urged them: (1) to show "Traces of the Trade" in their own parishes, using the Perry model to reflect on it; (2) to explore their own parish histories in light of A123; (3) to collect oral histories related to the days of segregation; and (4) to develop relationships with other parishes across racial lines, in order to continue the process of "repairing the breach." During the week between the two Saturday workshops, the Perrys met with several additional individuals and groups, did several other showings of "Traces" and spoke at two different parishes on the two Sundays.)

May 2010 - The annual diocesan "Mission and Ministry" Conference was devoted to the theme of "Reconciliation", as a way of keeping the "Repairing the Breach" initiative in front of people. The keynote speaker was the Rt. Rev. Eugene Sutton from the Diocese of Maryland, and the Commission to Dismantle Racism sponsored two workshops on "How to Research Your Parish's History" and "How to Collect Oral Histories:."

October 2010 - Dain and Constance Perry were invited back for another week. While here, they helped us do a third (identical) workshop for those who had missed the first two; shared "Traces" at a combined Youth/College weekend; and had several other showings of "Traces" around the diocese.

November 2010 - A "Repairing the Breach" banner (which had been created specifically for our diocesan Service of Repentance, Healing and Reconciliation from swatches of fabric contributed by several

parishes) was unveiled at the Diocesan Convention, and all the delegates were urged once again to attend that service in April.

April 9, 2011 - The WNC Service of Repentance, Healing and Reconciliation was held at Trinity Church in Asheville, attended by over 600 people. Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori was the presider and preacher, and the service included a formal apology for this diocese's complicity in the horrific institutions of slavery and segregation by Bishop Taylor. The service also included a powerful litany of repentance and lamentation, an opportunity for people to go to bi-racial "stations" for healing prayer and the Laying on of Hands, and other moving elements which seemed to speak deeply to those in attendance. (A copy of the service may be obtained from the Commission to Dismantle Racism website.)

November 2011 - A book by the Rev. S. F. James Abbott entitled UNFINISHED JOURNEY: A BRIEF RACIAL HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA was distributed to each parish at the Diocesan Convention. (This book was written as a direct response to A123 and is also available on-line through the CDR website.)

March 2012 - A 31-minute edited version of our Service of Repentance, Healing and Reconciliation was completed and shown at a follow-up workshop for our "Parish Partners". (A copy of that DVD may be obtained by emailing EYC@diocesewnc.org.) The rest of the workshop was devoted to the sharing of parishes' "Repairing the Breach" experiences and the offering of other resources, ideas and opportunities for continuing the journey.

The work continues.

For more information, contact the Rev. S. F. James (Jim) Abbott at sfjabbott@gmail.com