



American Baptist Anti-Racism Convening Table

MEETING NOTES - #1

Meeting #1 | Friday, February 25, 2022 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

All Convening Members Present for the meeting.

Meeting generally followed agenda as presented.

Centering Scripture was Ephesians 5:9-17 – NRSV & The Message

Phrases from For Me/For Others Sharing

(What makes/would make engaging in anti-racism work across the ABC valuable?):

Moving forward/not just conversation	God's design for human images of God
Treating each other with dignity	Living into God's intention / pleasing to God
Being & Shedding Light/Can ABCUSA be light?	Learning & growing from those with experiences
Interdependence without oppression	Local & global issue – helps being a part of a network
Lead with stated "anti-racist" purpose	
Learn to live into our self-definition (diversity/equity/inclusion) Space for all voices	
"If we get this right..." Connection to church growth/evangelism/social systems	
Investment must show commitment to equity/inclusion	
Necessary for wellness – of self/soul/denomination/country/young people/Christian witness	
Personally applicable to all – responsibility of all humanity – impacts everything	

The represented organizations in this group are already engaging: Board/staff education; statements/resolutions; affinity group; prayer vigil; town hall talk; staff additions to lead in anti-racism; programming for constituency; efforts – programming/granting

Work across partnerships for cross-learning/application very important

Recognize fractures among us; recognize how racism has impacted/defined our institutions, practices, and previous efforts of racial justice work

Informal and formal networks are encouraging

Can we talk about mission and also address how mission has been defined by colonialism/racism?

Important that our work can be entered in regardless of where someone is on the journey

Hope that our efforts touch the whole/all parts of the denomination

Important that we also probe our understanding of "partnership" so that we can truly have shared work

Unsure about interest/commitment beyond conversation across the ABC

Wondering if church can shape society/culture even as church is already falling behind, even as we continue to cosign on systems perpetuating racism

Need to be heartfelt | Need to understand what our actions and in-action promote

Need others to process how to really move forward - beyond statements & resolutions

Pathology in the church/ABC => a fraud that silences us (embarrassment, our participation thru affirmation or micro-aggressions). If we get this effort/commitment right, it can be a powerful witness within and with other denominations – perhaps can be replicable?

Addressing internally (institutionally) as well as externally – impacting communities

Awareness that there is an expectation that "this too will pass" but showing a sustained priority for the long haul is important

Establishing and fulfilling short term and measurable goals



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Following are notes from group discussion in the latter half of the meeting.

Discussion Notes:

I WONDER...

Research/Fact-finding/Audit

- What was present that prevented true change to happen at previous attempts; how can we learn and avoid those this time around
- What are we already doing? [What are even our stated goals and how are these actions leading toward these goals?]
- In relation to the anti-racism commission, what were the results of congregational & institutional subgroups?
- ...what are the dark spaces we have not yet even named?

Process

- What are actions that lead to long-term change
- What is the appropriate role of Board leadership engagement for true change (denomination wide); financial resources (financial buy-in); name and address power dynamics of financial resources and the impact on whether true action can happen
- Language:
 - o Beloved community as an image/narrative?
 - o The impact/implications of even the language in our culture/that we use [even in scriptural interpretation]
 - o Why antiracism and not reconciliation
- Who are we consistently forgetting/leaving out even in our efforts to go about the same problem in new ways? [forming groups/tables in new ways that allow the church to be informed by those outside of the church who are ahead of us as well as position us to be a stronger witness]
- ...how we will capture/acknowledge/make space for confession? [Naming complicity of church]
- Determining appropriate composition of the convening table/commission - particularly considering a pattern of the absence of white males
- What are the short-term actions we can do to live out our diverse reality

Impact

- Complacency of church with racism; how can we engage the church deeply theologically so that we are uncomfortable when people are not treated with dignity?
- (in relation to complicity) - the theological convictions/assumptions that even guide our scriptural interpretations - which informs our lived discipleship
- What would global anti-racism be like?



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I NOTICE...	STAR THAT!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Acknowledgement we have been here before; companioned with [cautioned] hope/optimism- Yearning for this work to be impactful, measurably- Naming that resolutions are insufficient in resulting in action and affecting change- a desire for naming short term goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- While this is a huge topic, how can we impact our own selves – ABCUSA, with our tagline that we are the most diverse denomination – deal with the incongruence and hold ourselves accountability to live out our mission and identity with integrity – becoming beloved community- Mission should drive the budget- Owning complicity by acknowledging our participation in practices that support racism – naming how we (the church, individuals and collective) support systems that perpetuate racism- Church must respond to and engage demographic and generational shifts: Changing majority -> fear -> power – we don't control this phenomenon, but we must change the pattern with which we engage the shifts around us

WHO	WHAT/WHY (purpose)	WHEN/WHERE/HOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the appropriate composition of the convening table/commission? Historically, there is a noticeable absence of white males- We must be mindful of the pathology/pattern of certain people not being present- To whom is this commission going to relate: national institutions? Local church level? Generation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Why antiracism and not racial reconciliation?- What additional education is needed? What is hoped for as a result of this education – lay out short and long term goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sunday morning segregation hour: What is needed so that pastors can lead/preach in ways that support anti-racism and so that our boards understand themselves to be ambassadors/models of how to be in ways that do not support racism?

TASKS by next meeting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marie (MO) to send to group the results of the task force subgroups- Group to send any additional Star That items to include in meeting notes to Marie by end of Monday 2/28- MO to send notes and recording link to group- MO to send out date scan for next meeting to occur about 4 weeks from today- Group members to consider additional organizational reps to round out this group's diverse perspectives/role; review notes and let MO know any thoughts for next meeting's agenda