

**REPORT OF THE DISMANTLING RACISM TASK FORCE
TO GENERAL SYNOD 2023**

1. FOR ACTION OR CONSIDERATION

- Motion: Continuing the Work of Dismantling Racism in the Church
- Motion: Dismantling Racism and Faith Formation
- Motion: Commitment to Call to Action #59

2. FOR INFORMATION

Dear Siblings in Christ,

We are pleased to present the final report of the Dismantling Racism Task Force to this General Synod for your consideration and action. This report includes an overview of the work of the Dismantling Racism Task Force over the last 3 years, as well as several recommendations for next steps in this work.

Background

Our Task Force's work of dismantling racism does not exist in a vacuum and we represent but one further step of the Anglican Church of Canada's journey in this ongoing mission. In 1992, the late Reverend Canon Romney M. Moseley offered the Church valuable insights about the importance of dismantling racism through his work, *No Longer Strangers: Ministry in a Multicultural Society, a Report to the Anglican Church of Canada*. In addition, our Church remains deeply indebted to the national Anti-Racism Working Group which worked between 2001 and 2004 to develop anti-racism education for CoGS and its standing committees and boards. This Working Group also created the Charter for Racial Justice, approved as the official anti-racism statement of our Church in 2007.

Beyond these official measures, we are grateful for the efforts of countless faithful Anglicans who have, both individually and collectively, worked tirelessly to dismantle racism and promote racial justice in their faith communities, dioceses, and beyond. Generations of lay members, clergy, students, and others have demonstrated a commitment to anti-racism as well as calling on the Church to act more intentionally to eradicate racism within the Church while engaging in public witness in support of broader anti-racism efforts.

All of the aforementioned measures can be described as significant early steps on the pathway to achieving true racial diversity, inclusion, and equity at all levels of the Church. However, much more remains to be done. We are conscious that matters relevant to racial justice have increasingly become a major focus of attention at the local, regional, provincial, national, and international levels. We acknowledge that commitment to racial justice is not merely consistent with but required by our Baptismal Covenant, our Marks of Mission, and many other components of our faith. We recognize that the Anglican Church of Canada has a duty to demonstrate leadership in advancing the cause of racial justice both internally and in the communities we serve. Shifting our focus from mere diversity to true equity, inclusion, and anti-racism is necessary if we are to fulfill our commitment to creating the Beloved Community, ensuring that persons from all identities have equal opportunity to contribute their gifts and participate fully in our Church.

Our Task Force was created by the Council of General Synod (CoGS) in 2020, in response to the wave of protests and increased dialogue regarding anti-Black racism across Canada and the world at the time, and

in acknowledgment of the ongoing systemic racism affecting Black, Indigenous, Asian and other People of Colour in Canada. From the beginning of our Task Force, we gauged that CoGS' original mandate was too extensive for the time frame allotted and the group that had been gathered. We do see our work, however, as beginning to lay the groundwork for the goals identified in the original mandate, which give a good overview of long-term strategy for the Church in dismantling racism. To that end, we have developed several Recommendations for General Synod to consider as interim steps bringing us closer to these goals (see below under "Recommendations").

National Diocesan Survey

In order to begin to understand more fully the current landscape of dismantling racism in our Church, our Task Force put out a survey to every diocese in the Anglican Church of Canada in February 2022. The survey intended to discover the racial demographics of leadership throughout our Church, and the current anti-racism work conducted locally. The survey primarily covered three areas:

- the extent to which those who are Black, Indigenous, and People Of Colour (BIPOC) were represented in the Church
- the extent to which anti-racist policies were being implemented in the Church
- the extent of anti-racism training in the Church

The survey received responses from across the country, from small and large dioceses and from urban and rural dioceses. However, the overall response came from just 12 of the 30 dioceses, plus the Anglican Military Ordinariate. In addition, the content of the responses and the extent to which the questions were answered as intended, varied considerably. These varied responses made statistical analysis of the data problematic. However, we can report the following:

a) **Representation:** Almost all dioceses gave a number for the BIPOC clergy in their diocese. The proportion of clergy varied from under 4% to around 50% within a diocese. The total number was 121 of approximately 720 clergy in the respective dioceses. The responses re: BIPOC representation among lay leaders and general membership were again varied, but only half of the dioceses could give definitive responses. In contrast, Statistics Canada reports that in 2016 the "visible minority" population of Canada was about 22%, and the Indigenous population was an additional 5% (and growing!). Again these proportions vary considerably by region.

b) **Policy:** The evidence suggests a low awareness of the Charter for Racial Justice within the Anglican Church of Canada. There were two dioceses which responded in detail to the provisions of the policy. Three dioceses have a specific budget for implementing the policy. Concerning the three policy areas we investigated, nine dioceses had anti-harassment policies, four had anti-racism policies, and two had employment equity policies.

c) **Anti-Racism Training:** The extent of anti-racism training for both clergy and laity varied considerably. In three dioceses, anti-racism training is a requirement for all clergy. In others, the training is taken by a small minority, and some dioceses had no idea of the extent of such training. Mandatory lay training was not reported in any diocese.

Comments made in or about this survey were also very mixed. It was common for dioceses to report that they are trying to work on anti-racism but need specific resources or budget. There was some pushback on the survey's intent, with one comment saying, "I am not sure what this survey intends to determine." However, others appreciated the survey and the resources that it identified.

The Task Force wishes to thank the Rev. Neil Elliot for the generous volunteering of his time and the sharing of his skills and knowledge in helping us to design, administer, and analyze the results of this survey.

Stakeholder Feedback on Draft Recommendations

It was very important to the Task Force to solicit feedback on our Draft Recommendations from a wide range of stakeholders—those directly impacted by racism, and secondarily, those who have a hand in shaping our Church’s response to racism. We were able to receive written and verbal feedback from a sampling of Anglicans: respondents included the national Black Anglicans of Canada, Toronto Urban Native Ministry, an Asian leader in the Diocese of Toronto, as well as several clergy and lay leaders from the Anglican Canadian Asian Ministries (ACAM) group and the Dismantling Racism Workshop Facilitators in the Diocese of New Westminster. We also asked for feedback on the Draft Recommendations from the Primate and the General Secretary, as well as CoGS itself (via small groups convening at the CoGS March 2022 meeting).

We must acknowledge that we experienced significant challenges in receiving feedback from a wider diversity of stakeholders – we were hoping for much more geographic diversity, both in terms of location across dioceses/regions, and urban/suburban/rural contexts. Most notably and most regrettably, due to a variety of unforeseen circumstances, we received feedback from just one local group representing Indigenous interests. Given these significant limitations, we consider these Recommendations a work in progress that will continue to need further consultation with the groups mentioned above and others.

Overall, the response received to the Draft Recommendations was positive, and our Task Force was heartened that there was clear support for the direction and broad strokes that we have laid out. We considered a large majority of suggested revisions to be more relevant to the next stage of this dismantling racism work, particularly in terms of developing the Recommendations further and actually implementing them. We envision these to be among the first tasks of the dedicated national staff person and the Advisory Council proposed in the Recommendations. We have kept the bulk of the original Recommendations intact for now, but encourage CoGS and the General Synod to consider the specific feedback we received from the stakeholder groups, in terms of moving forward with implementing Recommendations and in addressing the gaps that have been identified.

A summary of general comments on the Draft Recommendations from stakeholders include:

- They demonstrate a logical flow of actions to address racism in our Church, with the national Church taking responsibility for supporting local-level change.
- They establish mutual respect and collaboration between all levels of the Church, and provide a hopeful and challenging call to the Church.
- They provide for education that is needed for change. Some respondents felt that local parish-level theological education would enable a culture shift in our larger Church.
- They are ambitious goals, since culture change will take a long time. There was a suggestion to give a proposed timeline for each Recommendation to increase success.

Some of the bigger comments and suggestions for expanding on these Recommendations included:

- Many respondents wanted more specificity and actionable items within the Recommendations.

- It is important that the Anglican Church of Canada have mechanisms of accountability, for work going forward, and for righting historical wrongs.
- There were some questions about what authority belongs to the national church vs. the diocesan and local church, in terms of carrying out this work.
- It is important to partner with the Self-Determining Indigenous Church in this work.
- It is important to include theological colleges in the process of change.
- It is important to consider and account for regional differences, especially in places with an absence of those who are BIPOC.
- There was a desire to be more intentionally inclusive to increase BIPOC representation across the Church.
- There was a desire to name the different experiences and needs of specific groups within those who come from racialized backgrounds.
- There was a desire for training and knowledge transfer, especially from White/Settler allies to BIPOC people.
- There was a desire for an acknowledgement and naming of past resistance, and reflection on this resistance in the spirit of overcoming it in the future.
- There was some diversity of opinions of what terms such as “BIPOC”, “White”, “Inclusion/Equity/Belonging” ought to mean.*
- There were some questions and comments about the logistics of Recommendations such as the Advisory Council, consultations with BIPOC folks, and the national staff position.

**Note: The Task Force intentionally left these terms somewhat open-ended. We acknowledge that these terms may mean different things in different contexts, but believe that it is important to have a starting point from which to build.*

Recommendations

1. Establish a permanent National Advisory Council on Dismantling Racismⁱ:
 - a) To conduct an initial and ongoing review of church structures, culture, policies, and practices pertaining to racism and anti-racism
 - b) To develop and implement a national action plan to move from promoting diversity to living out full inclusion, equity, and belonging at all levels of the church (in both membership and leadership)
 - c) Whose membership reflects the communities of the Church most impacted by racism, namely BIPOC and those with experience in anti-racism ministry and leadership. The Advisory Council would strive for geographic, gender, ethnocultural, lay and clergy representation, to the degree reasonably possible, and delineate appropriate supportive roles for White/Settler allies on the Council
2. Create a full-time position at the national level to animate diocesan and national anti-racism activityⁱⁱ, including
 - a) Assisting dioceses in finding regional consultants to help inform and manage the direction of the work to encourage broad collaboration where beneficial.
 - b) Supporting existing affinity groups/internal stakeholders committed to racial justice to engage in this work more effectively
 - c) Identifying and facilitating possible external funding sources and providing administrative support towards anti-racism efforts across the whole church

3. Develop a process/framework to examine and support the further development of anti-racism curriculum in seminaries and other theology programs while compiling supportive resources that can be used broadly in other formation contexts (i.e. Sunday schools, lay training programs, seasonal programs, youth ministry, etc.)
4. Form an online resource hub for anti-racism educational and liturgical resources (i.e. Sunday school, worship, annual celebrations and commemorations, etc.)
5. Encourage all dioceses across Canada to engage with the full historical realities of the Anglican Church's involvement in slavery, Residential Schools, and other forms of racial injustice, per TRC Call to Action #59) as well as its historical work in striving to dismantle racism
6. With input from the National Advisory Council, conduct consultations with BIPOC Anglicans to gather information on a national, diocesan, and local level through
 - a) Establishing virtual and in-person (if possible) safe space gatherings for various demographic groups (representing different backgrounds of race, gender, clergy/lay etc.). Participants would share their hopes for the Church and concerns regarding racism within it. They would also share how they envision the Church dismantling racism (locally and nationally).
 - b) Compiling this research into reports that can be considered and acted upon by diocesan and national bodies of the Church.
7. Coordinate anti-racism education and training for the committees, councils, and staff of General Synod
8. Develop a Dismantling Racism Grantⁱⁱⁱ for innovative projects to meet local diocesan needs.
9. Continue to walk with, support, and engage in ongoing dialogue with the Self-Determining Indigenous Church while encouraging all institutions, policies, programs, and practices to comply with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, per TRC Call to Action #48

Conclusion

Our Task Force has initiated the foundational work of sending out a survey to every diocese to gather current demographics and to understand anti-racism work occurring locally; and of creating Recommendations to General Synod, incorporating feedback from a cross-section of stakeholders. We acknowledge there were limitations in the survey respondents and results, as well as in the feedback received on the Recommendations. We view these limitations, however, as good guidelines to address and close the gaps in those involved with the future work ahead, ensuring proper representation across the nation and Church, as well as from a broader swath of stakeholders.

While there are a number of opportunities for improvement, there are particular strategic places to begin and to continue the work of dismantling racism within the Anglican Church of Canada, as outlined in our Task Force's Recommendations. Overall, we would suggest that in terms of priority, the General Synod consider implementing the staff person and Advisory Council first. These two parties can then plan and carry out the best ways to accomplish next steps, and also revise these steps as needed, after further consultation with other stakeholders.

The fact remains that the work our Task Force set out to do in 2020 is incomplete, as we knew it would be. We continue to believe strongly in the importance of dismantling racism in our larger Church, and see our Task Force’s contribution as just one drop in the bucket of what is needed. We hope that our small contribution can serve, however, to move the Anglican Church of Canada along a little further in the journey. We are grateful for the opportunity to have served on this Task Force and thank the General Synod and CoGS for the trust placed in us. We wish to also thank Ryan Weston for his unflagging work in supporting this Task Force in multiple and myriad ways.

In particular, we continue to hold fast to the belief that to be successful, this work of dismantling racism must be infused with the Holy Spirit’s guidance and gift of courage for holy tasks. Our Task Force remains convinced that among the best ways to ensure better and more accurate listening to the leadings of the Spirit is to work toward breaking down the barriers to having more diversity of voices at the table, especially ones that can hold our feet to the fire to make the changes that are needed. The work to break down these harmful barriers—barriers that our own systems have created and continue by default to uphold tenaciously—in order to ensure this diversity is long and hard. The prize at the end is a Church where all feel welcomed and affirmed of their rightful place in it, and are able to offer their unique God-given perspectives and gifts toward this journey of following Christ faithfully together.

We pray that our Church’s work of dismantling racism may continue in that spirit of following the promptings of the Holy Spirit in ways that will enable the Anglican Church of Canada, as Micah 6:8 reminds us, to simply do what God requires: to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Faithfully in Christ,

Marlena Anderson, Irene Moore Davis, Brittany Hudson, Vivian Lam, and Pat Lovell, with staff support from Ryan Weston.

ⁱ We envision The National Advisory Council to be a Primatial committee of 12 members representing a diverse cross-section of the church. Half of the members would be appointed by the Primate, the other half elected by CoGS.

ⁱⁱ We envision the national Dismantling Racism Animator staff position as one modelled on the Reconciliation Animator position, reporting to the Primate. The specifics of the position would be determined by the National Advisory Council in consultation with the Primate.

ⁱⁱⁱ A proposal with more details for how the Dismantling Racism Grant would work, would be developed in the future in consultation with the National Advisory Council.