Appointive Cabinet Racial Justice Report

In its 2020 statement on racial justice the Minnesota Cabinet agreed to provide annual updates to our planned actions and accountability. As Wesleyans we are mindful of the deep grace of God and the continual work of growing in love of God and neighbor. In seeking to grow in anti-racism we lean on our theology of journeying in love with accountability. This report will cover the years from 2020-2023.

Actions:

- Require regular training in anti-racism/white supremacy for all clergy under appointment—including the Appointive Cabinet.
- Support the continued creation and development of churches of color in relevant mission fields.
- Continue to make and support cross-racial, cross-cultural clergy appointments. This year, we have begun to provide training and support for all of our new cross-racial appointments.
- Encourage all of our churches to be engaged in anti-racism study and action.
- Identify, motivate, and equip more churches to be reflective of the diversity in their communities.
- Form a Multi-Cultural Wisdom Team to advise the Cabinet and Conference structures.

Accountability:

- Each district superintendent reflects in their annual performance review on their work and witness for racial justice and reconciliation.
- Annually, the Cabinet reports on its collective progress on these steps to the Annual Conference Session.

Require regular training in anti-racism/white supremacy for all clergy under appointment—including the Appointive Cabinet.

In these last three years we have actively worked to train all our clergy in anti-racism through our Building Beloved Community (BBC Module 1) training led by Rev. Dana Neuhauser and trained moderators. 153 clergy participated in BBC training in these last three years. This represents 54 % of all clergy (Deacons, Elders, Licensed Local Pastors, Certified Lay Pastors) but is 67% of all active clergy who are not BIPOC. All of the current Extended Cabinet members have also gone through Module 1.

There are other places in our system where the work of growing in anti-racism continues. For a decade the BOOM has used pre and post bias questions as part of their interviewing process. The IDI is included as part of the BOOM psychological evaluation process, though there is no formal feedback session included. The IDI is included in our onboarding training. It is important to establish a regular rhythm of moving through the Building Beloved Community modules, with both cabinet and clergy under appointment.
Support the continued creation and development of churches of color in relevant mission fields.

The Extended Cabinet of the Minnesota Conference continues to strategize, establish, and support new communities of color to better reach our increasingly diverse mission field. Currently mono-cultural and multi-cultural faith communities total 22 in the Minnesota Conference. Within the past three years new Filipino, Hispanic/Latine, and Hmong fellowships have been launched with outreach to the urban Karen community and greater Minnesota Hispanic/Latine populations being cultivated in 2023. We have great opportunity yet before us, with potential for at least one new “non-dominant culture” congregation launched each year.

Continue to make and support cross-racial, cross-cultural clergy appointments. This year, we have begun to provide training and support for all of our new cross-racial appointments.

Diversity is sought not only across new populations, but within existing congregations as well. In recent years, Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural appointments strategically deployed clergy of color to churches in diverse communities. Not surprisingly however, optics and perspective of a lone leader rarely shifts the culture of an organization. We have also learned that effective Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural appointments are mutually adaptive. In the process of the church and pastor learning how best to express their uniqueness and embrace the gifts of the other, they also better position themselves to be receptive and responsive to the diversity of their broader mission field. In the last three years we have increased intentionality and content for the preparation of church leaders and the onboarding of clergy of color. We also recognize the need for non-supervisory support systems for BIPOC clergy. Of thirty-two clergy of color currently under appointment through the Minnesota Conference, seventeen are in Cross-Racial/CrossCultural contexts.

Encourage all of our churches to be engaged in anti-racism study and action.

As important as training and supporting our clergy is, making training available to our congregations is critical. This happened in a variety of ways. The Minnesota Church and Society team offered grants of up to $300 to churches to purchase books for book studies. Following the murder of George Floyd, the Twin Cities Rapid Response Team allocated thirteen grants totaling $34,650 for crisis intervention, reconciliation and restoration ministries. The application and award process centered voices most impacted. Community needs ranged from food to counseling to education to respite care for traumatized leaders.

New City Church received a GCORR grant for anti-racism education and anti-racism worship material development. Churches including Centenary, Centennial, Hamline, Living Spirit, Holy Trinity all hosted education opportunities for their congregations. Churches on every district hosted book studies on antiracism, such as Two Harbors, Aitkin, Blooming Grove, Lake Harriet, and The Grove. These are initial efforts, at the educational stage, but lay the groundwork for more intentional action.
While not a Conference initiative, Hamline and Fairmount Avenue, along with several other United Methodist and a Lutheran congregation, raised $25,000 to house a family of a child victim of gun violence from North Minneapolis. They moved the family to St. Paul to be closer to Children’s Hospital for the six months he was hospitalized.

In addition, the Church Profile process now includes a multicultural inventory from CORR, though churches need training and context to understand how to use it.

**Identify, motivate, and equip more churches to be reflective of the diversity in their communities.**

By 2050 it is projected that the Minnesota BIPOC population will grow by 1 million people comprising over 1/3 of the population of the state. Offering abundant life in Christian community is not a church growth strategy, it’s a gospel mandate. Motivating and equipping outreach to diverse communities isn’t just the role of a cabinet, or a conference office, but the clarion call of every local church to relevantly connect with the mission field entrusted to them by God. We have some points of leverage to effect this change:

- Reclaim racial justice and equity not as a program initiative, but as a central discipline of discipleship.
- While working diligently to recruit BIPOC clergy we recognize we need to listen to their needs and build a Minnesota Conference culture that better sustains and retains BIPOC clergy.
- Across our state we embolden “eye opening leaders” who help our churches see and embrace everyone in their communities, not just those who look, value, and interact like themselves.

As local churches are more reflective of the diversity of their communities they become a clearer reflection of the Kin-dom of God!

**Form a Multi-Cultural Wisdom Team to advise the Cabinet and Conference structures.**

The goal to “Form a Multi-Cultural Wisdom Team to advise the Cabinet and Conference structures” was not met per se, but the Transitional Table has in part fulfilled this role. The Transitional Table, made up of 14 clergy and lay persons, is almost 30% BIPOC and raised up as one of its primary areas of focus “For the sake of the gospel and the integrity of our witness, we will have engaged the work of confession, repentance and repair towards becoming the beloved community with particular attention to racial justice and LGBTQI justice.” In addition, Bishop Plambeck met in the spring of 2023 with various BIPOC groups and is exploring more intentional ways of onboarding cross-cultural/cross-racial appointments.

**Each district superintendent reflects in their annual performance review on their work and witness for racial justice and reconciliation.**
A final goal was for each district superintendent to reflect in their annual performance review on their work and witness for racial and restorative justice. In the season of multiple episcopal transitions, annual performance reviews with the DSs have not happened. We will resume the discipline of annual performance reviews in April 2023 with Bishop Plambeck and will include this question.

As this report is submitted, we are indebted to the foundational work of Deacon Dana Neuhauser for developing and piloting a program for support of congregations with Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural appointments in addition to launching conference-wide training for Building Beloved Community. We commit to partner with our new full-time Director of Racial Justice and Equity, Sabrina Tapia as her passion, insight and expertise informs our ongoing work and witness!

Rev. Michelle Hargrave and Rev. Dan Johnson