

A Fishbowl Dialogue on “Eviscerating Racism” with the MCC Race and Reconciliation Team



ColInspire Conference
October 7-10, 2019

From the October ColInspire Purpose Statement:

“In the Kingdom of God, our liberation is bound together with all others. We cannot live as one body in Christ as long as the sin of racism is commonplace in our communities, our institutions, and our lives. It’s not enough for us to live in isolation in our churches, waiting for the storm to pass. To “conspire” is to “breathe with” another; as the church conspires to eviscerate racism, we must think about what it means to truly breathe with one another, even as we acknowledge that people of different races experience racism differently and have different roles to play in this work. We must “breathe together” as one community, lifting up our many differences and strengths while supporting each other through our trials and shortcomings. Taking in the breath of hope, resilience, love, and knowledge gives us the courage and strength for the uncomfortable work of destroying racism.

What do we need to do to transform our collective imaginations? We must not only discover and dismantle the racist ideologies that hold our imaginations captive, but indeed, eviscerate racism in our bodies, souls, the ground we share, and the air we breathe. We choose to work at the level of evisceration because we acknowledge how deeply racism is lodged in the very visceral nervous systems of ourselves and communities.

Through mind-blowing sermons, to deep dives into church and societal structures, to self-examination, participants were invited to see that “With God’s help, we liberate our imagination to expansively conspire with our Creator for a church and world where racism is extinguished, where all of us can live in the abundance we were created to inhabit.”

In the spirit of the Montreat ColInspire Conference and the declarations made from the Co-Inspire Purpose Statement in the excerpt above, members of the Mission Coordinating Committee’s Race and Reconciliation Team, who attended the conference, were asked to commit to bringing some of our learnings back to our environment that will begin the whole Church thinking about what is needed to “eviscerate” racism in our families, our communities, our local congregations, the larger church, and ultimately our world. The MCC Race and Reconciliation Team would like to offer the following four questions in a fishbowl forum with people of color and whites and to ask them to share with and listen to one another’s responses in this setting, using the following questions. We will end by asking each participant to commit to one task over the next 2 months, then returning to our fishbowl at our March Presbytery Open Space to share new insights.

All are welcomed!

The questions are:

1. What at this time seems to hinder your full liberation?
2. What do you need to help you fully open to ‘the other’s’ experience?
3. What strengths to you bring from your cultural context that lend toward the evisceration of racism in your contexts.
4. What do you think we need to transform our collective imaginations.

Led by:

Elder Sandra Barrett, Garden Memorial
Elder Les Henig, Northwood
Elder Jochebed Jordan, Redeemer
Elder Therese Taylor-Stinson, Liaison, MCC Race and Reconciliation Team