



Executive Summary

Background

In 2023 the Mission Institute was contracted by Christ Church Cathedral (CCC) to complete a racial audit. This audit is one of the commitments in CCC's Indy Racial Equity Pledge as well as to live fully into the mission and values of The Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The audit was happening simultaneously with CCC's focus on the Strategic Plan and ongoing efforts of the Racial Justice Team (RJT) at CCC.

Process

The goal of the audit is to identify and explore how racism operates in CCC. It is not meant to provide a resolution to obstacles but to increase clarity and opportunities to explore ways to move forward. The survey was sent to 66 members of the CCC community. In total, we collected survey data from 34 church leaders and employees, and interviewed 10 of them.

Theological Reflection

"The missionary dimension of a local church's life manifests itself, among other ways, when it is truly a worshiping community; it is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is a church in which the pastor does not have the monopoly and the members are not merely objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society; it is structurally pliable and innovative; and it does not defend the privileges of a select group. However, the church's missionary dimension evokes intentional, that is direct involvement in society; it actually moves beyond the walls of the church and engages in missionary 'points of concentration' such as evangelism and work for justice and peace."¹

What as Christians do we really have to say? For undoubtedly the Church should be the place where a word reverberates right into the world."²

"Missionary activity is not so much the work of the church as simply the Church at work."³

CCC, like many religious institutions, has had a complex history when it comes to issues of race relations. Despite varying perspectives, Episcopalians as a collective have played a significant role in various aspects of racial justice in American society, including its stance on slavery, civil rights, and on-going issues related to racial diversity and inclusion. The Episcopal church's history

¹ Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. American Society of Missiology Series 16. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). pg. 381

² Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. Edited by Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey William Bromiley. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975. pg. 11

³ Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. American Society of Missiology Series 16. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991). pg. 372

regarding race relations is complex, marked by both progress and setbacks. While the church has taken steps toward racial inclusivity and justice, it continues to grapple with these issues as part of its ongoing mission to promote love, reconciliation, and justice within its congregations and the broader society.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church invites us to “walk the way of love” in order “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ”⁴. Under his leadership, The Episcopal Church was accompanied in following “Jesus into loving, liberating, and life-giving relationships with God, with each other, and with the earth as part of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement”⁵.

Demographics

A few key demographic findings. The overall response rate to the survey was 51.5%.

- Of overall CCC leadership and employees surveyed,
 - ◆ 52% identify as white
 - ◆ 48% identify as People of Color

Dominant Patterns Theory and Framework

The following theoretical frameworks were used in analyzing the collected data.

- Racism is a **complex adaptive system**, with multiple parts affecting the whole. Engagement with such systems requires a cyclical approach, naming the questions, *what?, so what?, and now what?* again and again.
- **White Dominating Culture** or **White Supremacy Culture** are the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior embodied and enacted by the vast majority of institutions stemming from a longstanding history within the Episcopal Church and the United States.
- **Faith-based** grounding and understanding racism as sin. The **Baptismal Covenant** states that when we sin, we must repent and turn back to God. These can be instructive ideas for Episcopalians in the work of anti-racism.
- Understanding the **complexities and tensions** of racial socialization and cultural differences across constituencies.

The Four Dominant Patterns:

1. Faith-based grounding of racial equity work
2. Complex strengths, challenges, and responsibilities of leadership roles in the parish and workplace
3. Tensions in and between confronting bias and supporting different constituencies
4. Power dynamics of marginalization and tokenism

Faith-Based Grounding of Racial Equity Work

A foundational and frequent pattern that arose from the audit was the importance of placing faith at the core of CCC racial equity work. Additionally, respondents

⁴ (1875) *The Book of common prayer*, according to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America . New-York, T. Whittaker. p. 855

⁵ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/> -about us

acknowledged the ongoing need to serve the community and address racial inequity outside of CCC. They recognized the church's role as a spiritual hub of transformation and the importance of CCC's commitments to *the Indy Racial Equity Pledge* and CCC's *Pledge to the CCC Community*. People use the language of their faith to reflect on anti-racism work and to compel the Church to live into the mission and values of CCC.

Complex Strengths, Challenges, and Responsibilities of Leadership Roles In the Parish and Workplace

Audit participants expressed great confidence in people taking leadership in the context of anti-racism work. Most people expressed a deep commitment to adopting leadership roles in racial justice work as well as a deep respect for those with whom they share leadership responsibilities. However, audit respondents stressed that there is much more to do. They were clear that the work is systemic and requires determination to maintain a lifetime commitment. Those in leadership have to move between navigating the power structure of The Episcopal Church and fulfilling individuals' desire to worship, fellowship, and engage in ministry and mission.

Tensions In and Between Confronting Bias and Supporting Different Constituencies

People spoke frequently of the progress that has been made in building the Spanish-speaking church community and in integrating it into the community's larger fabric without compromising its integrity. This pattern names the tension of People of Color within and outside various constituency groups. For example, while many spoke to the need for White support and engagement in CCC work to become more multicultural and anti-racist, there was significant cultural and language bias evident in the White dominating culture.

Power Dynamics of Marginalization and Tokenism

Marginalization was an overwhelming theme that surfaced in the audit. All survey participants acknowledged that marginalization exists in CCC. Respondents to the audit and interviewees noted that marginalized communities include various groups and factors such as economics, culture, politics, and sexual orientation.

Given that everyone has multiple social identities such as class, sexual orientation, ability, and race, understanding how intersectionality deepens the complexity of racial oppression will move CCC toward greater inclusivity.

Recommendations for Christ Church Cathedral

- Continue to utilize regular prayer and meditation to strengthen and maintain CCC's awareness, clarity, and spiritual connection to the work.
- Maintain opportunities for regular self-reflection and ongoing evaluations of the work
- Maintain humility to allow for recognizing and acknowledging the strength of others, and putting their needs and concerns before a dominant cultures' instinct to control or solve.

- Validate and commit to an understanding that racial justice work has various levels of engagement and approaches and is different across constituencies.
- Implement and maintain a system of accountability to address implicit bias and promote systemic change (workplace, decision making, liturgy, etc).
- Continue to educate about racialization and the history of whiteness while accepting the experience of oppression is different based on cultural background.