



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

GCE43 GS92 Anti-Racism Common Table for January 2021

True Document Date: January 23, 2021

1. What is the issue?

With the recent commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination, it is important to have a coordinated structure for accountability, for advancing the work, and for evaluating its progress. We are proposing an Anti-Racism Common Table to replace the four current working and reference groups.

2. Why is this issue important?

At this point in the United Church's life, there is a need for clarity among elected members/volunteers who are engaged in anti-racism work. There has been some good and faithful work done among the national groups engaged in anti-racism; however, there has also been confusion about who is responsible for what aspects of the work. An earlier report named this dynamic clearly:

The United Church has several different elected member/volunteer groups working on different aspects of the church's racial justice work at a national level. There is the GCE Anti-Racism Working Group, the White Privilege Working Group, the Indigenous Peoples Reference Group, and the Racialized Peoples Reference Group. Each of these groups has had different mandates, different degrees of terms of references, and different reporting relationships. To date, some of the racial justice work has been a challenge because there has been a lack of coordination and communication between these groups. As such, some efforts

have been duplicated, and some aspects of the anti-racism work has been missed entirely.

- General Council Executive Report on Anti-Racism to GC 43 Annual Meeting
October 24, 2020

Recognizing these challenges, the members of these four national groups met together jointly twice to discern the best direction for the church's anti-racism work, and in particular how they could be organized in ways that would best serve the church's work. Together, the groups came to consensus that a racially integrated Common Table would be the best way of moving forward.

Afterwards, a smaller Process Group, composed of members of each of the four groups, met twice to work on a proposed Terms of Reference for the Anti-Racism Common Table.

If there is no action taken on this issue, the concerns about a lack of coordination and communication between the four groups would not be resolved. There would also likely continue to be challenges around some aspects of the work being duplicated, and other parts of the work being missed entirely. No action would also likely result in frustration among the members of the four groups, who have prayerfully discerned that an Anti-Racism Common Table is what God is calling them to do.

3. How might the General Council Executive respond to the issue?

The General Secretary recommends that the General Council Executive:

1. approve the establishment of an Anti-Racism Common Table;
2. approve the Terms of Reference for the Anti-Racism Common Table (attached);
3. approve the slate of names as initial members of the Anti-Racism Common Table; and
4. empower the General Secretary, General Council, to appoint additional members to the Anti-Racism Common Table in order to further reflect the diversity of The United Church of Canada (diversity with respect to racial identity, gender identity, ethno-cultural background, language, age, geography, and vocation).

4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council Executive:

- GCE 22 (2020) – Commitment to Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination
- PMM 07 (GCE 42, 2017) – White Privilege

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ANTI-RACISM COMMON TABLE

Mandate

The Anti-Racism Common Table coordinates and develops strategic directions for the United Church's anti-racism work. It also offers recommendations and advice to the Executive of General Council (GCE) and the National Indigenous Council (NIC) about living out the United Church's commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination.

The mandate for the Anti-Racism Common Table is to:

- Shape, develop, and animate the United Church's national anti-racism action plan; be involved with consulting about the development of plan; and evaluate the plan's progress
- Coordinate and develop strategic directions for the United Church's anti-racism work across the church
- Assess the availability of current anti-racism resources, and consider developing additional educational resources, as needed
- Engage in conversations to evaluate the feasibility of national anti-racism network(s)
- Work on dismantling White privilege and White supremacy in the church; address the culture of Whiteness in the church
- Communicate, share information, and integrate the church's anti-racism work and initiatives across the General Council, Regional Councils, and communities of faith
- Engage in the work of the Anti-Racism Common Table while living out an intercultural model, recognizing the relational process of doing work person-to-person and nation-to-nation, and keeping track of the experience of the process of doing this collective work.

The work of the Anti-Racism Common Table is guided by the United Church's anti-racism policy, *That All May Be One* (2000), intercultural policies (2006, 2009, 2012), the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2016), the *Calls to the Church* (2017), and the commitment to becoming an anti-racist denomination (2020).

Membership (Or Composition)

The Anti-Racism Common Table has a membership of 20 people, initially drawn from the membership of the former Indigenous Peoples Reference Group, the former Racialized Peoples Reference Group, the former Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, and the Anti-Racism Working Group of the 2018-2022 Executive of General Council (GCE).

The General Secretary, General Council, may appoint additional members to the Anti-Racism Common Table in order to further reflect the diversity of The United Church of Canada (diversity with respect to racial identity, gender identity, ethno-cultural background, language, age, geography, and vocation).

The Anti-Racism and Equity Officer, Adele Halliday, is the staff resource to the Anti-Racism Common Table.

Skills and Experience

Committee members will be:

- people who possess good communication, animation, and/or analytical skills
- able to commit the time required for this responsibility
- predisposed to collaboration and teamwork
- comfortable with and able to participate in electronic meetings
- committed to right relations, the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their relevance, the Calls to the Church, the vision of becoming an intercultural church, and the journey to becoming an anti-racist denomination
- people with a background, work, or lived experience on anti-racism, intercultural engagement, and/or Indigenous justice

Committee members will be active participants in a local community of faith or ministry, familiar with the polity of The United Church of Canada, predisposed to collaboration and teamwork, sensitive to diversity issues, passionately committed to the mission of the United Church, and willing to discern God's yearnings for this work.

Expectations and Term

The Anti-Racism Common Table will meet as needed by video-conference call and may meet in person as necessary. The term of this appointment is until the rise of the 44th General Council (July 2022). The General Secretary may re-appoint people to the Anti-Racism Common Table after July 2022.

The Anti-Racism Common Table may form task groups from time to time that would focus on specific duties; membership for these task groups might include members outside of the Common Table.

Initial members of the Anti-Racism Common Table will be:

- **Jordan Cantwell** (former moderator from 2015-2018, member of the GCE, member of the GCE Anti-Racism Working Group, and ministry personnel at St. Martin's United Church in the Living Skies Regional Council; Saskatoon, SK)
- **Paul Douglas Walfall** (member of the GCE, member of the GCE Anti-Racism Working Group, and ministry personnel at First United Church in the Northern Spirit Regional Council; Fort Saskatchewan, AB)
- **Matthew Fillier** (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, and ministry personnel at Bedford United Church in Regional Council 15; Bedford, NS)
- **Ellie Hummel** (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, ministry personnel, and chaplain and coordinator of the Multi-faith & Spirituality Centre at Concordia University; Montreal, QC)
- Ren Ito (member of the Racialized Peoples Reference Group, former Social Justice Animator staff for the Shining Waters Regional Council, and current PhD candidate at Emmanuel College; Toronto, ON)
- Rhonda Johns (member of the Indigenous Peoples Reference Group, and Program Coordinator at the outreach ministry/education centre Nations Uniting in the Shining Waters Regional Council; Brantford, ON)
- Jenni Leslie (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, and ministry personnel at Kitchissippi United Church in the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council; Ottawa, ON)
- Alcris Limongi (member of the Racialized Peoples Reference Group, former General Council Office staff as the Program Coordinator for Racial Justice and Gender Justice, and current ministry personnel at Parkdale United Church in the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council; Ottawa, ON)

- Shannon McCarthy (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, ministry personnel, and Regional Council Executive Minister of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, the Living Skies Regional Council, and the Northern Spirit Regional Council; Winnipeg, MB)
- Ha Na Park (member of the GCE, member of the GCE Anti-Racism Working Group, and ministry personnel at Immanuel United Church in the Prairie to Pine Regional Council; Winnipeg, MB)
- Barry Rieder (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, ministry personnel, and Community Minister at the Jane Finch Community Ministry in the Shining Waters Regional Council; Toronto, ON)
- Tony Snow (member of the Indigenous Peoples Reference Group, candidate for ministry, and Indigenous Lead for the Chinook Winds Regional Council; Calgary, AB)
- Sara Stratton (member of the Dismantling White Privilege Working Group, and General Council Office Staff as the Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice Animator; Toronto, ON)
- Yvonne Terry (member of the Racialized Peoples Reference Group, and retired ministry personnel from the Living Skies Regional Council; Rouleau, SK)

Jointly accountable to the General Council Executive (GCE) and the National Indigenous Council (NIC).

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