

164th Annual Convention Indaba Session 1

Given that The Episcopal Church has apologized for its role in slavery, what would you see as an appropriate further Christian act of repentance for the role of the Episcopal Church in slavery before the Civil War, for its refusal to condemn slavery during the Civil War, and for its hand in the active segregation and oppression of Black Americans for the 100 years following the Civil War?

Challenges we face:

- This is such an enormous issue that we get stuck at how to begin.
- We don't know how to talk about race ("let's get rid of race, I am color-blind," etc.).
- We are a predominantly white church here in Iowa. We tend to ask people of color to speak for their race and we unfairly expect them to help us.
- We don't have a good understanding of reparations – what good will money do? What will it fix? What if we make ourselves vulnerable and it doesn't change anything or makes things worse? There is some resistance to giving up control and acknowledging our own shame.
- We don't have a clear ownership of responsibility - What is my responsibility? How am I connected to the sin of racism and white privilege? There is some resistance to owning responsibility, and a desire to distance ourselves from the sins of the past.
- We know that there is no amount of money that can fix this.
- We have fear. Even as we acknowledge that history has always been told by the oppressor - there is fear of how much will unravel when we dismantle the history we have been taught.
- There is fear about the current state of racial tension in the US.
- We are not in agreement about what needs to be done or even the need for reparations.

What acts of repentance could create right relationship?

- Repentance can't just be money.
- Repentance can't just be an apology.
- We need to understand what white privilege means and its role in perpetuating racism.
- Our repentance can't just be in relationship to slavery, it also must address our oppression of Native Americans.
- We need to do the work necessary to discover our personal and church histories with oppression of Native Americans and Black Americans.
- Part of our repentance must address the current form of slavery and lynching – mass incarceration and the killing of people of color.
- Acts of repentance should be done in consultation with people of color
- We need to personally stand with people of color - show up in support at protests, rallies, vigils.
- We need to seek and foster relationships across races.