

"As a child, I remember visiting my aunt in Alabama - we sat on her front porch. Some of her neighbors were also on their porches - including the African American neighbor next door and the Caucasian neighbor across the street. My aunt and her Caucasian neighbor began talking to one another and in the course of the conversation, they began making racial comments and used terminology I found offensive, even as a child. It did not make sense to me that this lovely Southern lady could speak so callously and disrespectfully about a group of people - especially within earshot of the people she was disrespecting... My heart still cannot understand why we so often use words and language to build barriers that divide rather than bridges that unite."

~ Olivia Wakefield

"In 2007, the church I pastor suffered a devastating fire at the hands of an arsonist. As the congregation gathered that Sunday morning to be with one another in the presence of God, we noticed some unfamiliar faces. A church from the other side of the city ended their time of worship in order to join us in our time of need. This African American congregation demonstrated the vastness of God's love and kingdom. Had the shoes been on the other feet, would we have done the same?"

~ Randy McKinney

Joining the Ongoing Conversation:

If you are interested in more information concerning the Racial Reconciliation Task Force's work or if you feel led to serve on the Ministry Team, email Laura Barclay at lbarclay@cbfnc.org.

Learn more about the CBFNC Initiative of Racial Reconciliation at www.cbfnc.org.

2012-13 Racial Reconciliation Ministry Team:

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CBFNC
**racial
reconciliation**
MINISTRY TEAM

conversations
and
relationships

The Earliest Conversations:

In the 2007-08 Strategic Plan for the CBF of NC, diversity was identified as an initiative shaping future ministries. To address this need, the 2007 CBF of NC General Assembly approved the formation of a Diversity Task Force, for the purpose of making recommendations for increasing the diversity of our Fellowship.

As of July 2007, the Diversity Task Force began working toward this end. Ethnic diversity quickly rose to the top of our exchanges and the task force discerned racial reconciliation, particularly between African American and Anglo Christians and churches, needed to be the focus of our work. To that end, the task force was renamed the Racial Reconciliation Ministry Team.

Past Conversations:

During the last four CBFNC General Assemblies, the Racial Reconciliation Ministry Team sponsored workshops on white privilege, diversity and the Body of Christ.

They also sponsored five day-long workshops in Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Charlotte, Wilmington, and Asheville that were well attended by pastors and lay-leaders, stimulating dialogue on how to best build community between congregations of different races. The ministry team is now deepening the conversations at divinity schools and faith communities across the state.

The Current Conversation:

We believe there is a difference between increasing the racial diversity of the Fellowship and building community with Christians from other racial groups.

In order to build authentic relationships of trust that lead to reconciliation within the body of Christ, we must understand that which led us to be segregated, recognize what it means to be segregated, and discover why it is important that we engage one another.

Therefore, education, conversation, and relationships are the foundation for any meaningful future in regards to increasing the Fellowship's racial diversity.

Future Conversations:

We will continue to conduct listening sessions at divinity schools across the state regarding race and the missional church. Please encourage students to attend and share their thoughts. We also offer day-long workshops around the state. Check www.cbfnc.org for upcoming events.

We partnered with the Baptist Center for Ethics to produce a non-partisan, biblically based documentary on immigration called "Gospel Without Borders" to help churches learn about ways to serve our immigrant neighbors. These DVDs were mailed by CBFNC to all partner churches, divinity schools and colleges. Ask your pastor about a screening. Find out more at www.cbfnc.org.

As our work continues to be a main goal of CBFNC, we look forward to you joining the conversation at our annual General Assemblies, regional Fellowship on the Move fall tours, and other events. We know it is vital to bring together churches and divinity schools in communities across the state to discuss the importance of an outward, God-centered focus involving community engagement in 21st century ministry.

Beginning the Conversation in Your Setting:

- Pray for the Spirit's leadership and directions and discern what you and your congregation are called to do concerning reconciliation.
- Actively seek opportunities to form authentic relationships with the leadership of congregations that differ from your own and become partners on mission together in your community.
- Become well-read in the area of racial reconciliation (Find recommended resources on the task force's web page through www.cbfnc.org).
- Find opportunities to incorporate these resources into congregational dialogue through book discussion groups or special studies.
- Explore and investigate the racial history of your congregation and community. What are the stories that have shaped the way your church and community looks?
- Be patient with your congregation—true reconciliation and relationship building takes time.

Check www.cbfnc.org to join us!