

Council of Churches Launches Truth-telling, Reparations Initiative

The Minnesota Council of Churches has launched on a ten-year initiative for racial healing, truth telling, and reparations, in response to this summer's killing of George Floyd and long-standing racial disparities across the state.

The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area is a member of the Council of Churches. Executive Presbyter Jeff Japinga sits on the board and was part of the initial group developing this initiative. You can read more about it in a [recent Star-Tribune article](#). The Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs, a member of Presbytery and a “parish pastor” at Church of All Nations in Columbia Heights, serves as Program Director for Racial Justice for the Council of Churches, and will be a key leader.

The initiative is built on three distinct platforms:

1. **Truth Telling Process:**
MCC brings a moral voice to the work of racial justice and equity. In order to get at the deeper issues blocking the transformation of systemic racism in Minnesota, a strong moral voice is required to call for truth telling, welcome lament, advocate for reparations, and hold systems accountable for change. The South African Truth & Reconciliation was led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other religious leaders because of their moral authority. Faith communities provide a redemptive space for acknowledging past egregious intentional injustices and redressing past injustices and present inequities through specific acts of penance and contrition.
2. **Education**
Each MCC member denomination will pursue its own educational process for racial justice and equity work in conversation with MCC and other judicatories. This could include anti-racism training, cultural competency development, DEI-informed leadership development, etc. The Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area has already launched both an Institutional Assessment for Race and Equity and its Anti-Racism Spiritual Pilgrimage.
3. **Reparations in Black and Indigenous Communities**
MCC will build a coalition to call for, legislate, and deliver reparations to Black and Indigenous communities. This would be coordinated with the truth telling process. This restitution would include land and economic reparations. Reparations are effective when “an improved position for (Blacks and Native Americans) is associated with sharp and enduring reductions in racial disparities, particularly economic disparities like racial wealth inequality, and a corresponding sharp and enduring improvements in (Black and Native American) well-being.”

MCC will seek partnerships, create plans and processes, establish budget and funding strategies, and propose a timeline with the goal of launching the public work in the first part of 2021.