

**Report of the Committee on Ministry  
Racial Bias Assessment  
2020-2021**

**Committee Members**

**Tom Wacht, Chair  
Erin Foster  
Kevin McGahren-Clemens  
Janice Silverberg  
Ginny Strand  
Denice Tomlinson**

## CUUC – Committee on Ministry – 2020-2021 Study on Racial Bias

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Project:** This year, COM explored the issue of racism through the lens of **racial bias**, with a focus on how we as individuals, and as a congregation: (a) have experienced it, (b) can recognize it; (c) have – whether consciously or unconsciously – participated in it; and (d) how we, individually and together, can or could address this important concern.

We note that as the survey was conducted during the pandemic, we had to be distanced from the respondents, who among themselves were constrained from personal interaction.

**What We Did:** Recognizing that this is an all-encompassing topic, we decided to briefly survey individual members, and to separately engage with CUUC's various committees, to discuss how each of us, as members of the CUUC community, can engage in this essential work.

*Individuals:* The initial email on Jan 13 was sent to 553 people and opened by 181. The follow-up email on Jan 26 was sent to 555 people and opened by 156. As of our most recent UUA certification (Feb 15), CUUC has 185 members and 135 friends.

A total of 70 persons responded to the survey, though not everyone answered every question. We reviewed the individual responses as well as tabulated them in various categories in a spreadsheet.

*Committees:* We met with 10 committees:

1. Auction
2. Board of Trustees
3. Environmental Practice
4. Hunger and Homelessness
5. Nominating
6. Path to Membership
7. Racial Justice
8. RE Council
9. Refugee Resettlement
10. Science and Spirituality

In addition, we spoke to the chair of Canvas/Finance and included his responses in the summary.

**Findings:** The individual responses were significantly skewed to older members of the congregation:

88.4% of those responding are members of CUUC, 70% are over age 60, and 44% have been affiliated with CUUC for more than 20 years. 64 respondents described themselves as white/Caucasian/of European descent; 4 identified as Black or African American; one Eurasian and one white Hispanic responded. There was not a significant deviation in white vs. non-white responses.

While there was a perception of generally effective anti-racism efforts in ministerial, congregational governance, and social justice teams, more needs to be done to (a) acknowledge and recognize the existence of racial bias; and (b) implement efforts to better address it.

The vast majority of the respondents indicated they hadn't observed or experienced racial bias. While this may be interpreted positively, it raises the underlying issue of racial bias myopia.

For many of the committees the discussion with the COM of this issue was the first time the committee had an opportunity to talk about their attitudes, practices and policies regarding anti-racism, leaving the COM with the impression of a congregation in the beginning stages of any anti-racism work.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Establish or continue an 8<sup>th</sup> Principal Committee that would keep the topic of racial bias in front of the congregation by engaging outside speakers and providing educational opportunities for the congregation on an ongoing basis; Continue to pursue diversity both within the congregation and in congregational activities and by developing relationships with groups outside of our congregation. Assume responsibility for ongoing dialogue on the subject in services, coffee hour, RE; and conduct regular evaluation and reflection as to how we are recognizing and addressing racial bias as individuals, as groups and committees, and as a congregation.
- 2) Support the Committee on Ministry in establishing policies and procedures for addressing conflicts around racial justice issues and assume a leadership role in educating the congregation about these policies and procedures, in order to address perceived incidents of racial bias on a proactive, not a reactive, basis.
- 3) Ask each committee to update its mission statement, policies and practices around education and training for committee members, specifically as this relates to raising awareness of racial justice issues and the manner in which each committee makes a contribution to the work of the congregation in this regard.
- 4) In light of the centrality of the Nominating Committee and Path to Membership Committees respectively as 1) central to leadership development and 2) the face of the congregation to the public, we recommend that the newly appointed 8<sup>th</sup> Principal Committee work with these two committees next year to assess possibilities for strengthening anti-racist work on the part of their committee. For example, in regard to the Path to Membership Committee, strengthen the role of greeters in engaging new members at coffee hour.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES from SURVEY

### Background

The initial email on Jan 13 was sent to 553 people and opened by 181. The follow-up email on Jan 26 was sent to 555 people and opened by 156. As of our most recent UUA certification (Feb 15), CUUC has 185 members and 135 friends. A total of 70 persons responded to the survey, though not everyone answered every question.

The responses were significantly skewed to older members of the congregation: 88.4% of those responding are members of CUUC, 70% are over age 60, and 44% have been affiliated with CUUC for more than 20 years. 64 respondents described themselves as white/Caucasian/of European descent; 4 identified as Black or African American; one Eurasian and one white Hispanic responded.

### Summary of Qs 1-15

In answering the question “How would you define racial bias?” some respondents focused on actions (treating others differently based on race, whether consciously or unconsciously), while others referenced ingrained beliefs and attitudes about different races, which would affect behavior on personal, societal and institutional levels (“white privilege”). One response re: definition: “explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious preference for, trust of, favoritism toward or comfort with people of (one’s) same race vs. other races.”

The survey presented separate questions as to whether respondents had observed or directly experienced racial bias. Almost 2/3 of the respondents (64.7%) indicated they had not observed racial bias at CUUC. The majority of those who did observe bias indicated it occurred in worship services or congregational events such as the auction (#14 each), or at coffee hour and other gatherings (#11 each) (some respondents provided more than one example).

Comments on this section cited Music several times as indicative of racial bias, either because the music program is reflective of white majority culture or because “black” music is stereotypical and generations old and not representative. The auction was mentioned generally as part of the “white upper-crust experience,” which specifically caters to the wealth differential in the congregation. Several respondents referred to the choice of an auction theme several years ago which they considered cultural appropriation, and the related poor reception of a black youth coordinator who questioned the choice (and who later opted not to continue her employment with CUUC). Coffee hour also drew comments for being “difficult to navigate” with “closed” groups of friends conducting personal conversations. One comment: “racial bias per se, no; racial discomfort, prejudice or ignorance, yes.”

An even greater majority of respondents stated they had not experienced racial bias (83.6%); those who did so identified coffee hours, events and gatherings as the settings where this took place (#7,6, 6 respectively). The examples cited include comments in a Journey group, that someone not of color couldn’t possibly understand the experience of a POC, a group leader mispronouncing someone’s name, the perceived double standard of permitting caricature of white culture, patronizing celebrations of other cultures, and the actions related to the auction theme and the BLM poster.

Similarly, the vast majority of respondents indicated they had not experienced hostile or derogatory communications from other individuals (91%), while more than 78% had not observed such communications from others. Respondents reported observing unintentional comments, mistaken perceptions, and a general “I don’t see color” attitude. A small minority reported feeling patronized or talked down to at some point; one respondent experienced white congregants “explaining” her race to her. Another respondent objected to an assumption that all whites experience “white fragility.”

In terms of CUUC as an institution, 75% of the respondents indicated that it had not communicated racial bias, intentionally or unintentionally. Among the 15 respondents who commented on this question, it was noted that the very fact that this is a dominantly white congregation reflects bias, while another respondent feels we overaccommodate. Another opines that we have not been proactively anti-racist, yet another applauds our efforts to become intentionally anti-racist. One comment: “There is probably no way to say ‘no’ to this one – we’re working on the assumption that every institution must express or communicated biases even if unintentional.”

It should be noted that several responses referred to incidents occurring many years ago, or which the respondent heard about but did not witness. However, it should also be noted that the auction incident remains unresolved (several respondents referred to the “cultural appropriation” in the choice of theme), as does the process related to placement of the BLM poster. It should also be noted that the RE program drew almost universally positive response.

### **Summary of Q’s 16-21**

In terms of forward-looking action steps towards solutions, the five categories of possible options presented all received relatively equal support on a 1-5 scale:

- 4.2 – Work with outside groups
- 4.0 – Strengthen RE curriculum
- 3.9 – Have Social Justice team take the lead
- 3.8 – Create internal dialogue
- 3.8 – Attract greater diversity

Additional commentary on each question varied, but the three most prevalent themes underscored an almost equally divided perspective on whether to focus internally, externally, or continue as we currently are:

- EXTERNAL – 12
  - Combination of bringing in external facilitators / educators (9) and partnering with established outside groups (3) Beloved Conversations came up often as example.
- INTERNAL – 8
  - Create more opportunities for internal dialogue and sharing from those most knowledgeable, impacted, or engaged (e.g., Social Justice Team, POC)
- STATUS QUO – 8
  - CUUC doing a lot already so need to keep it up (+ other things important too, e.g., economic justice)

One comment stood out that punctuated essentially a demand for external input by stating that “these questions are intrinsically flawed.... This is white methodology.... we need to follow the lead of POCs and communities that have been doing this work on a deeper level.”

Net, while overall the congregation is engaged and supportive on the topic of anti-racism, there is no clear consensus on the best path forward.

### **Summary of Q’s 23 – 26**

Regarding the effectiveness of CUUC’s anti-racism work so far, respondents were generally tough graders, noting that, while progress has been made, the impact of our anti-racism work has been mixed to date – a good place to start towards improvement. However, a more positive rating has been reserved for the minister’s effectiveness regarding this topic.

- 4.0 – Ministerial leadership and inspiration
- 3.6 – CUUC committee work
- 3.5 – Congregational governance (structure / policy)
- 3.4 – Individual engagement

The commentary behind these ratings varied very broadly.

- The largest subset (6) actually did not even feel comfortable commenting for various reasons (e.g., newness, pandemic absence, inability to judge).
- A somewhat related subset built on earlier comments by confirming they felt that the congregation was performing well in general – or at least trying – across these areas. (5)
- Another group believed focus had to be further increased internally beyond the Social Justice teams (5)
- And another sub-set reiterated the need for external involvement / input and 3<sup>rd</sup> party education (5)

Although nearly all comments were made in a balanced fashion, one in particular betrayed a raw nerve that, while an outlier in this survey, clearly merits further review and understanding:

- “ More members of the BOT, Committee chairs and teachers need to do this work to be effective, more aware and less harsh in their dealings with visitors and other members. I have always felt on the margins when working with other CUUC members who had a strong white dominant culture approach to making decisions.”

Taken as a whole, the comments in this section aligned again along the general groupings of greater internal or external focus for those requesting greater action in addition to a sub-set acknowledging current efforts or not feeling qualified to convey an opinion.

### **Summary of Q’s 28 - 32**

The respondents are involved in a wide range of racial justice initiatives and groups beyond CUUC. The most prevalent mentioned were:

- NAACP (7)
- Southern Poverty Law Center (5)
- MLK Institute (4)
- ACLU (3)

Many others were mentioned once or twice in addition to attendance and involvement in local rallies, vigils and other initiatives.

70% of congregants replied that CUUC influenced them to become engaged in anti-racism work. Many different drivers were mentioned but some of the key ones behind this impact were:

- Sermons and other support from pulpit (6)
- Offering of Beloved Conversations course (6)
- Racial Justice Committee work (5)

Finally, only 19 of the 70 respondents offered additional closing comments at the end of the survey. No general theme runs through these final thoughts, but the wide range of beliefs on display throughout the survey is again evidenced by this sampling that runs the gamut of perspectives regarding CUUC's anti-racism efforts:

- "I'm just not that interested in anti-racism as an issue in my spiritual life."
- "In my personal opinion, I think CUUC is doing well and has done well." (POC)
- "Although it appears that my answers are not so encouraging, I do not feel we are unsuccessful entirely."
- "I have heard distressing anecdotes of microaggressions, insults, and outright racist behavior from a variety of people at CUUC.... There is clearly an accommodationist wing and a more honest response wing among POC with CUUC in how Black people themselves feel they should react to such distressing comments and behavior from fellow members of CUUC....We need to make clear such comments and behavior are unacceptable..."
- "I am concerned that your bias will affect your ability to hear what I write, are you truly in covenant with me?"

### **Commentary:**

A primary concern is whether or not our survey fully or accurately portrays the perspective of the congregation. Only 70 member/friends responded, out of a potential pool of 185 members and 135 friends, and more than 2/3 of those responding are over age 60, which raises the question if this survey accurately reflects the opinions/experience of the congregation.

The vast majority of the respondents indicated they hadn't observed or experienced racial bias. While this may be interpreted positively, it raises the underlying issue of racial bias myopia. Positively though, the respondents' net takeaway was that we, as a whole, need more education regarding how to both identify and combat racial bias - so there appears to be minimal denial of its existence and negative impact within our membership.

Regarding the 1/3 of the respondents who have observed racial bias, it's interesting that those 24 respondents recorded an average of more than 2 incidents each. This may indicate that these respondents are more aware and observant, and that racial bias at CUUC is not just an isolated incident. And while it may be encouraging that the degree of racial bias experienced by members is about half that of what has been observed, it must also be considered that those negatively impacted either didn't respond or are no longer members.

In terms of a path forward, 4/5 of the congregation supported internal education and coaching re: identifying and addressing individual blind spots re: racial bias. Members showed the same support for heightened RE activity and community engagement.

## **COMMITTEE RESPONSES from FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### **Introduction**

The Committee on Ministry (CoM) sought this year to “take the pulse” of the congregation in regard to its position on racial bias. In addition to an individual survey of congregants, the CoM conducted meetings with the members of select UUC committees. In many instances, the committees were not meeting this year due to Covid and met specifically to respond to the questions posed by the CoM, and we are very appreciative of the time and effort on the part of committee members. We met with 10 committees, which were as follows:

1. Auction
2. Board of Trustees
3. Environmental Practice
4. Hunger and Homelessness
5. Nominating
6. Path to Membership
7. Racial Justice
8. RE Council
9. Refugee Resettlement
10. Science and Spirituality

In addition, we spoke to the chair of Canvas/Finance and included his responses in the summary. This report summarizes the responses by question across groups.

### **1. On a scale of 1 -10, how important is the work of your committee to helping CUUC become anti-racist? Why?**

About half of the committee surveyed did not identify a number but did discuss how important their committee’s work was to the helping CUUC become anti-racist. Most of the committees that provided a rating put their work between and 8 and 10. Members in these groups said things like:

- *Anti-racism and racial justice work is near the top of our priorities.*
- *We are generally knowledgeable about racial issues because we want to help people.*
- *Have expressed the intent to do anti-racist work. A steady history of a commitment to a multi-culturalism, followed by a commitment to inclusivity.*

Two committees gave their committee a 5.

- *I’d give us a 5 rating. Addressing racism is not our objective, but we try to be inclusive. We attempt to be culturally inclusive. We don’t add or subtract to the issue.*
- *I think we’re welcoming, which puts us in the middle.*

There were also a number of committees that did not feel that anti-racism was a focus for their committee. COM members viewed some comments as a resistance to addressing this topic and/or lack of experience with the topic. Committee members said things like:

- *We accept any volunteers. We welcome anyone who is willing to help. It's a non-issue within our committee.*
- *While we serve the needy and do good things, we do not promote anti-racist feelings within our congregation.*
- *I have an issue with the entire topic. Why are we taking this up as a topic during a pandemic.*
- *We have a specific goal of fun and fundraising. Addressing racism is a low priority for us – I'd give it a three. We do not have to become anti-racist because it's not part of our goal.*
- *Racial issues are not part of our mission.*

A large number of comments, perhaps the majority, however, dealt with struggles that committees and individual members were having around this issue, with many questioning if and how they could do more:

- *...we haven't thought about ways to get people to have more agency and control over their own situation. Is our work condescending? What are we really doing for the larger good? We are a committee of service,. Have we done enough for education or advocacy? How would we do this? Who would we empower?*
- *Sometimes I feel like I'm going to tear up because I can share what it was like to grow up with my experiences as a person of color. How can we get the discussion going?*
- *Delivering hot food has to take place in a short drivable area. We haven't talked much about working further. We don't have the capacity to work beyond what is nearby. There is so much need. Our capacity has not gone beyond our geographic reach.*
- *But are we proactively reaching out to people who we want to include?*
- *There may be unconscious biases. We could be more aggressively inclusive. Are there sub-conscious things we do that could be improved upon?*
- *Through our efforts to be certified as a green sanctuary we are reaching out to constituencies, including communities of color. The way we are now, we are not judged well by the green sanctuaries commission.*
- *[name of committee] We've tried but just can't get more people. There is an assumption that you have to have a certain background. This dissuades many.*
- *As for the racial issue – we need to work this from the welcoming side. We need to get more people into the congregation.*

## **2. What policies and practices promote eliminating racial bias within your committee?**

Very few committees identified explicit policies to promote antiracism but there was a great deal of discussion about practices and attitudes that were felt to promote eliminating racism. There was also more discussion about the struggles that committees face.

The only committee that really identified explicit policies was the Board of Trustees. They pointed out that they had revised the Personnel Handbook to address specific topics that had to do with social equity. They also noted that the congregation's commitment to the 8<sup>th</sup> principle will be in the policy book and speaks to the voices of the congregation in endorsing this.

A number of committees stated explicitly that they did not have any formal policies, nor anything codified.

Practices that promote anti-racism: Many committees identified practices that they believed promoted eliminating racial bias within the community. Members said things like:

- *One of our practices is that we are very cognizant of the issue and do consider how our work would impact anti-racist work – has been at the forefront of most of our discussions.*
- *We do have discussions to make sure we don't favor any one community.*
- *We think about selecting theme, food, alcohol, and many other aspects of planning. We offer different pricing to force our committee to think about a wide range of sensitivities.*
- *it's more the culture of the committee to be antiracist. We are welcoming. We use relationships and education to try to deal with any racial bias that enters our committee. We listen and talk.*
- *Through the Beloved Conversations program some of us are becoming more comfortable with "Followship." We are learning to become followers, letting people/communities of color set the pace on our work with them.*
- *The committee reaches out to others to identify potential action and/or thought leaders re: diversity.*

Attitudes that promote anti-racism: In addition to practices, the committee members also identified attitudes they believe promote the elimination of racial bias.

- *Race is always a consideration as we decide how to teach our lessons. We are sensitive to particular children.*
- *We have, in the past, fallen into "Color-blindness"... We are now making considerations based on particular kids that come from diverse backgrounds.*
- *Our help is genuine. It's an act of love. We're not obligated to solve a global problem.*

Struggles: As was true of the responses to Question 1, committee members identified a number of struggles in regard to this issue:

- *Our teaching staff is all volunteers, with diverse talents and capabilities. We can't ignore color. We need to meet people (volunteer teachers) where they are. When we have mostly white volunteers, it's sometimes hard for students of color to talk about their issues.*
- *We had a non-CUC-affiliated person in the group for a while. She was very valuable in adding a different perspective. Perhaps opening some committees and social justice groups to the general public could be a possible entry point to CUC? Open any door we can.*
- *We did have one member of color working with the refugees, and we were careful to include her, but she's not able to participate now due to COVID.*
- *Mission is to come up with slate to support direction CUUC going -terribly hard from race as few people available - also problem from denomination – very white denomination – really hard.*

### 3. How is anti-bias education built into your group's yearly cycle?

Most committees did not have anti-bias education built into a yearly cycle- in fact, few committees had annual education. Members reported that:

- *We don't have any education built into a yearly cycle. We have individuals in charge of specific projects. We meet to discuss the projects and then we go do them. Any education we have is individual members describing what they're doing and teaching other committee members about it.*
- *Depends on the leadership of the board. 2 years ago – went through a course. Does depend on the individual leadership of a particular board.*
- *We don't have a yearly cycle.*
- *There is no yearly cycle and no specific education for CUUC members. The only time we discuss anti-bias is when we do external training.*
- *We don't have a yearly cycle of education within the committee.*

Many committees were active in doing education for target groups outside of their committee, however, usually with the larger congregation but sometimes outside of CUUC as well.

- *RE does a good job about providing resources on diversity for parents – suggestions for books, links, lots of outreach.*
- *Maybe next year we could have a workshop for parents on how to talk with your kids about racial issues and anti-bias.*
- *Outside the committee, every year we try to introduce something anti-racist to the larger congregation. We are lucky that many of the UUA common reads have had racial bias themes.*
- *We've gotten involved in reading and leading congregational discussions on the 1619 articles.*
- *HIAS (an organization certified by the State Department) gets the refugees. They do some training of the tutors that work with the kids - with a reminder to respect cultural differences. HIAS training happens when we get a new family, but this is not at a regular interval.*

Committee members also identified informal practices that they believe are educational.

- *There is more diversity in the RE committee than almost anywhere else at CUC.*
- *Not a set practice; however, this year the board did encourage the Beloved Conversations work; creative financing for people to join – costs \$150/person and 22 people.*
- *Food is an amazing and real force for breaking down barriers. Breaking bread together is an act of trust, expanding boundaries, shared experience and conversation.*
- *If something came up, if someone had a bias, we would not hesitate to discuss it. We'd explore it with them.*
- *Someone who chooses to be in this space is likely open to unlearning a bias.*
- *We're talking about doing our own reading group on racial topics.*

**4. What stories or anecdotes illustrate how your group engages in challenges related to racial bias or cultural miscommunication? a. Within your committee b. Within the larger congregation**

Committee members identified challenges as well as practices within their committee that addressed racial bias or cultural miscommunication.

- *We are TRYING to do real things. The children are working on a plan for music and words for the 8th principle in song.*
- *It's a learning process. For example, we had to understand food preferences of the communities we serve. We had to learn that pork had different meanings in different communities of color. We had to learn and make decisions about spending money in ways that meet the needs of our service communities.*
- *Regarding gifts vs gift cards at Coachman. Some congregants say that they want to choose the gifts for the children. But isn't it more meaningful to let the child/family choose. We had to learn to let go and not use our biases on what kinds of gifts certain people need/want.*
- *The committee had a lengthy discussion about how we handle our food and drink, never thought that someone else might be put off. All participated and took the time to try to consider what else might be off-putting to people from different cultures; Feels that the board are really sensitive and supportive of each other.*
- *When new projects or new ideas brought up – raise questions that need to be answered.*
- *One example of how this committee seeks to combat bias is the addition of pronouns of choice on nametags.*

Members also identified areas in which their committee was active within the larger congregation.

- *The high school age youth partnered with the racial justice team.*
- *Recently there was an incident of someone who experienced racial aggression. We were there with support. We have to be present to meet people where they are and support their unique experiences.*
- *Last year, communication about the holidays of another religion -discussed it and worked through it.*
- *The effort around the BLM banner was very contentious. I found this surprising. I was shocked that parts of the congregation weren't further along in their racial understanding. The reality didn't match the theory.*
- *Two years ago, a visitor was upset that the festival of Diwali was not recognized or even mentioned in the service. Not a regular attendee. Rep of this committee apologized, raised issue with worship committee and minister.*
- *We have had some Black members in the past, who left CUUC. Do we do a good enough job of following up and finding out why? Inconsistent efforts. One response was: "I'm in the white world 24/7; I don't want to think about it on Sunday morning."*

Committee members also identified a number of questions that arose from an experience they had had:

- *Are there best practices for how we should interact with parents and people of color in the congregation? Are we doing everything we can to be supportive?*

- *We want to have a microcosm of the world if we can get it. How do we address this? It's a real challenge for the congregation? How much change can we bring about if the congregation is SO WHITE?*
- *We should try to have a measurable impact. We need to put our shoes on and get out there. What can we do beyond the banner? Where does the rubber meet the road?*
- *We should check in with our families. What are the communities within our congregation? What do they need?*
- *We should ask people how THEY want to be supported. Have a direct conversation. DO something. How can we help you?*

## **5. Do you feel supported by the Board/Minister/others in your committee's attempts to reduce racial bias?**

Responses to this question fell into those that indicated feeling supported by the minister, by the board, or by both. Ongoing challenges for the congregation were also noted.

Supported by the board: A few committees noted made specific mention of the board, and most felt supported. They said:

- *The board provides funds for our projects.*
- *The board changes from year to year. There sometimes individuals that are more or less supportive; it varies a lot. There may be someone on the board who has real bias issue themselves.*
- *We are supported by the board. The board has allocated some plate shares to our work, but generally this doesn't really apply to us.*
- *Don't necessarily feel supported but definitely don't feel unsupported either.*

Supported by the minister: Comments fell into two categories – those who felt supported, and those who did not as a result of an incident a number of years ago. They said:

- *Yes. Meredith's words resonate when you're confronted with a racist person.*
- *Meredith's leadership has been great. I don't think UU could be done any better.*
- *The minister puts racial equity out there in the pulpit all the time. Meredith has courage. His courage has spurred our organization to do more. However, the board members are often maintainers of the status quo.*
- *The one time I didn't feel supported by Meredith on an issue related to this committee, I went to talk with him about it. After our chat all was well.*
- *It was a terrible thing that happened. The youth advisor brought it forward – not a member of the congregation. Meredith said you have to change the theme. We said we couldn't because too much time and money had already been invested. The problem went from bad to worse. The issue was not handled the right way.*
- *The non-resolution of this has resulted in how we deal with Meredith now. We didn't feel supported. There's a sense of mistrust now.*
- *CUUC is reactionary instead of being proactive. Staff should help the committees ahead of time rather than after we've messed up. The staff needs to be the professionals – putting processes and education in place in advance.*

Many committee members mentioned both the Board and the Minister.

- *Yes. Minister supports and helps make board members aware of the anti-racist issues. Feels that Minister and RE Director are both very supportive of their work in regard to anti-racism and social justice initiatives.*
- *The CUUC board and the Minister did not seem aligned the year the committee was charged with cultural misappropriation. It was clearly no one's intent to engage in cultural misappropriation, and seems a useful, if painful, moment to reflect upon (again, I know) in a different light to consider how the Board and the Minister may have more productively acknowledged the complaint AND supported well-intentioned committee members.*
- *I'm a little frustrated that we haven't had much support in bringing the Beloved Congregations information to the whole congregation. I've wanted to introduce In the Spirit of Truth-style discussions to the larger congregation.*
- *Committee is supported, but not necessarily in this work, as we haven't directly addressed racial issues.*
- *Receive clear messaging re: importance of anti-bias perspective and actions from Minister, Board, other committees and overall congregation.*

In regard to the needs of the congregation as a whole to be supported in this work, members noted:

- *We all want to learn and do better. We support the idea of being anti-racist but we're in a place of learning right now. The will is there and we're now at a point of learning.*
- *One member brings up the challenge of "staffing" committees and relying on volunteers and indicates that the committees may be majority White because the congregation is majority White.*
- *The board and minister and RE director need to take a leadership role. We need a process like the welcoming congregation program to educate everyone.*
- *We don't specifically attempt to reduce racial bias. This is not part of our mission. But it's good to examine ourselves sometimes.*
- *Our problem is more about getting volunteers than including people. We can't be inclusive if we don't have volunteers.*

## **Summary and Discussion**

As can be seen from the above, most committees at CUUC do not view antiracist activities as central to their purpose. Those that did view it as a priority were racial justice teams and the Board of Trustees. A minority of committees identified it as central to their work, and with the exception of the Board of Trustees, no committee had any explicit policies committing them to eliminate racial bias. No committee had anti-bias education built into the committee's educational program for their members, but this needs to be considered in the light of the fact that committees by and large did not have a yearly educational program for their committee. Committees involved in educational activities tended to target those outside their committee – the congregation or in some instances the larger community.

While some committees had positive stories or anecdotes to report in regard to challenges they faced, one incident came up repeatedly in a number of different committees. This involved a

theme chosen for the auction a number of years ago, which was viewed a cultural misappropriation, and handled badly from the point of view of those who were either involved or knew about it.

By and large, the committees reported more support than not from the Board, minister, and others in any pursuit of anti-racist activity. However, ramifications of the auction theme incident appears to have resulted in a feeling of not being supported by the minister.

There were challenges and struggles discussed in response to all the questions. It appears that for many of the committees the discussion with the CoM of this issues was the first time the committee had an opportunity to talk about their attitudes, practices and policies regarding antiracism, leaving the CoM with the impression of a congregation in the beginning stages of any anti-racism work. Therefore, the following recommendations are made to the Board of Trustees:

### **Recommendations:**

- 5) Establish or continue an 8<sup>th</sup> Principal Committee that would keep the topic of racial bias in front of the congregation by engaging outside speakers and providing educational opportunities for the congregation on an ongoing basis; Continue to pursue diversity both within the congregation and in congregational activities and by developing relationships with groups outside of our congregation. Assume responsibility for ongoing dialogue on the subject in services, coffee hour, RE; and conduct regular evaluation and reflection as to how we are recognizing and addressing racial bias as individuals, as groups and committees, and as a congregation.
- 6) Support the Committee on Ministry in establishing policies and procedures for dealing specifically with conflicts around racial justice issues and assume a leadership role in educating the congregation about these policies and procedures, in order to address perceived incidents of racial bias on a proactive, not a reactive, basis.
- 7) Ask each committee to update its mission statement, policies and practices around education and training for committee members, specifically as this relates to raising awareness of racial justice issues and the manner in which each committee makes a contribution to the work of the congregation in this regard.
- 8) In light of the centrality of the Nominating Committee and Path to Membership Committees respectively as 1) central to leadership development and 2) the face of the congregation to the public, we recommend that the newly appointed 8<sup>th</sup> Principal Committee work with these two committees next year to assess possibilities for strengthening anti-racist work on the part of their committee. For example, in regard to the Path to Membership Committee, strengthen the role of greeters in engaging new members at coffee hour.

## COM Survey on Racial Bias: Individuals: 12/01/20

This year, COM has chosen to explore the issue of racism through the lens of **racial bias**, with a focus on how we as individuals, and as a congregation: (a) have experienced it, (b) can recognize it; (c) have - whether consciously or unconsciously –participated in it; and (d) , how we, individually and together, can or could address this important concern.

Recognizing that this is an all-encompassing topic, we decided to briefly survey individual members, and to separately engage with CUUC's various committees, to discuss how each of us, as members of the CUUC community, can engage in this essential work.

### I Background

Are you a member who has signed the membership book or a friend who attends CUUC but has not signed as a formal member?

Member \_\_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age? Under 20 \_\_\_ 20 to 29 \_\_\_ 30 to 39 \_\_\_ 40 to 49 \_\_\_ 50 to 59 \_\_\_  
60 to 69 \_\_\_ 70+ \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many years have you attended CUUC?

Less than Two \_\_\_\_\_ two to five \_\_\_\_\_ six to ten \_\_\_\_\_ eleven to twenty \_\_\_\_\_ More than  
twenty \_\_\_\_\_

How would you identify yourself racially? \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Racial Bias: Identifying It:

- How would you define racial bias?

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Have you **observed** racial bias at CUUC? [Check for each area observed]:

- Worship – readings, music, choir, sermons \_\_\_\_\_

- coffee hour \_\_\_\_\_
- Auction, Day in Place, Annual Barbeque, Brunch \_\_\_\_\_
- Otherl gatherings \_\_\_\_\_
- Religious Education \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- Have you **experienced** racial bias in our worship service, Religious Education or in social contexts? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_ [Check for each area experienced]:
  - Worship – readings, music, choir, sermons \_\_\_\_\_
  - coffee hour \_\_\_\_\_
  - Auction, Day in Place, Annual Barbeque, Brunch \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other gatherings \_\_\_\_\_
  - Religious Education \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- At CUUC, have you **experienced** intentional or unintentional communications from another individual in a way that felt hostile, derogatory, insulting or a negative racial slight? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_
- If so, when and what kind?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- At CUUC, have you **observed** intentional or unintentional communications from another individual in a way that felt hostile, derogatory, insulting or a negative racial slight? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

- If so, when and what kind?

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- Has CUUC as an institution intentionally or unintentionally expressed or communicated racial bias? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

- If so, when and what kind?

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### III. Racial Bias: Addressing It:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5 [1 lowest priority > 5 highest priority], for each activity how would you rank the importance of these activities for CUUC:

- attracting a more racially and ethnically diverse membership \_\_\_\_\_
- strengthening RE curriculum at all levels that addresses racism in our communities \_\_\_\_\_
- actively seeking to affiliate with groups in the wider community that engage in anti-racism work \_\_\_\_\_
- focusing on our Social Justice teams to define tasks and goals related to anti-racism \_\_\_\_\_.
- creating reading/discussion/support groups specifically focused on how we at CUUC can engage in anti-racism \_\_\_\_\_
- developing a process or tools to identify and address our individual blind spots on this issue \_\_\_\_\_

For each activity you rated 4 or 5, do you have specific suggestions of how to go about this?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. As of now, how would you rank, on a scale of 1 to 5, the effectiveness of these aspects of CUUC in engaging in anti-racism:

- ministerial leadership and inspiration \_\_\_\_\_
- Congregational governance \_\_\_\_\_
- committee work (list) \_\_\_\_\_
- individual engagement \_\_\_\_\_

Please comment on how/why you answer as you do, and offer suggestions of how we can do better:

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where and how do you engage in anti-racism work? (Check each area applicable):

- membership in political/social action groups? \_\_\_\_\_
- financial support for anti-racism causes? \_\_\_\_\_
- involvement in community action related to anti-racism? \_\_\_\_\_
- personal commitment to do this when/ how / ever possible? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe and name the group and organizations you have been involved in.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did CUUC influence you to engage in anti-racism work? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name [optional]: \_\_\_\_\_

COM 2020-21 Racial Bias for CUUC Committees

Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

1. On a scale of 1 -10, how important is the work of your committee to helping CUUC become anti-racist? Why?

2. What policies and practices promote eliminating racial bias within your committee?

3. How is anti-bias education built into your group's yearly cycle?

4. What stories or anecdotes illustrate how your group engages in challenges related to racial bias or cultural miscommunication?

- a. Within your committee
- b. Within the larger congregation

5. Do you feel supported by the Board/Minister/others in your committee's attempts to reduce racial bias?