

CUIC Racial Justice Task Force Focuses on Repentance, Reconciliation and New Praxis

Columbus, OH, October 20, 2007 – In its fall meeting, the Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) heartily agreed with the CUIC Coordinating Council that the primary focus of CUIC's ecumenical relationship should be eradicating systemic racism in North America. "This is the first time the task force as a whole has dealt with the hard issues. In the past we've discussed titles, episcopacy, but never have we reached a consensus as to how we work around this table," said long-time task force member Christine May, Director for Racial Justice Ministries for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Only a few weeks prior at a meeting in Baltimore, MD, the CUIC Coordinating Council, representing ten communions, committed themselves to keeping racial justice at the top of its agenda. In an attempt to reclaim the central, guiding vision of "seeking to be God's beloved community," Coordinating Council members understood and reaffirmed racial justice and reconciliation to be at the core of the church's call to unity.

The RJTF gathered in Columbus, OH to focus on rebuilding community among its membership, to begin shaping a clear framework for CUIC racial justice work, and to plan for the upcoming CUIC Plenary on January 11-14, 2008 to be held in St. Louis, MO. "RJTF sought to work within ourselves and the greater ecumenical community toward reconciliation and renewal," stated Rev. Peggy Tuttle, Episcopal priest. "I thank God for the challenge of transformation that the RJTF brings to the CUIC table. With God, all things are possible," said Rev. Timothy James, Associate General Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

"We named and wrestled with the complex individual and cultural manifestations of institutional racism. We offer the depth and authenticity of our exchange to CUIC as a whole," stated Shenandoah Gale, co-convener of the RJTF and ELCA Coordinator for Anti-racism Education and Training. Bridgette Green, Presbyterian Church USA Associate Minister for Racial Ethnic Young Women Together expressed that "the Spirit has revealed that the work of CUIC is centered on racial justice, repentance and true reconciliation."

Communions represented in this meeting were the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, International Council of Community Churches, Moravian Church Northern Province, Presbyterian Church (USA), and the United Church of Christ.