

Task Force on Theology of Social Justice Advocacy  
Zoom Meeting  
August 14, 2020

Present:

Sarah, Anne, Prince, Dora, Brant, Guy, Lallie, Ruth

Summary and decisions:

After extensive constructive discussion about the survey, we agreed to go forward with it. Lallie offered to gather specific wording changes (due to her 9am EDT Wed Aug 19) and incorporate them into a final draft. Brant agreed to draft an Introduction making transparent some of the tensions we're recognizing.

Sarah will forward this next draft to the GCO office, which has access to people who can look it over and advise on specific changes so we can better get the information we're after.

The rest of these Notes are Lallie's efforts to capture our conversation, forgive the many errors and send in any corrections or changes you would like me to make.

1. Lallie summarized key changes from the last draft
2. Ruth reported headlines from conversation w KBD [these are Lallie's notes of Ruth's oral report, hold them lightly and do not share for attribution]
  - a. This is a white survey for the white church
    - i. Doesn't make sense from her perspective
  - b. Fact of TEC needing this survey says a lot about the church
    - i. Justice should be DNA of who we are as the church
    - ii. TF needs to recognize this
  - c. Survey is indictment of church
  - d. This is the theological nexus of who we are as the church
  - e. BLM lays bare how we are not showing up
    - i. TEC was inadequate as response
    - ii. Reflection of our own injustice in our church
  - f. Racial justice is essential for Christian formation
  - g. "Performative allyship" is serious and real
    - i. People won't say social justice doesn't matter. They will say it's critical, but we know that's not actually the case, since we're doing the survey
3. Ruth's Friend's Q -
  - a. Should it be focused on individuals or on the institution of the church? Should we be focusing on the church or on the individuals?
4. Brant -
  - a. Can we address these concerns with a careful introduction?
5. Dora -
  - a. Has struggled w purpose of survey from beginning
  - b. It looks too suggestive and limiting for her
  - c. BLM question inclusion feels as if it limits questions of racial bias to black ppl only

- d. If we're looking to highlight the limitations of what we're doing, then we should not be limiting the focus of the questions, nor directing people's answers
6. Anne -
- a. Doing justice as "attractive" vs imperative?
  - b. Ally language is sociological - there's no place for it in the church, which is a body, not an association of allies.
  - c. What's people's experience of following Jesus and how has that been manifested in their justice action?
  - d. Is the survey racialized itself?
  - e. If responses indicate white people respond at higher rates than BIPOC, that's meaningful data for us to reflect the Church
  - f. Growing up in a black you'll get a different formation around justice
7. Dora -
- a. We are already articulating the problem
  - b. Why do we need a survey?
8. Sarah
- a. "How was I formed into thinking that BLM is central to my Christian formation?"
9. Dora -
- a. How can we ask the questions in an open-ended way so everyone can participate, without leaning into and perpetuating white supremacy?
  - b. Allyship has no place in church. If I am a toe and I am hurting, then the church is hurting.
10. Guy -
- a. What does social justice mean in a Christian context?
  - b. We're doing this survey because progressives and BIPOC asked us to gather this data about the Church
  - c. He doesn't feel this needs to be changed.
  - d. Keep 'social' in Qs
  - e. Keep open ended Qs
11. Prince -
- a. Isabel Wilkerson's, *Caste* is giving us new language to talk about race and racism in the US
  - b. Survey is a catalyst
12. Lallie -
- a. "Social" might trigger white conservatives - are we just flagging our identity as progressives?
  - b. How has your church contributed to your formation for justice action?
  - c. Your family?
13. Sarah -
- a. Add - Sacramental life in addition to prayer & contemplation
  - b. Remove 'allyship' from Q
14. Guy -
- a. Jesus movement
  - b. "Social" justice has deep roots in Civil Rights Movement

- c. Urgency to get this out
- d. Strike while iron's hot

15. Brant -

- a. Qs need to be ones that everyone can answer
- b. Since we're not going for statistical validation
- c. We want their stories
- d. Suggests even more simplification
- e. What's your story
- f. What resources have you needed
- g. What ones have you benefited from

16. Dora -

- a. If we are moving forward, we can focus & simplify
- b. Don't ask leading questions, so we aren't getting lies
- c. Let BLM & COVID come out organically, not in reaction to our leading Qs
- d. If we want to know where the Church is, we need to ask open-ended Qs

17. Guy -

- a. Wants to take the temperature of the Church so we know what resources are needed
- b. Snapshot of TEC in a moment, so we can make better decisions without making assumptions
- c. We're doing the survey to get a wider circle of input
- d. Some subsections are too directive