

Meeting Notes
Task Force on the Theology of Social Justice Advocacy
February 8, 2019

In attendance:

Ruth Frey
Sarah Lawton
Guy Leemhuis
Lallie Lloyd
Jose Roderiguez-Sanjuro
Prince Singh
Reuben Varghese
Susanne Watson Epting

Prince opened us with prayer – the collect for the commemoration of Absalom Jones:
Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

In our ongoing work of community-building, we introduced, or re-introduced ourselves, our work and our ministries.

We agreed on some basic group norms: respectful conversation, a willingness to do the work (writing, interviewing, ongoing meetings), and a willingness to keep each other updated on what we've each agreed to do. Prince volunteered to share some norms about respectful conversation that he has found effective. He also suggested that we think about some sort of devotional format for our meetings, and he and Sarah will speak about how that might happen.

We affirmed that we wish to have Sarah and Prince remain our conveners and that, for now, we will consider rotating the responsibility of minute-taking.

We agreed to find early (for Sarah) morning meeting times for our future meetings. Monday seemed to be the best time. (Note: Sarah has since posted another alternative in our messages on the extra-net.)

Jose suggested that the extra-net is not a helpful tool for people who rely primarily on smart phones. Sarah will investigate other options with the GC office.

Sarah offered, in answer to questions about background, to survey or be in touch with folks at both the Archives and the Office of Government Relations to collect a summary of previous actions that might inform our work.

While we have agreed to share our individual understandings of a theology of social justice advocacy, this is likely to take several meetings. In our time together, we were able to hear from Lallie Lloyd, whose reflections were deep and rich. Lallie has graciously supplied her notes here

to help us reflect on her what she shared, and to give those unable to be present, a little food for thought.

From Lallie:

- Many iterations over my faith journey
- Transformed in recent years as I walk the path of naming my race & class privilege and become actively anti-racist.
- As a Christian, I'm centered on Jesus' example of confronting the principalities and powers of his day (colonialism, clericalism, classism, racism); until those powers killed him.
- I see my salvation in his example. As I seek to dismantle my internalized privilege, deeper connections open up w/ colleagues, neighbors & friends, especially people of color. These relationships bring me depth of connections and healing. Scripturally, righteousness means being in right relationship, not some theoretical ideal of purity.
- My social justice advocacy now starts here; though it hasn't always. Because continuously naming and repenting (lamenting) my internalized oppressor (which appears as WASP-socialized values of perfectionism and performance that I now find really painful), is the only way I can hope to not perpetuate the harm, unfairness and injustice I purport to seek to heal.
- Christian social justice advocacy - then - while grounded in Jesus - is expressed and lived out in public, pluralistic, small-d democratic spaces: multi-faith coalitions, and community responses to injustice that are led by people most proximate to the pain the injustice causes. My opportunity is to follow their lead.

At our next meeting, we will continue with reflections.