

GCORR Monitoring Report - April 23

The General Commission on Religion and Race Equity Monitoring Report

Equitable sharing of power, influence, vision, finances, and other resources has long been a part of the dynamics of The United Methodist Church's General Conference. This General Conference is no different. At this pivotal moment in our history, our denomination at every level must be asking critical questions:

“What are we seeking to become as we transition into a truly worldwide church?”

“What might the church look like when we face reduced funding and resources?”

“Whom and what do we prioritize in our collective deliberations?”

Amid these conversations, The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) asks all General Conference participants to contemplate potential equity issues that may arise in our work together in Charlotte.

Equity is defined as “the quality of being fair and just; recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.”(1) Equity often affects access—access to basic human rights, food, and other resources. Differences like race, age, socio-economic status, mobility, gender, or sexual orientation determine access to resources, mediate success, or designate one's level of inclusion and well-being.

Equality says: Everyone begins from the same starting point, with equal access to resources and equal chances to survive and thrive.

Equity says: Everyone does not begin from the same starting point. There are historic, systemic, and on-going inequities where discrimination exists within the structures themselves.

Equality says: The rules of the process are the same for everyone.

Equity says: Even if the rules are the same, the

process itself is designed to privilege some at the expense of others.

Equality says: Oppressions (racism/tribalism, classism, ageism, etc.) will end when all people are treated with dignity and respect.

Equity says: Oppressions (racism/tribalism, classism, ageism, etc.) will end when we address and dismantle the assumptions, values, and systems of oppression that actively resist treating all persons with dignity and respect.

Equality says: Everyone has the right to vote.

Equity says: Everyone's right to vote is protected and access to voting is enabled, *i.e.*, ease of travel to voting locations, timely accessibility to translated information prior to voting.

Equality says: We can eradicate racism/tribalism by “doing no harm”; *i.e.*, racism will end when we stop harming persons and communities of color.

Equity says: We can eradicate racism/tribalism by both “doing no harm” and by “doing good”, *i.e.*, racism will end when we actively work to stop the harm that leads to racial injustice and when we engage in the work of dismantling its root causes.

During this General Conference, it is critical to understand these differences between equality and equity. Both terms point toward treating all people the same: as children of God who have dignity, worth, voice, power, and choice. When equity is centered in the work of this General Conference, it will be achieved by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.

It is also important to remember that any piece of legislation may bring more equity to some people than to others. Indeed, some legislation may even pit groups of people against each other in the quest for equity. In this instance, it may be useful to ask: **“Who will benefit from this legislation and in what ways?”**

GCORR's charge to ensure institutional equity will be part of our role and partnership with General Conference participants. Our goal is to

help frame questions and to provide reflections of each day's activities that raise awareness around issues of equity in our interactions and deliberations. These reflections will become part of our official shared history as the people known as The United Methodist Church.

Citation:

(1) National (USA) Association of Colleges and Employers, "*What is Equity?*", *NACE Website*, 2024.