

# **Racial Equity Assessment of Domestic Disaster Relief and Recovery Programs in Week of Compassion**

May 16, 2022

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*“As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.”*

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## Executive Summary

*Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice, which make philanthropy necessary.*

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Week of Compassion’s mission statement reads as follows: “As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.”

The challenge of this racial equity assessment of Week of Compassion’s domestic disaster relief and recovery work is that while the organization’s mission statement does not preclude racial equity in the mission, neither does it guarantee it. Such is the case for many social service agencies in the United States, a result of this nation’s history of consolidating wealth and power for white people at the expense of people of color, while providing charity that does nothing to eradicate structures of inequity.

Week of Compassion in recent years has taken seriously the need to create new ways of self-governing in order to disperse power, after many years of concentrated decision-making power in the hands of one leader. Week of Compassion staff have also made an intentional shift to prioritizing racial equity principles in many of its long term recovery efforts. In keeping with the denomination’s twenty-five year commitment to antiracism, the Week of Compassion staff and board invited Lori Adams and Sandhya Jha into a 9-month assessment of the organization’s racial equity practices in its domestic disaster relief and recovery work, culminating in this report and a debrief with board and staff via zoom in May 2022.

During our nine months we learned these things about Week of Compassion’s current racial equity practices:

- As Week of Compassion seeks to deepen relationship with Disciples congregations of color, staff have found that current relationships with heads of the denomination’s racial ethnic ministries have proved a huge boon.
- While board and staff have varying levels of exposure to the denomination’s antiracism work over the past twenty five years and varying levels of exposure to other resources related to racial equity in the workplace, all parties have expressed a commitment to racial equity as an essential part of Week of Compassion’s ministry in this era.
- Week of Compassion staff have already begun to bring racial equity commitments into whether and how they support long-term recovery work. And staff have already begun implementing racial equity strategies in the structure of Disciples involvement in volunteer projects, even though that initiative is very new to the ministry.
- While Week of Compassion staff have taken significant steps in practicing racial equity on a project-by-project basis, there are at this point very few formalized policies in place to ensure that it becomes part of the organizational structure, criteria and culture.

We also learned these particular challenges that Week of Compassion faces in expanding its racial equity practices:

- While staff have strong relationships with the executives of the denomination's racial-ethnic ministries, Week of Compassion's relationships with congregations of color in the denomination hinge significantly on regional minister relationships, particularly in the critical period immediately after a disaster. When regional ministers do not have active relationships with congregations of color, it limits staff's ability to reach out and work with congregations of color.
- The low number of staff and an organizational culture of rapid response to emergencies has sidelined a comprehensive approach to racial equity for five years; this may lead to challenges with implementation of report recommendations if the organizational culture remains the same.
- While staff have made huge strides in how they engage in long-term recovery and volunteering initiatives through a racial equity lens, the immediate response programs tend to benefit white people (and middle class white people) at much more racially inequitable ways, while the conventional wisdom of staff is that immediate response initiatives like household solidarity grants gain the ministry a large proportion of its goodwill.
- While Week of Compassion wants to build out a less emotionally exploitative fundraising strategy for their annual appeal, their ecumenical partners are not engaging the work with the same lens.

In order to provide constructive recommendations, Lori and Sandhya looked at five areas in the life of Week of Compassion's domestic disaster relief and recovery programming: immediate response, long-term community recovery, volunteering, fundraising and communications.

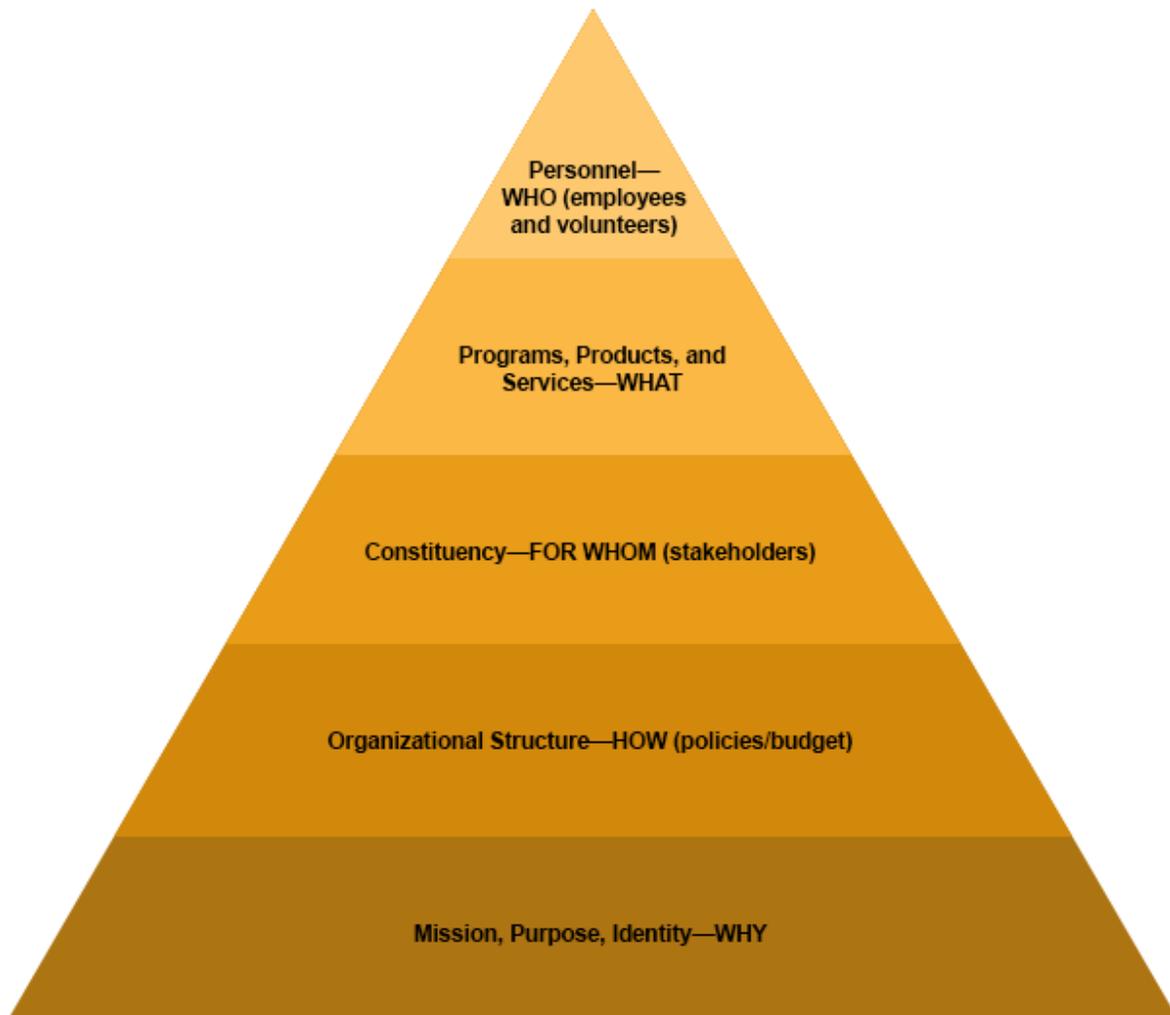
**While providing specific recommendations in those five categories, we tied our recommendations to four larger missional shifts we see as critical for the long term success of Week of Compassion's commitment to racial equity:**

- **consistent understanding and articulation of racism as systemic misuse of power**
- **investment in communities in ways conscious of and responsive to pre-existing economic and racial inequities, while investing in generative economic sustainability**
- **a model of accountability to marginalized and minoritized communities that ultimately prioritizes a transfer of wealth and resources to those communities**
- **ministry of support, empowerment and equipping of congregations engaged in local community relief, development, and advocacy, as well as domestic refugee resettlement**

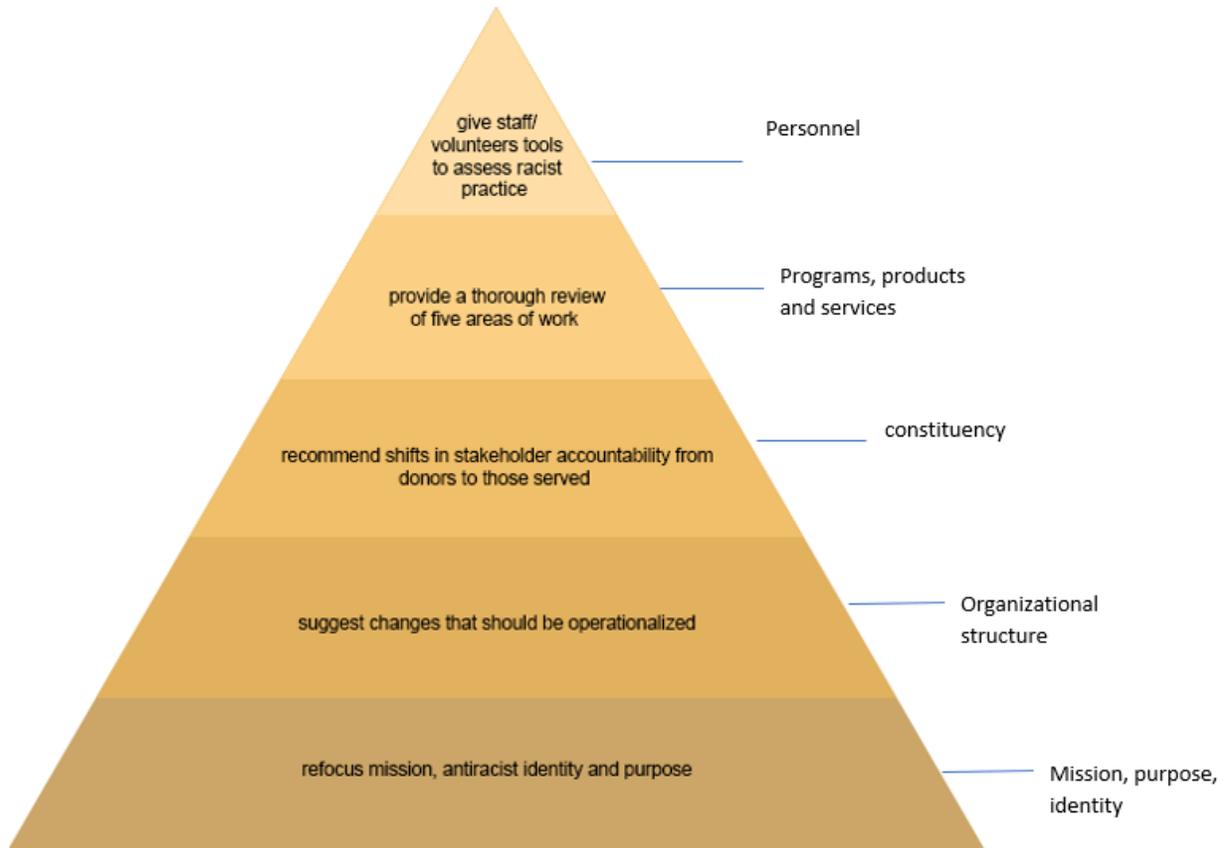
This report concludes with a brief acknowledgement of how much work it will take to make the organizational identity shift into Being Antiracist culturally, missionally, and structurally. Without this long-term commitment, however, all of the smaller strategic changes stand very little likelihood of success.

In any 2-day or 2.5-day antiracism training in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), participants are exposed to a framework about the levels of an institution and why any work that focuses on the first three levels is destined ultimately for failure. For that reason, this report looks at all five levels, although the primary focus as was requested will be level two in the context of level five missional refocus.

### **Levels of an Institution**



This report seeks to engage Week of Compassion at all five levels:



Our experience in working with both the board and staff leaves us encouraged that this report will serve as a solid foundation that allows Week of Compassion to make a huge contribution to the life of the church as well as to the people our church has underserved for too long. Many reports end up collecting dust, but we are confident of the vision and commitment of the people who make up Week of Compassion to live into a racially equitable identity in ways that shape the ministry for decades to come.

## Project Assignment Summary

### Background

In the summer of 2021, Week of Compassion received an Oreon E. Scott grant to address the racial inequities in domestic disaster relief and development work. Specifically, staff requested an assessment of current policies and practices in Solidarity/Partner grant-making; Long-term Recovery resource allocation; and Volunteer labor projects sourced by Disciples congregations.

The consultants, Lori Adams and Sandhya Jha, began the project by working with staff to name and analyze the types of domestic disasters that require response and relief support from government, philanthropic, educational, religious and other sectors. These include:

- 1) Climate/Natural Disasters - disasters that are naturally occurring and may or may not have a connection to the climate crisis
- 2) Health related Disasters - pandemics, water or land toxicity/drought, etc.
- 3) Human-caused Disasters - for example, gun violence, infrastructure failures, mining accidents. etc.
- 4) Human Displacement - climate disaster can result in displacement of people from entire neighborhoods and communities. In this report, we refer to this displacement as *internal displacement*, meaning internal to the US including Puerto Rico. Climate disaster and war also result in great migrations of people to the US. We are referring to this group of displaced persons as refugees and asylum seekers.

Each of these kinds of disasters also has at least five levels of response in any given response cycle:

- 1) Immediate Response and Aid to Survivors
- 2) Assessment of Strategic Response
- 3) Long-Term Recovery and Resettlement
- 4) Advocacy for systemic policy shifts that impede long-term well-being
- 5) Preparedness for Future Disaster

In addition to evaluating disaster relief and preparedness strategies in Week of Compassion, this process has included a review of communications/marketing strategies and fundraising strategies related to these project/program areas. We have also included some review of current perceptions about congregational support of human displacement caused by domestic disaster and the growing need for congregational support in internal domestic resettlement. We do not presume a thorough analysis of the policies and practices of Week of Compassion's refugee resettlement initiatives, as prior to 2022, nearly all of this work was done by partners funded in whole or in part by Week of Compassion.

We do note, however, that increasingly, climate disaster is causing grave human displacement issues within the United States. From the shifts in Puerto Rican population following hurricane

Maria and stateside relocation to the decimation of native populations and their sacred homelands in Louisiana (Hurricane Ida, Fall, 2021) to the eradication of entire towns in Western, KY following late 2021 tornadoes, the call for congregational, local community, and Week of Compassion preparedness for domestic resettlement has increased. We are including this relocation focus as a part of the long-term human recovery and resettlement recommendation.

**The Challenges to Race Equity and Justice in Domestic Disaster Response:**

Week of Compassion’s domestic disaster recovery work faces three primary challenges to achieving racial equity in funding distribution:

- a) Domestic disasters harm communities of color disproportionately
- b) Domestic disaster response exists in an economic system that disproportionately favors wealth accumulation and resources for white society, including access to resources for disaster recovery
- c) Foundations exist in a philanthropic complex that is hierarchically accountable to predominantly white, often wealthy donors, boards, and administrative staffs rather than to the communities and/or leaders of the communities being served

*a) Disasters harm communities of color disproportionately:*

The Oreon E. Scott grant proposal, written by staff, laid out the industry-wide racial inequities in domestic disaster relief, recovery and resettlement. A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation found that households with high social vulnerability and low economic status were more likely to experience negative impacts from natural disasters, and less likely to access recovery services after the storm.<sup>1</sup> This follows a pattern that has been noted by researchers, especially in the nearly 17 years since Hurricane Katrina.

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*Nonwhite communities face greater disaster vulnerability and more obstacles to disaster recovery.*

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As Drs. Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright argue in *The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities*:

*“Race and class dynamics play out in disaster survivors’ ability to rebuild, replace infrastructure, obtain loans, and locate temporary and permanent housing.”<sup>2</sup>*

Ultimately, the risk that a population faces before and during a disaster, as well as the population’s ability to recover after a disaster, are related to a number of socio-demographic factors, many of which correlate with race and ethnicity. In short, nonwhite communities face

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation/Episcopal Health Foundation Texas Post-Harvey Survey (conducted Oct. 17-Nov. 20, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright, *The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities*, (New York: 2012, New York University Press), 55.

greater disaster vulnerability and more obstacles to disaster recovery. This imbalance is both a product and driver of systemic environmental and civil injustice and is part of the cycle of poverty and (race) inequality. Contributing factors include access to wealth and liquid assets; legal residency; insurance status; transportation access (both private and public); social capital; English language proficiency; and homeowner status, which correlates directly with allocation of recovery resources. Communities, families and individuals with access to these resources typically fare better during a disaster and almost always have more resilience after a disaster.<sup>3</sup>

*b) The very nature of the US economy creates challenges for race equity in Week of Compassion's work:*

While the disaster response field has publicized the disproportionate harm endured by communities of color across the globe and within the US, it has not often succeeded in galvanizing sufficient response to meet the disproportionately harsh impact of these disasters. Neither has it dealt with the systemic issues at the root of addressing these “more vulnerable” communities by acknowledging that our resource distribution systems and our market economy commodify black and brown labor at substandard wages. Income levels and generational wealth accumulation in the US are much higher on average for white citizens than all other racialized groups. A tax structure that taxes wealth at lower rates than income also disproportionately advantages white society and disproportionately harms communities of color. This systemic economic inequity leads to outcomes that create “disposable communities of people,” heightening death and destruction for many communities of color as well as some white communities.

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*Systemic economic inequity leads to outcomes that create “disposable communities of people” that heighten death and destruction for many communities of color as well as some white communities.*

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The disparate impact is not only a matter of inequitable distribution of disaster response resources/services, but also a systemic lack of access to infrastructure, transportation, access to nutrition, healthcare, affordable housing and the like. Exacerbating the harsh effects of disasters for many rural communities and for many neighborhoods of color, generational poverty continues to grind away so that “recovery” to status quo offers continuing sub-standard life, especially in tornadic corridors, earthquake prone areas, and hurricane zones. For this reason, proportional response based on the demographics of Disciples “membership” perpetuates inequity. In domestic disaster recovery, **equal response is not equitable response** when insurance coverage, assets for recovery, and access to capital are overwhelmingly held by white citizenry and white dominant institutions.

*c) Foundations and charitable organizations in the US function in inherently inequitable ways:*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/disaster-management-is-too-white-official-tells-congress/>

In addition to the disproportional harm experienced by communities of color and lack of access to resources for neighborhood and personal recovery from the impacts of these disasters, there is a third set of racial justice issues negatively impacting People of Color through the sector of US Christian philanthropy, of which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are a part. Mainline Protestantism has been structured since its inception to serve white populations (members) advantageously. It has deep investment in white patriarchal structures, leadership models, networks, values and norms. While Disciples may have made some strides in dismantling the inherent privilege and bias *for whiteness* embedded in our systems, the accumulated wealth of the denomination remains primarily in the hands of white congregations and white leaders.

Like any other philanthropic entity, Week of Compassion's commitment to practice racial equity and justice in its domestic disaster relief and recovery work must include strategic challenge to the following:

1. Its primary accountability for decision-making, funding, and organizational structure to white donors, white boards, and white administrative executives rather than accountability *grounded* in and with communities of color.<sup>4</sup>
2. Its rootedness in charity rather than systemic change, providing immediate relief that temporarily alleviates harm but does not engage in systemic reallocation of resources to reduce long-term and repeated harm.
3. Connected to #2, its practices of aid that diminish true partnership to create solutions *with not for* people most impacted by systemic inequities in domestic disasters
4. The legacy of Volunteerism initiated for the benefit of volunteers and veiled as an opportunity to help and fix "those people's problems."
5. Primary messaging focused to a white donor base that aims to inspire and not offend the givers, reinforcing a "charitable giving" hierarchy of accountability to whiteness. Operational policies and protocols that place almost all decision-making in the hands of a few (albeit well-intended) staff rather than operationalized norms/guidelines for on-going adherence to policies that engage on-going systemic redistribution of resources. Research in the field also demonstrates that implicit and explicit bias among response agencies and their employees results in unequal provision and distribution of recovery resources.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> According to the report [Mismatched: Philanthropy's Response to the Call for Racial Justice](#), there has been an increase in racial equity and racial justice funding. (To distinguish, "Racial equity focuses on the prevention of harm and the redistribution of benefits within existing systems. Racial justice focuses on power building and transformative goals, explicitly seeking to generate enough power among disenfranchised people to change the fundamental rules of society.") That increase means that from 2015-2018, 6 percent of foundation funding went to racial equity work and 1 percent went to racial justice work, with less than 1 percent of that funding going to grassroots organizing. The report also noted, "Funding for racial equity and racial justice remains a small portion of overall foundation funding — not commensurate with the scale of racial disparities or the demands of racial justice movements."

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_nac-report\\_11-2020.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nac-report_11-2020.pdf)

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/05/688786177/how-federal-disaster-money-favors-the-rich>

When these factors are not taken into account in the disaster recovery process, equity is compromised, creating significant obstacles to recovery and the wellbeing of the entire community.

Domestic disaster response sits within the context of an economic system that privileges white wealth achievement, a philanthropic system that benefits and is primarily accountable to the wealthy, and a society intent on disfavoring communities of color through systemic lack of access to resources necessary for life. For Week of Compassion, this assessment seeks to name complicity with these problematic, contextually embedded sources of inequity so that processes, policies and protocols that counter (mitigate) systemic inequity might be developed.

The following five Areas of Assessment were reviewed:

- Immediate response
- long-term response
- Disciples volunteer opportunities
- Communications
- Fundraising

These areas were chosen because they involve the greatest investment on the part of Week of Compassion staff. Again, we did not review refugee resettlement efforts because this work was engaged by partners supported by Week of Compassion, not by Week of Compassion directly at the outset of this review.

The consultants in this process are providing the following within those five areas as the bulk of this report:

1. A review of the educational content provided over the past eight months in order to assess the impacts of racism in current protocols
2. Recommendations for strategic shifts that will allow Week of Compassion to function at its core as a racial equity and racial justice body. (Note: this is not a checklist.)
3. A Racial Equity Impact Assessment to help staff and board make specific decisions that Operationalize/Institutionalize AR policies, processes, and objectives.

## Methodology:

In order to collect the information for this assessment, Lori and Sandhya used the following research tools, with considerable staff support :

- A cursory review of the history of Week of Compassion as a ministry
- Surveys of key stakeholders (volunteers, recipients, general church leaders, regional ministers, a cross section of donors, disaster relief partners outside the Disciples of Christ) to understand current perceptions of the ministry and also perceptions among stakeholders of the importance of racial equity (of 147 invited, 68 responded) - data located in Appendix D
- 15 in-depth interviews with general ministry and denominationally significant leaders and local pastors from the three racial ethnic ministries to understand how the ministry is affecting people across the life of the church, with a particular focus on communities of color within the Disciples - summary of interviews located in Appendix E
- Analysis of both spending and staff time allocations regarding four categories of Week of Compassion's domestic disaster relief and recovery work - summary located in Appendix D
- Discussion with Week of Compassion board regarding the theological foundations of racial equity in disaster relief work, framed by readings on how systemic racism plays a guiding role in philanthropy

In addition, staff went through significant anti-oppression analysis training in order to be able to engage the work of implementation of racially equitable policies, allocation of grants, and communication strategies to build racial equity into the DNA of Week of Compassion rather than only into its practices while it has the staff and board it has now. We worked with staff over a number of sessions to bring to consciousness a General Power Analysis of Disciples Volunteering, Solidary Grants, Long-term Recovery, Fundraising, and Communications. These sessions drew from the work of Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training, Movement Generation, Just Funders, and other organizations at the intersection of nonprofit social service and racial justice.

In this report, several terms will be used which were defined and explored as the consultants and staff worked together. For the purposes of this report, here are our definitions of the following terms:

Racism: as the whole denomination defines it, we define racism as “**race prejudice + institutional/systemic power,**” understanding that it functions individually, culturally, and institutionally in order to concentrate power for white people at the expense of people of color, while misshaping all of us and robbing us of our God-given identities as equally and uniquely created in the image of God

White supremacy culture: while we will not use the term extensively in this report, it is important to note that outside of the Disciples of Christ, more and more activists engaged in

antiracism are talking about white supremacy culture as an important concept. Tema Okun, one of the leading scholars in the field for over 20 years, describes it as follows: “White supremacy culture is the widespread ideology baked into the beliefs, values, norms, and standards of our groups (many if not most of them), our communities, our towns, our states, our nation, teaching us both overtly and covertly that whiteness holds value, whiteness is value.”<sup>6</sup>

Racial Equity and Racial Justice: Borrowing from the definitions of the organization Race Forward,

Racial Justice is a vision and transformation of society to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive.

Racial equity is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.

Distinction between Racial Equity and Racial Justice: Racial equity is the process for moving towards the vision of racial justice. Racial equity seeks measurable milestones and outcomes that can be achieved on the road to racial justice. Racial equity is necessary, but not sufficient, for racial justice.

## Antiracism

Drawing on the Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training Workshop content (introduced to staff during their August, 2021 workshop), this report affirms that ANTIRACISM is as a *Way of Being*, NOT primarily *A Way of Doing*. Strategic shifts toward racial equity and justice can not be grounded in tweaks to existing practice/policies, but in a fundamental reorientation of the way Week of Compassion leverages its power and resources to promote sustainable human communities through disaster response, resettlement and preparedness.

Antiracism is a fundamental shift in vision as well as operations. It requires a liberatory imagination that moves far beyond a racially proportional response inside an existing funding and allocation structure. It intentionally moves into a way of life that privileges new ways of BEING disciples of Jesus Christ, replicating the economy Jesus advocated for, the integrity of compassion he represented, and the accountability to marginalized and minoritized people he maintained.

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<sup>6</sup> Tema Okun’s newly designed website has significant amounts of information on this subject: [WHAT IS IT? - WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE](#)

Antiracist Identity is A **Way of Being** that is:

- **RACE AWARE AND RACE CONSCIOUS**
- Informed by a **POWER ANALYSIS** of how systemic racism impacts all people of color, as well as white people in specific ways
- Aware of how systemic racism is **EMBEDDED** in institutional culture and practice
- **CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS** of how racism operates in intersectional ways that exacerbate oppression, especially the relationship between racial and economic oppression
- **GROUNDING IN ACCOUNTABILITY** to communities of color committed to dismantle the white dominant center
- Sustained by **INTENTIONAL practices and CREATIVE collaborations** that build a critical mass of support for this work
- **SEEKING** the **LIBERATION** of all living beings and the earth

(Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training)

We hope this section gives you a sense of the tools we used and the analysis we bring to the rest of this report. We also want to note that the analysis is consistent with our denomination's antiracism analysis and the work of Reconciliation Ministries.

## Theological Grounding for the Work

That equality is a good thing, a fine goal, may be generally accepted. What is lacking is a sense of the *monstrosity of inequality*.

– Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Thunder in the Soul: To Be Known by God*

What sets Week of Compassion apart from many disaster relief groups is that it is a ministry of the church, and particularly of a church that has committed to becoming an antiracist church. That means that any work of the ministry foundationally connects back to the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ.

In much of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the theological foundations of ministries are cursory or implicit. However, engaging in theological exploration of what Jesus' ministry and teachings invite us to commit to is a real gift to the work of Week of Compassion, given how much of its work is communicated in ways that connect to Biblical texts already. This is made doubly important by the fact that while our sacred texts were written for the purpose of creating equitable communities, centuries of dominant culture interpretations have caused many Christians to miss out on how that message remains an essential part of scripture.

In a rich conversation with the board in April 2022, board members gathered to discuss some theological realities in Week of Compassion's work in relation to the work of racial equity. In that conversation, the board brought stories of their own lived experiences with issues of racial equity, their learnings about inequities in the impact of disasters and the response to those disasters, and their distinct (but generally complimentary) understandings of how our relationship to God needs to shape Week of Compassion's relationship to racial equity and racial justice in disaster relief and recovery.

Week of Compassion functions out of deep spiritual commitments, but board and staff have not explicitly discussed the theological underpinnings of their collective work, or how those commitments point towards the work of racial equity. Those conversations are particularly germane in light of how US philanthropy is founded on generations of racial and economic exploitation, and how current structures of philanthropy provide responses to immediate needs without adjusting imbalances of power made possible by those generations of exploitation. Theological engagement of that concrete reality is absolutely essential for any ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and particularly for Week of Compassion.

As the board discussed the history and current day realities of racial inequities in philanthropy, the following themes emerged:

- the distinction between immediate response to crisis and repairing harm.
- what it means for the philanthropic industry turning people into "problems to be repaired." (As one board member reflected, "I wonder how it feels as a person put into the category of problem.")

- how the increase in climate disasters and our relationship to land intersect with historic and continuing race inequities in this country.
- The culture of competition in nonprofit fundraising, including within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- the need to represent impacted communities more intentionally in board structures, stretching just beyond traditional board diversity strategies.
- What it means for donors and recipients to actually understand themselves as part of community with each other.

All of these themes beg some theological reflection. As the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond often notes, "Diagnosis Determines Therapy." The themes above are concrete problems and also theological problems. How we diagnose them will determine the solutions we bring to bear. For example, one board member noted that Week of Compassion, as the larger society, is moving away from being crisis-driven to a model of working towards sustainable change. "What we don't understand," he noted, "is that racism is a 24/7/365 crisis that causes many people not to be able to have a full life. Natural disasters exacerbate this already existing problem." What does Jesus have to say about that 24/7/365 crisis? How does that shape Week of Compassion's priorities?

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*Diagnosis Determines Therapy.*

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By means of another example, board members discussed the painful reality that charity still functions out of racism, as the readings laid out, especially the Barber and Villanueva readings.<sup>7</sup> One board member noted that accountability was driven by the fear of giving to the "wrong" people of color (terrorists, as an example) without realizing that using particular structures of accountability could be "creating our own problems by perpetuating white supremacy." The group discussed the fact that accountability itself was not racist but that it was often used in racist ways. Taking for granted the need to address racial equity, what does our relationship to God tell us about how accountability needs to be re-imagined at Week of Compassion?

Putting the April board discussion in conversation with this process's understandings of racial equity in Week of Compassion's domestic disaster relief and recovery work, here are some theological possibilities to consider while engaging this report.

Vy's predecessor Amy often spoke of how Compassion exists at the intersection of charity and justice. The same theme emerged in board conversations about racial equity at Week of Compassion, evoking the classic text of Micah 6:8: "And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Asking what that passage means in the light of generational growth in wealth inequity feels like incredibly important work for the board to do as it discerns with the staff how to engage in a race equity approach to Week of Compassion's mission. In one conversation, a board member brought up the example of Dorothy Day, leading to a reflection on the passage about Jesus

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B for the full list of readings.

asking Peter to feed his sheep. However, using DDT (Diagnosis Determines Therapy), it is possible to engage that passage as related to a distribution problem (why weren't the sheep already being fed? Why was the food concentrated in the hands of people not sharing it?) As one board member noted:

“Charity is problematic when it's just about relief.

Power has to be used to keep justice and love circulating.” If a repair to a community is a return to status quo degradation, that’s not good enough. And in fact, scripture speaks to this extensively and repeatedly.

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*Charity is problematic when it's just about relief. Power has to be used to keep justice and love circulating.*

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Additionally, the theme of the Table showed up several times, the most central symbol of the Disciples of Christ, but this time in reference to who is at the table, who is making the decisions about what is on the table, at what stage in the meal planning people are invited, etc. One board member noted a conversation with the Rev. Dr. William Barber who said, “I grow weary of being invited when they planned the meal, created the guest list, set the table, & you just sit at the already set table as they tell you what they’re going to do.” One board member who works with the disability community evoked their rallying cry: “Nothing about us without us” and said that should also be true at the table.

The Disciples’ antiracism initiative is officially called The Many Members One Table Initiative, and it hearkens to the recognition of diverse gifts and diverse needs at a table that needs to accommodate all. As Week of Compassion board and staff engage in race equity practices together, the question of whose table (Barton Stone felt particularly strongly that we all needed to position ourselves as guests at the table since Christ was the host) is an important theological lens to bring to how Week of Compassion engages in decision-making and priority setting, and who is a part of those processes.

As a response to the readings, the discussion evoked much conversation about accountability. In this assessment, we talk a great deal about how anti-oppression organizations intentionally position themselves to be accountable to communities of color (and particularly anti-racist communities of color). This is in part to recognize that the people most impacted by injustice are more likely to have solutions to our society’s problems than the people who benefit from that injustice. It is in part also to rectify generations of being accountable to preserving power and privilege for white people. One board member said that Jesus taught us that when we pray, God already knows our needs. “Are we putting ourselves in God’s place” with the current structures of accountability?” he asked the group.

The Bible has over 2,000 passages related to “the poor,” and while some of them are about responding to individual need, more of them are about how when a society is not accountable

to poor people, it is out of alignment with God’s will. The Bible engages systemic justice much more explicitly and frequently than we are encouraged to notice. That reading of the Bible as a resource for community accountability may serve the staff and board well as you engage this process.

If Week of Compassion is interested in exploring theology and praxis related to race equity in non-siloed ways, especially with a focus on domestic ministry, this might be an opportunity for low-stakes conversations with Reconciliation Ministries, the

Justice Roundtable, and Repairers of the Breach, Disciples for Racial and Economic Justice, among many others. Opportunities to engage in conversation about bringing our Biblical understandings to our day-to-day work are too far and few between in a church that proclaims “no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible.” Such conversation might also create onramps to deeper relationships with institutions of higher education, if you brought together a theology and practice listening circle including scholars with a commitment to race equity.

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*The Bible engages systemic justice much more explicitly and frequently than we are encouraged to notice.*

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## General Findings

Some of the most powerful lessons we've learned over the past two decades have come from reflecting on our missteps. Perhaps the biggest one: the long time it took for us—and here I need to be more specific, *me* and many of my white colleagues—to grasp the centrality of race in almost all of the work we do. For an organization whose animating question from the beginning has been, “How can we have the greatest impact in the world?,” and whose work centers on breaking cycles of poverty, this failure is a deeply troubling part of our story. The reality that our lack of awareness has sometimes helped to hold in place—and in some cases contributed to—greater inequities in society compounds the cost of our error.

—Jeff Bradach, Bridgespan<sup>8</sup>

Over the course of nine months, the consultants observed the following:

1. The survey of key stakeholders showed that their perceptions of Week of Compassion were affirming of the ministry in general and expansive in their commitment to Week of Compassion deepening its commitment to racial equity outcomes. (See Survey in Appendix D)
  - a. ⅔ of respondents understood Week of Compassion to be both a fund and a program; ⅓ believed it was primarily a fund.
  - b. Without naming whether this was good or bad, most respondents believe the vast majority of decisions about the organization's directions are driven by staff AND board.
  - c. Some respondents, especially regional ministers of color, believe that congregations and regions should have more autonomy or direct involvement in decisions about the distribution of funds for immediate relief and long-term recovery.
  - d. An overwhelming majority of respondents supported Week of Compassion deepening its strategic commitment to addressing disparities between white people and people of color in regards to accessing resources in the wake of a disaster. In a series of questions, the area that got the lowest level of support was about Week of Compassion deepening its research and strategy regarding the intersection of climate change and systemic racism. That level of support was still 75% among respondents.
  - e. While respondents recognized racial disparities and even spoke about how a shift towards advocacy might be a needed part of the work to come, few placed those disparities in a context of generational oppression or consolidation of wealth, indicating an area of potential growth in understanding even for strong Week of Compassion supporters who are committed to racial equity.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/philanthropy/the-bridgespan-group-and-racial-equity-reflections>

2. Survey respondents were overwhelmingly clear (almost 90%) that racial disparities exist in the field of disaster recovery, and while there were frequent requests that Week of Compassion not get into mission drift, respondents saw racial equity in disaster relief as squarely within the organization's mission. (This was reflected even more starkly in deep dive interviews with a smaller selection of representative stakeholders.)
3. In the deep dive interviews (9 with denominational and regional leaders, 6 with local pastors from racial/ethnic ministries' recommendations), we observed:
  - a. deep appreciation for the work of Week of Compassion from most interviewees
  - b. a recognition that Disciples Volunteering provides a great opportunity to ground people in the systemic injustice in domestic disasters
  - c. awareness among pastors of color that there needs to be more collective and visible listening to their needs and experience as a foundation for deeper awareness, relationship and most importantly trust between churches of color and Week of Compassion
  - d. among interviewees very familiar with Week of Compassion over a long stretch of time, an awareness that Week of Compassion has made significant shifts away from what the consultants might refer to as "white supremacy culture practices," and a desire to own those shifts more publicly. As one interviewee noted, "we need to own the history and find new ways to move forward." (Note: among interviewees less familiar with Week of Compassion, the only reference points they have are contemporary, so its improvements over time are of less relevance to them.)
  - e. an awareness among some of the interviewees of the tension between the high visibility of immediate response and the much more significant transformative power of long-term recovery work grounded in anti-oppression values.
  - f. for some of the pastors of color, a lack of awareness that Week of Compassion is involved in long-term recovery, specifically in a collaborative and anti-racist way.
  - g. a desire particularly among interviewees of color to deepen collaboration with communities of color in ways that use the gifts and respond to the articulated needs of those communities (perhaps not only in moments of crisis). Quoting the Rev. Terri Owens, one interviewee said "We need to tear down the barriers to love."
4. Funding provided by Week of Compassion through grants and other expenditures for Domestic Response are shown in the tables in Appendix C for the years 2017-2021. The tables show dollar amounts and % of total expended for each of four kinds of disaster response: Climate/Natural Disaster, Human-Caused Disasters, Health Disasters, and Human Displacement.

In all five years, the majority of funding provided by Week of Compassion was in response to Climate/Natural Disasters. Funding for Human Displacement, primarily to support refugee resettlement, is the second priority in expenditures for each year. Except for 2020, when Covid pandemic grants were given to Disciples who had no access to stimulus checks and to Disciples congregations supporting food-related Covid relief,

Week of Compassion has been expending less than 2% of its domestic disaster funds in Health-related or Human-Caused Disasters.

The tables also show expenditures for the four cycles of disaster recovery: Immediate Relief, Long-Term Recovery, Advocacy, and Preparedness. In these cycles, the vast majority of Advocacy funds went to Disciples Home Missions in support of staff engaged in refugee and immigration advocacy (policy and legal support). Week of Compassion has already made decisions about shifting these funds into support for congregations engaged in refugee resettlement. The largest percentage of funding, however, is given over to Immediate Relief and Long-Term Recovery, though there is not consistency from year to year in terms of allocations to each.

We believe this inconsistency in the distribution of funds from year to year speaks to several issues worth noting:

- a) Staff are making decisions based on the variable nature of the impacts of disasters from year to year.
- b) We have heard two concerns from staff about donations:
  - (1) that designated funding sometimes results in large amounts of money in a specific category (for example “hurricane relief”) not being accessible for more urgent needs (for example Afghan refugee relief), and
  - (2) that when an emergency occurs, donors will reach out directly to request funding go to churches that don’t need relief. While these variables have allowed flexibility in response. These pressures have not always served Week of Compassion well in operating out of an equity lens, so that,
- c) There has not been clarity as to whether Week of Compassion could have greater efficacy as an organization providing immediate relief, long-term recovery, or both; nor are there operationalized guidelines for staff to make those decisions.

For racial equality and equity purposes, this data is broken down into race categories of white and POC (people of color) recipients. Together with staff, we recognized several things in examining this data:

- The majority of immediate relief goes to white households and congregations, in the aftermath of climate disasters
- The majority of long-term recovery dollars is provided to white-led organizations or majority white congregations for the benefit of neighborhoods of color
- The majority of Covid-solidarity grants was given directly to people of color, however, grants for support services for Covid-related harm (e.g. food pantries) was provided mainly to majority white congregations
- Refugee and Immigration dollars have been expended primarily to partners engaged in refugee response or to white congregations resettling refugees of color.

5. There have been significant shifts in how Week of Compassion operates, moving over recent years from a personality-driven ministry model to a mission-oriented model. The Board of Directors plays a more significant role in decision making, very much by design. These shifts make it possible to operationalize anti-oppression values and practices, which are currently used in many instances but are by-and-large not formalized or institutionalized yet.
6. While Week of Compassion staff have made significant shifts in implementation and messaging to prioritize racial equity, very little of that work has been operationalized or formalized. Therefore, it relies largely on individuals' personal commitment rather than on organizational commitment. Additionally, there are few guidelines to help staff make racially equitable decisions that have been collectively embraced, and there is little clarity about how to communicate the organization's racial equity commitments to donors, volunteers, supporters, and the larger church, far less how much formal authority regarding racial equity to bring to ecumenical and regional decision-making bodies.
7. One of the very real challenges Week of Compassion faces in deepening its racial equity practices is that it functions within white institutional values that do not celebrate or prioritize accountability to anti-racist communities of color. Every general ministry seeking to do this work encounters the same barriers, and cultivating cross-unit practices of racial equity and anti-racism are challenging at best. Both survey respondents and our interview with Reconciliation Ministries Executive Director, April Johnson, indicated desire for stronger partnership between Week of Compassion and Reconciliation Ministries.

While there was some confusion among a few survey respondents about the difference between the work of antiracism generally and the work of antiracist domestic disaster response, many respondents suggested in open responses that Reconciliation can be a critical partner in reviewing, implementing, and evaluation response strategies and providing resources for volunteer/congregational education. Another way partnership with Reconciliation can advance Disciples' antiracism commitments is to publicize the outcomes and impacts of Week of Compassion's strategic shifts toward racial equity and justice; so as to replicate these strategies in wider church life.

8. Week of Compassion faces the challenges that many service-based nonprofits face: US-based philanthropy functions within a racialized capitalist economy. This can lead to donor accountability and "sheltering" or protecting certain types of donors in ways that compromise accountability to communities of color. There is a palpable tension (possibly perceived, possibly real, likely a combination) between securing funds for the ministry and publicly claiming the ways in which Week of Compassion seeks to practice anti-oppression values. Even two of the interviewees, dedicated to both Week of Compassion and racial equity, expressed concern that a focus on racial equity would alienate potential white volunteers.

## Recommended Shifts in Missional Priorities for Domestic Response

*In the ancient biblical text, the prophet Isaiah tells us that if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, 'then 'your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and raise up the age-old foundations.'(Isaiah 58). Reconstructing a just and merciful society is possible, but it depends upon a commitment to invest in repairing age-old harms.*

*– Rev. Dr. William Barber II, Forward to Decolonizing Wealth*

Based on our general findings, Lori and Sandhya have provided two broad categories of recommendations. The second category, in the next section, includes specific recommendations in five areas. The first category, here, are four shifts in missional priorities. Our experience is that program shifts yield very little if an organization has not prioritized mission alignment. To borrow the Biblical metaphor, this section is the firm foundation that allows the construction of the house. Without engaging these missional priorities, changes in the specific recommendations section will be built on a foundation of sand.

At the same time, it is worth noting two things. First, Vy and Caroline have invested considerable hours over the last 9 months with Lori and Sandhya exploring these foundational principles so that they are equipped to engage in their implementation. And second, these proposals are in many ways a continuation of the mission alignment work that has been happening at Week of Compassion over the past five years. The board and staff have already begun work of deeper accountability, more rigorous structure, greater engagement of board gifts and skills. This helps Week of Compassion continue its work, in an ethically and morally grounded way, for the strengthening of the organization's purpose.

These broad shifts are incorporated into specific recommendations in each of three program areas reviewed as well as in recommendations for communication strategies and fund-raising protocols/strategies in the next section.

**1 )** Week of Compassion already understands the race inequities in current models of disaster relief. It also seeks to live out the Christian Church's commitment to antiracism, which pays particular attention to the role of systems and institutions in consolidating power for white people at the expense of people of color. Therefore, **we recommend a fully-operationalized shift away FROM the framing of racism as personal bigotry or race bias within leaders/decision-makers TO a framework that names racism as systemic misuse of power; this includes a shift from strategies of diversity, performative inclusion, and charitable response, primarily, to strategies that seek to achieve racial equity and justice.**

Racist misuses of power are operationalized in structures, policies and practices that advantage and invest in white dominant norms and society while also excluding, harming or exploiting people and communities of color disproportionately. The work of antiracism must point to ways

of measuring the potential shift away from naming racist perpetrators to naming structural rootedness in systems of investment in white dominance.

While the former way of understanding focuses on the eradication of racism by trying to eliminate personal bias and individual racists, the latter framework recognizes the need for dismantling power inequities that are institutionalized in every sector of US society, including church-based disaster response. Dismantling racism begins with a commitment to a fundamental shift in the worldview, values, identity and institutional purpose: to operate differently because the mission is to serve communities of color (and white communities without access to necessary resources) by building sustainable assets that help communities thrive.

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*Dismantling racism begins with a commitment to a fundamental shift in the worldview, values, identity and institutional purpose: to operate differently because the mission is to serve communities of color (and white communities without access to necessary resources) by building sustainable assets that help communities thrive.*

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Recommendations for change, for disaster response, address the individual bias and socialized learning of personnel, volunteers, and partners making decisions while simultaneously acknowledging that “we can’t educate racism away.” Therefore, the recommendations in this report address programmatic inequities in service provision that lead to white stakeholders having greater access to resources. Antiracist change in policy, practice and protocols reflect the need for stakeholder relational-development that prioritizes communities of color. Most importantly, however, by engaging in antiracist systemic change, Week of Compassion can engage in disaster relief **outcomes that move toward communal Racial Justice:**

Racial Equality Lens	Racial Equity Lens	Racial Justice Lens
Distributes resources based on client requests	Analyzes data and information about race and ethnicity	Understands and acknowledges racial history
Prioritizes resource distribution to white base of the organization while also responding to community of color impact with proportional response	Understands disparities and the reasons they exist and acts proactively to respond to disproportionate impacts on communities of color	Creates a shared affirmative vision of a fair and inclusive society
Responds to immediate problems without addressing root causes	Looks at structural root causes of problems	Focuses explicitly on building civic, cultural, economic, and political

		<b>power by those most impacted</b>
<b>Names race only in terms of proportional impact</b>	<b>Names race explicitly when talking about problems and solutions</b>	<b>Emphasizes transformative solutions that impact multiple systems</b>

The gift of adopting this missional shift is two-fold: it commits to measuring the impact (not just intent) in Week of Compassion’s journey toward racial equity and it provides a framework that Week of Compassion can use in its collaborative work with other general units; furthering our denomination’s shared language and shared commitment to making this shift in every level of the church.

2) In order for Week of Compassion to contribute to a larger culture shift within the field of domestic disaster relief and recovery, **we recommend a missional shift FROM providing immediate relief and long-term recovery that restores communities to status quo realities TO investment in communities that addresses pre-existing economic and racial inequities and invests in generative economic sustainability.**

This shift builds on the first one, noting that racial and economic justice proceed hand-in-hand. We recommend that Week of Compassion focus efforts in long-term recovery and the resettlement of people displaced by disasters, asylum seekers and refugees by investing in racially just regenerative communities following climate/natural disasters or health-related crises.

As the chart below<sup>9</sup> suggests, US economic policy has resulted in practices of extraction that have left communities of color and some white communities bereft of internal assets and resources. Housing and grocery stores, for example, are owned by those outside the community. If property is owned by community residents, access to job opportunities in and near those communities is limited, making asset repair difficult and keeping property values low.

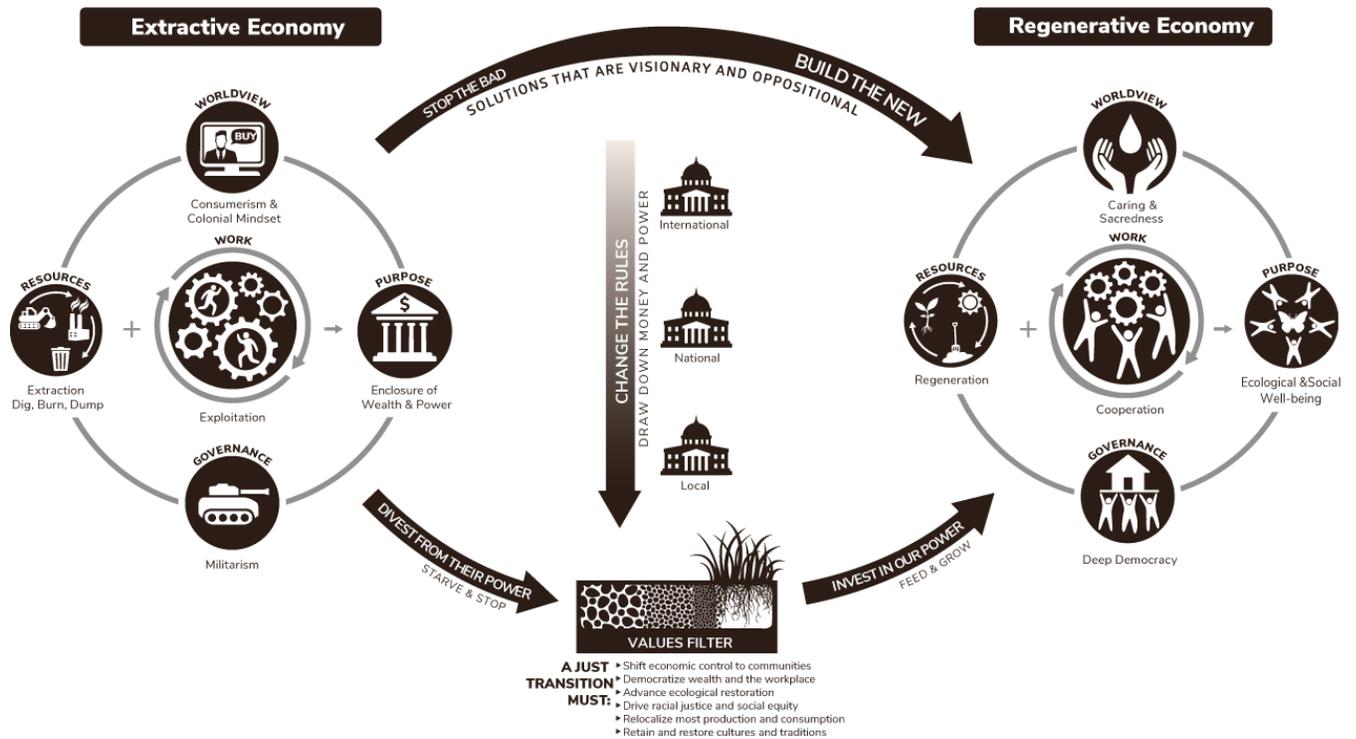
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*US economic policy has resulted in practices of extraction that have left communities of color and some white communities bereft of internal assets and resources.*

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Further, these communities are often not served well by government investment in infrastructure to keep utilities, transportation systems, road repair, access to water and sewage systems up to date. When climate disaster hits these areas, non-repairable decimation results that displaces entire populations, as we saw following hurricane Katrina in the 9<sup>th</sup> ward and again in hurricane Maria in multiple sections of Puerto Rico.

<sup>9</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Just-Transition-Framework-copy.png>



While temporary relocation and relief for these people is absolutely paramount, small solidarity grants will not provide sufficient immediate relief nor long-term regenerative communities with regenerative economies. Thus, we believe that the bulk of Week of Compassion’s domestic disaster response allocations, time, and congregational support should focus on projects that distribute regenerative capital into communities and equip the residents to build assets that sustain these communities generationally. As the diagram above suggests, this missional shift would require Week of Compassion to be very clear about its purpose to promote ecological and social well-being as well as root itself in an antiracist economic worldview of affirming the sacred worth of all human beings. This shift includes movement from “reparation” as a kind of repair to status quo, to reparation that shifts provisions to community accountability (deep democracy) and “re-generates” economic wealth.

As we will note below, under Vy Nguyen and Caroline Hamilton-Arnold’s leadership the current Week of Compassion project in Dayton, OH (involving many partners), intends to provide this kind of regenerative impact. It could provide a model and will provide learning about how to best engage this kind of long-term recovery.

Certainly, redirecting funds, staff energy, and ability to support congregational education/ engagement in this change will require more than a budget shift that reduces the amount of allocation for immediate response and consistently increases grants (and projects) for long-term recovery. We recognize the pressure on Week of Compassion to play a role in policy advocacy. Currently, this is achieved through partner organizations that Week of Compassion funds and

participates with. Moving forward, Week of Compassion has the opportunity to deepen local congregations' engagement in advocacy as the fifth component of disaster recovery and relief that is least actively engaged right now. Training and empowering local congregations to engage in racially just advocacy can provide a significant impact in communities across the country. Additionally, Week of Compassion can continue program funding for partners who do advocacy to groups equipped to do that advocacy: Disciples Home Missions, Reconciliation Ministries, Church World Service, Bread for the World, Disciples for Racial and Economic Justice, etc. However, as Week of Compassion deepens its commitment to a regenerative economy, these grants would need to include evaluation criteria to ensure prioritization of commitment to advocating for policies that promote regenerative communities. This will also allow Week of Compassion to practice the anti-oppression transforming value of abundance thinking that uses resources responsibly.

Prioritizing this shift will obviously impact all stakeholders in Week of Compassion's domestic response work. It will alter the messaging, communication, and fundraising strategies necessary to support this shift. And, the reality is that for too many of us, we have been expending more and more energy for smaller and smaller gains when it comes to both social service and social justice. Embracing this model will both align Week of Compassion's racial justice and climate crisis commitments and it will also lead to prioritizing the work that creates a different reality from the extractive reality in which we currently live.

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*The reality is that for too many of us, we have been expending more and more energy for smaller and smaller gains when it comes to both social service and social justice.*

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3) As the survey showed, some Week of Compassion supporters understand the organization to be both a fund and a program, while others understand it primarily to be a fund. This is the result of intentional shifts over the past decade, and it provides opportunities for Week of Compassion's commitment to racial equity. A third recommended missional shift reframes Week of Compassion's identity as an antiracist philanthropic foundation for the purpose of both funding and programming. This shift is an **intentional and strategic departure FROM "classical" philanthropic, accountability models to white donors and "their" charitable interests TO a model of accountability to (and deeper partnership with) marginalized and minoritized communities.**

In his introduction to [Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance](#), long-time philanthropy reformer, Edgar Villanueva, speaks of the imperative to move decision-making, agency for systemic communal change, authorization for that change and long-term accountabilities for growth in communal well-being to the people who actually reside in those communities. He names strategies to move philanthropy into new forms of "loving humanity"—medicine that cures the illness promoted by dynamic misuses of power, which result from sustained accountability to the wealthiest Americans.

For Villanueva and other thinkers, there is a growing critique of US philanthropy. It is and has served as a justification for on-going “colonialism.” The harm caused by the extraction of resources, the exploitation of laborers, and control and monopolization of industry that highly values profit for a few also has a conscious. As, indigenous journalist, Rebecca Nagel suggests, in the US, “greed and charity go together”—both are controlled and accountable to the values and norms upholding white dominance.

Of course, these practices happen in covert and overt, well-intended and ill-intended ways, and with varying degrees of collective consciousness. So for Villanueva, “money as medicine” has to promote healing that gets at the root addressing symptoms, shifts responsibility from enacting donor interests to enacting communal interest with accountability to the communities served, not primarily bandaging the harm caused by immense disparities in access and control of wealth/resources. This recommended shift centers racial justice that “requires urgent fundamental changes that reposition communities of color in relation to power and resources.” Repositioning communities of color is first and foremost a shift in accountability for decisions about resource access and distribution.<sup>10</sup>

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*“Money as medicine” has to promote healing that gets at the root addressing symptoms.*

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From these first three missional shifts, we can begin to imagine how Week of Compassion can prioritize racial equity and justice in its decision-making as well as how it can measure the effectiveness of these decisions. Appendix C goes further into these filtering mechanisms but here they are named.

- A. From the Climate Justice Alliance<sup>11</sup>: How will or how does this grant, project, communication or fundraising strategy do the following things:
- Shift economic control to communities
  - Democratize wealth and the workplace
  - Advance ecological restoration
  - Drive racial justice and social equity
  - Relocalize most production and consumption
  - Retain and restore cultures and traditions (of communities)
- B. From Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training<sup>12</sup>: An analysis of the dynamics of power that assesses how investment in and legitimization of white dominant norms, standards and interests are being upheld disproportionately and, consequently, causing harm to people of color and other marginalized groups.

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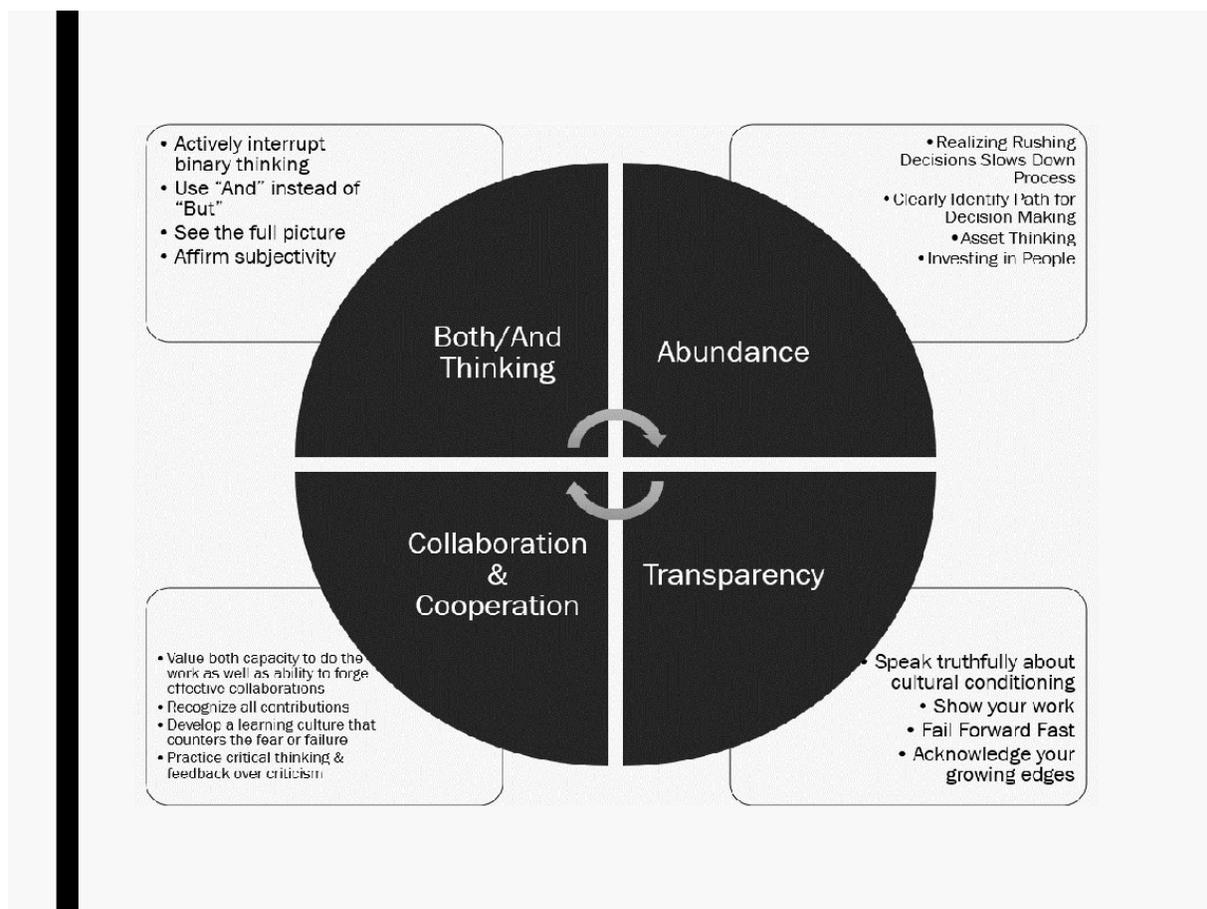
<sup>10</sup> <https://racialequity.org/mismatched/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Just-Transition-Framework-copy.png>

<sup>12</sup> <https://crossroadsantiracism.org>

C. A third tool for filtering decision-making and strategic planning is the operationalization of Antiracist Transforming Values: Both/And Thinking with an Abundant Worldview that engages in Transparent Communication and Collaborative partnerships practiced as a way of shifting the roots of a white dominant institution to an institution invested in antiracist economic justice and distribution of resources. The degree of impact of acting out of these Antiracist Transforming Values is enhanced by a commitment to shared (rather than hierarchically consolidated) power.

Grounding organizational commitment in these values also assumes a value of effectiveness over expediency in response. It requires that organizations abandon the *we've always done it this way* approach in favor of the long view: we seek the most effective use of resources to upbuild community transformation.



This tool is a combination of the work done by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training <https://crossroadsantiracism.org> and Tema Okun: <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/>

While this missional shift is rooted in accountability, its leaves and flowers are the richer, more meaningful and ultimately more effective partnerships that will emerge between Week of Compassion, local Disciples congregations, and grassroots organizations. Caroline has shared stories of this already happening in some of the long-term recovery work, and by baking this practice into the DNA of Week of Compassion, that experience will become the norm.

4) The fourth shift in missional focus builds on the first three to ensure that Disciples (or partner) congregational presence is represented in carrying out the ministry of domestic disaster response. Staff and board (and certainly those surveyed and interviewed) have lifted up a priority of empowering congregations to support domestic response beyond financial gifts. This calls for an intentional **shift FROM a ministry that is primarily staff-driven in grant-making, advocacy, and programming TO a ministry of support, empowerment and equipping of congregations engaged in local community disaster relief and response (as well as refugee resettlement).**

Implementing this fourth recommendation means that staff time will be devoted to educating and empowering congregations for long-term investment in their communities following a disaster or empowering them to partner with congregations in other regions to do the same. Congregational education (from Week of Compassion or in partnership with others) will be needed to further comprehension about systemic racial and economic injustice and its effects. Tools used to make staff decisions may need to be shared with congregations to shift charitable response to impactful responses of racial equity and justice. In part, we are suggesting that Week of Compassion heavily contribute to on-going discussions in local, regional, and general church gatherings about what it means to engage in mission and ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Over and over again, we heard from survey and interview participants that there is great desire for congregations to be invested in ministries of disaster response and resettlement of those displaced with *more* than financial gifts. Especially leaders and congregations of color seek not only to provide pastoral presence and accompaniment following natural disasters, but also the autonomy to respond in ways that they believe will have lasting impact. One stateside Hispanic pastor suggested that local stateside Puerto Rican congregations could have provided strategic help (to Week of Compassion) in the distribution of funds for long-term response following the devastation by Hurricane Maria: “Puerto Rican congregations in the states should be channeling the money for long-term relief. We can raise money for urgent relief and send it ourselves, but we need to have resources available to empower those closest to the ground. Our community is eager to help but Week of Compassion needs to give freedom to the congregations to respond.” The pastor was speaking to the fact that churches in direct relationship with impacted communities have a different perspective on how to respond, and that their wisdom should shape long-term recovery

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*The experiences of the misuses of power when individual (white) Disciples are making decisions are prolific...Building trust requires a shift in accountability.*

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strategies. This comment also pointed to lack of trust between some Latinx congregations in the denomination and Week of Compassion.

A Black pastor addressed a separate but related issue of trust. “There is little knowledge about the work of Week of Compassion in Convocation congregations. What awareness there is wary of trusting General Ministries of the church because of previous decisions. The experiences of the misuses of power when individual (white) Disciples are making decisions are prolific...Building trust requires a shift in accountability. Staffing of color is imperative.”

One Korean pastor noted that they had been honored to provide translation of a Week of Compassion workshop in their region but there were very few Korean speakers in attendance. “Deeper connections between general ministries and ethnic groups would be of great benefit,” they acknowledged while expressing excitement about what they had learned and how valuable it would be to many Korean churches not currently equipped for a natural disaster.

For white congregations, conditioned to respond through financial giving or short-term mission projects fraught with racially inequitable power dynamics, some pastors were quite clear that Week of Compassion could play a pivotal role in re-socializing congregations with a “culture of mission ‘with’ community well-being at its heart.”

A former Week of Compassion Committee member and pastor for 30+ years, said:

*It used to be really easy to raise funds in response to global and domestic disasters. We would put out an appeal and people responded generously. But in the last few years, I am sensing a kind of Week of Compassion fatigue. Disasters happen so frequently, that people don't even hear the appeal; it's just one more thing. People now are much more likely to respond to something they can get engaged with. We still receive offerings in February and for the really big disasters; but our congregation would much more likely support a local rebuild or even sponsor a refugee family. Yeah, it's easy to just send money to Week of Compassion and feel good about how the money will be used, but our people need to engage in partnering in specific response as well.*

One pastor envisioned partnerships between Week of Compassion and congregations that encourage a *Culture of Mission*:

- that understands the difference between “band-aid” response and response that is committed to building racial and economic equity for those served.
- that seeks to learn by engaging in projects that are more accountable to the leadership of the people in communities served.
- that listens to a diversity of leaders and engages in education to learn: what is partnership? what is antiracism? what is accountability? what assets do we bring to the tables of relationship-building besides money and time?
- that includes clarity around the desired impact of the project on everyone—e.g. volunteers, partners, and community served
- that includes education to challenge bias against “those that are other” as well as opportunities to raise self-awareness about socialized and internal bias

## **Specific Recommendations in Five Areas related to Domestic Response Current Programs, Grants, and Services**

*A year ago, we would not have dreamed of the opportunities coming from this movement. People of all colors are in the streets saying, 'This shouldn't happen, what can we do?'*

*– Barbara Solomon, a California Social Work Hall of Distinction inductee<sup>13</sup>*

As the filters and values from the previous section are named, they have to be written and practiced to provide daily adherence to Antiracist Identity Change. For instance, in communication and fundraising practices, protocols, and traditions, we need to define how Week of Compassion can and will live out something like “community-centric fundraising.” Implementation strategies will define how to center the needs, cultural life-ways, and asset development for communities of color and other marginalized communities. Domestic response will have to include focused service-learning opportunities in how congregations can support and participate in asset and wealth accumulation for people who have suffered the double loss of living in poverty while traumatized by climate disaster or human displacement.

This section will focus on the following five areas:

- 1) Immediate Response with Solidarity Grants
- 2) Long-Term Recovery
- 3) Volunteer Projects–Community Recovery Partner Projects
- 4) Fundraising Strategies
- 5) Communication Strategies

### **IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

The past 20 years have emphasized two types of public service accountability: fiscal discipline and standardizing “proven” programming. This has meant conceiving of public service organizations as competitive enterprises focused on efficiency, with funding tied to achieving performance metrics assumed to be equally relevant across diverse communities. This approach relies on the idea that the best forms of accountability lie in technical measurement, not collaboration with affected communities. This effectively reduces complex social processes to the frictionless universality of numbers.

**-Nicole P. Marwell, Jennifer E. Mosley, USA Today<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> [How to Be Anti-Racist: A Social Worker’s Perspective | MSW@USC](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Systemic racism goes beyond police. Reform human and social services \(usatoday.com\)](#)

### ***Household Solidarity Grants:***

These grants are used to supply immediate provisions, to offset deductibles, and/or to offset other out-of-pocket expenses. These grants are provided to Disciples households with names provided by congregations or regional ministers. It is estimated that somewhere between 6% and 30% of these natural disaster grants have gone directly to households of color in any of the last 5 year, even though staff has worked hard to build relationships with more congregations of color and to increase the proportional response to households of color. This is primarily due to the lack of sustained denomination-wide relationship between the general, regional, and local churches of color.

From survey and interview responses with people of color and white survey responders, immediate response grants are the best known of Week of Compassion's domestic responses. Recipients, especially white recipients, express strong appreciation for initial encouragement and the symbolic love of the church through these grants. In 2020, however, when approximately 92% of the Covid-response grants went to households of color, who did not have access to government support, a recognition of Week of Compassion among Hispanic congregations began to be shared. Many suggest that this initial connection represents an opportunity to build on the trust established in 2020.

Outside of this pandemic response, however, this program of direct household immediate relief represents a response out of the lens of *Racial Equality, not Racial Equity or Racial Justice*. Resources are distributed based on client requests from congregations who "know about" the grant option. They are distributed according to "need" in some cases but as a goodwill gesture in others. Because of church-wide lack of relationship/communication with constituencies of color, Week of Compassion will continue to primarily distribute funds to the white base of the denomination if it does not make concrete changes. In addition, this is a type of response that addresses an immediate problem, without addressing larger systemic infrastructure issues that cause disproportional damage to communities of color and rural white communities; people who also are disproportionately affected by lack of asset-wealth, access to insurance, and access to affordable housing.

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*Because of church-wide lack of relationship/communication with constituencies of color, Week of Compassion will continue to primarily distribute funds to the white base of the denomination if it does not make concrete changes.*

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Another challenge to operationalizing a racial equity or justice strategy regarding household solidarity grants has to do with the reality that it serves as one of the primary fundraising and communication strategies for Week of Compassion. For decades, Week of Compassion has been known among white congregations as the hand of the church reaching individual Disciples who have experienced the destruction of natural disasters. Applying a power analysis to this strategy, in which we examine the benefit to white society and consequential harm and exclusion to

communities of color, we can name a number of harm-rendering impacts embedded in the perpetuation of the current strategy:

1. **The overwhelming majority (more than 95%) of donors are white.** As well the overwhelming majority of recipients of these household grants are white Disciples. Clearly, these donors find Week of Compassion's immediate response strategy appealing. Some former recipients of these grants have even made large donations to Week of Compassion's endowment funds. This strategy, however, reinforces the practice of donor bias to "give" for the benefit of those like themselves. The consequential harm to people of color is also two-fold: over-reliance on wealthy white donors/congregations in service to majority white grant recipients (in the case of this strategy) increases the perception that the denomination neither well-serves the interests of nor really needs support from donors of color. The current employment of this strategy also (unintentionally) excludes Disciples of color whose congregations do not know about household grants (primarily because of long-term lack of connection with regions or general ministries that haven't served them well).
2. **Where household solidarity grants have been made to people of color, communication about these grants was not entirely transparent with regard to the Covid-19 grants for Disciples who don't have documentation status.** For various reasons WOC was not able to be fully transparent about these grants, and trust with Latinx partner congregations was heightened due to some of those grants. In order to advance these relationships, we suggest that WOC find ways to live into transparent communication about its support of asylum seekers, and to build into its communications strategy more intentional ways of introducing the Christian framework for including all asylum seekers regardless of legal status. Silence about the church's call to respond to undocumented immigrants' needs results in the only voice about undocumented immigrants being the voice of people using white supremacy frameworks that dehumanize people Week of Compassion is called to serve.
3. **This strategy replicates patterns of accountability to white dominant norms and values rather than accountability to the interests of communities of color and leaders of color** (problems inherent to the philanthropic preference for charitable response over systemic change). These small household grants, no doubt, are received as a sign of good will and in many cases actually help make it possible for households to acquire food and shelter in the first days following a disaster. Yet, this strategy offers a short-term fix to people who are financially stable. For people who are not financially stable, it serves to band-aid an already impoverished life. We are not saying that all communities of color are financial poverty zones. We are saying that communities of color and much of white rural America lack access in disproportional ways to the resources necessary for sustainable life. Short-term relief alone may extend goodwill, but it does not attend to the reality that long-term poverty is generational and communal; depriving entire communities of access to quality resources, infrastructure, jobs, access to living wages or reliable housing.
4. **This strategy limits the autonomy of the local church to distribute funds;** something named as problematic by regional and local survey responders. Because these grants are

provided to congregations for specific households impacted (and named by the pastors/or another leader), congregations have little opportunity to partner or collaborate in the disbursement of funds other than to suggest individuals impacted by the disaster. This perpetuates the perception of General Ministries hierarchical, top-down decision-making and promotes the furthering of philanthropic protocols that channel tax-deductible charitable funding from the “haves” to the “have nots.” It doesn’t really allow the congregation to make decisions about how to educate congregants or disperse funds to congregants in economically or racially equitable ways.

**Recommendation 1:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion limit immediate response household grants (and other solidarity grants) to a smaller percentage of the total natural disaster response allocation so that more of the budget can be linked to long-term recovery, systemic change, and investment in generative wealth for communities of color, as well as congregational ministries in support of refugee and disaster-related human displacement.*

**Recommendation 2:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion ensure that at least half of all household grants/community solidarity grants are given to households of color by working within communities to identify a partner congregation of color (Disciples or non-Disciples of Christ congregation).*

**Recommendation 3:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion move toward stronger congregational partnership in the distribution of household grants, encouraging local partnership with congregations of color by:*

- a) Working with congregations to distribute the grants to households, including letters to all congregants in an affected area naming that Week of Compassion’s grant is offered by a collective denomination as a gesture of hope that the entire community will work together in its recovery; including instructions that the money be distributed to “those with greatest financial need.”
- b) If there is not an identifiable Disciples congregation of color in the area affected by the disaster, provide a community or household solidarity grant in equal amount to the one given to the white Disciples congregation for that white congregation to give to a non-Disciples congregation of color for immediate household relief for their congregants. Provide directives to the white congregation about being in collaborative relationships that share out of abundance, with both/and thinking, and transparent communication. In addition, offer insights about what it means to be grounded in accountability to this congregation of color and its leadership in the weeks and months that will follow.

**Recommendation 4:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion create an annual household grant response strategy for Disciples congregations for congregants who lack access to basic necessities because of human displacement status or documentation challenges that the congregational community can not cover (replicating Covid response strategy with similar guidelines for grant evaluation). This strategy of household grants should be part of a larger*

*strategy for refugees, asylum seekers and US residents who are displaced from their communities because of natural disasters. (see below)*

**Recommendation 5:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion communicate with **transparent integrity, why these shifts are being made** and accompany communication with education about long-term racially equitable and just partnership in congregational immediate response. (see more in communications recommendations)*

### **Community Solidarity Grants:**

Currently, these grants offer a wide range of immediate relief through local Disciples churches including provision of food, gas cards, shelter assistance; support to assist neighbors and flexible cash for locally-identified needs. These grants may be in place of or in addition to household solidarity grants. These grants are provided to Disciples congregations of color and white congregations with large percentages going to Puerto Rican congregations, for example, following Hurricane Maria (channeled through the Church in Puerto Rico). Occasionally, these solidarity grants are provided to white congregations for “the benefit of” (non-Disciples) communities of color. Community Solidarity grants do seem to offer more autonomy in congregational/regional decision making about the local “on the ground” community-wide needs than household grants. As well, these grants offer response opportunities for white congregations to better serve the whole of the community in racially equitable ways. Still, we offer these recommendations to mitigate embedded white dominance in white congregational distribution.

**Recommendation 1:** *We recommend that education accompany community solidarity grants given to white congregations, more control of funds and the distribution of funds be transferred to community leaders of color, so as to minimize the charitable tendencies of white hierarchical “help, fix, and save” tendencies. Further, we recommend that white congregations be required to partner with a Disciples congregation of color in the geographic area to receive and allocate these funds. Where there is no Disciples of Christ congregation of color in the area, but impact on a community of color, the community solidarity grant given to a white congregation should partner with a non-Disciples congregation of color both for receipt and distribution of funds. Notation could be made that the grant is funded through the Disciples of Christ with hopes of establishing partnerships between local Disciples, religious leaders and the community of color impacted, with accountability to those local leaders.*

*This shift in strategy could build collaboration, communication, and better relationships within a community across racial divides. More importantly, it puts the decisions about distribution directly in the hands of community leaders. It is important to note, as well, that in some cases the partner congregation could be a temple or a mosque.*

**Recommendation 2:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion create and publicize the creation of on-going solidarity grants for Disciples congregations engaged in resettling people who lack*

*basic necessities because they are asylum seekers or have been permanently displaced following disasters. This solidarity grant would be specifically for congregations providing direct assistance for food and housing security, healthcare, and other basic-needs services for Disciples congregants or asylum seekers, displaced US citizens, and refugees. Criteria for grants would be similar to those developed for COVID-19 Grants and Partner Support grants for specific appeals like the current appeals from SWGSM.*

We envision these grants similarly to the current direct support given to congregations that assist with emergency situations for immigrant and refugee families the congregation is resettling; but would expand to include those without documentation as well as those who are internally (to the US) displaced (primarily rural white households living in impoverished areas and persons of color in neighborhoods/reservations with little prospect for long-term recovery. An assumption of “congregations know best” should be extended, with few strings attached, for congregations of color to resettle people of color. In the case of the resettlement and relocation needed for asylum seekers and disaster-related, internally displaced persons of color, most of the congregations ministering with these folks are already congregations of color.

This recommendation seeks to continue to build on this relationship, especially with Hispanic congregations, begun with the Covid-19 pandemic grants. These relationships could also feed into congregational empowerment for Disciples congregations to invest in refugee resettlement as Week of Compassion advances this new initiative. Finally, this initiative could pave the way for congregations to partner with displaced people whose hometowns are no longer habitable following a disaster. Congregations in the Great River region, for example, might choose to invest in ministries of relocation/resettlement of indigenous persons whose lands have been pummeled by a series of floods and hurricanes in Eastern Louisiana. Or congregations in Mayfield, KY could share in ministries of resettlement for the families displaced by the December, 2021 tornadoes hammering small towns that will not rebuild. To be sure, this strategy could engage more congregations of color in partnerships that also incentivizes leadership from congregations of color to offer their insight and skills to long-term recovery projects as well as congregational refugee initiatives. This seems to be the thrust of the pastor’s suggestions named above, following Hurricane Maria: congregations of color know how to get resources to the people and places that need them.

### ***Congregational Solidarity Grants:***

These grants are offered to assist with repairs or offset deductibles/out-of-pocket costs for churches that sustain building damage following a disaster. They are intended to help Disciples congregations get back to ministry quickly and as a sign of encouragement and care from the wider church.

The percentage of immediate relief expended for these grants is not large but is undoubtedly appreciated by congregations who have high deductibles or can not meet out of pocket

expenses for small repairs. The assessment of the distribution of grants indicates that an average approaching 40% has gone to congregations of color.

### **Recommendations:**

This report does not recommend specific racial equity improvements for grants given to congregations for *small* building repair, except that Week of Compassion continue to request information about financial need in project repair. Our one significant request in this arena is that Week of Compassion staff engage members of the antiracism team within Church Extension to reflect together on how to create more intentional racial equity strategies when they partner in distributing congregational solidarity grants, paying attention to the difference between equality strategies and equity strategies.

For larger rebuild projects, however, we advocate the following:

- Before extending money to offset the costs of deductibles/out of pocket expenses for engagement in major rebuild projects, seek to assess the scope of the project in terms of *its contribution to building racially equitable, long-term, local community recovery*: Is the congregation intent on restoring a building that can facilitate a ministry plan for today's ministry to community rehabilitation not just to reconstruct a building to its former function.
- This kind of major rebuild following a disaster seems to coincide with long-term community recovery. It does not require immediate action or relief. Instead, there is the opportunity for the congregation, with support of local community partners and Disciples partners, to engage in offering the assets of the church building(s) in service to a racially equitable long-term community recovery.
- Assessing possibilities for these contributions could be the kind of educational support that Week of Compassion offers to help a congregation create an on-going ministry plan for community needs, rather than prioritizing its own welfare. (see below the importance of congregations participating in recovery after community disasters)

## LONG-TERM RECOVERY

*“It is time for philanthropy to embrace the principles of Just Transition. A Just Transition requires us to acknowledge the impact of the extractive economy on marginalized communities, repair the harms of our long history of exploitation and reject the continued accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a few....This necessitates the redistribution of social, political and economic resources and the incorporation of a reparations framework.”*

*-Justice Funders*

Over the last five years, Week of Compassion’s allocations for Long-Term Recovery projects (including DHM past volunteering ministries and the current programs of support for facilitating volunteers) have ranged from 27.4% of expenditures (2017) to 70% of expenditures (2019). Even during the 2020 and 2021 years of the pandemic, when volunteer constructed projects were minimal, allocations by percentage of budget were higher than the previous years. Clearly, Week of Compassion has been trending towards greater allocations to Long-term Community Recovery projects. By far, the majority of these allocations are for rebuilds, restoring community homes (either rental or owned properties).

The Week of Compassion staff reports that work-time allocation has increased for these recovery projects, particularly around communication and planning with ecumenical and community stakeholders. The increase in focus on recovery efforts is not unintentional. Staff recognizes that the lasting positive effects of long-term rebuilds outweighs the immediate positive response of small grants. At the same time, Disciples are one of only a few ministries that provide immediate cash response to Disciples households and congregations. Staff express genuine concern over potential diminishment of the goodwill generated by household grants, concern about the impact on future gifts to Week of Compassion, and primarily the potential diminishment of trust by affected congregations in building a foundation of relationship and legitimacy for long-term recovery. For these reasons, where it is evident that long-term recovery will be necessary, we recommend that “community solidarity grants” that require partnership between white congregations and congregations of color, have more potential for building foundational long-term partnerships than household grants. **Shifting allocation of immediate relief dollars in ways that will service the long-term recovery missional priority recommended in this report should be a priority.** Again, Week of Compassion will need to provide education and support for the partnerships to work to racially equitable impacts.

There are, however, additional tensions named by staff in wider partnered decision-making for long-term recovery:

- Disciples are a “small” player at the table—the larger funders have a larger voice.
- Protocol and policy have not been established that would guide which projects to get involved with and which to turn down.

- Staff feels pressure to use limited dollars strategically, with different goals in conflict: “If we diffuse dollars, we won’t have any impact at all...” “Either we fund this or we fund that, but we can’t fund both.”
- Staff reports difficulty in collaborative partnerships when community partners are operating out of different value systems than those of Week of Compassion.
- Access to federal funding depends on restrictions that may or may not be consistent with community need.

Long-time leaders of volunteer projects also feel these tensions. Two volunteer leaders who were interviewed, for example, recalled a project where people were moved out of their neighborhoods and relocated to what became a FEMA trailer park. The city rebuilt the destroyed neighborhood without protecting affordability for that neighborhood’s former residents. The effect was that survivors were permanently displaced from their community. As one pastor said, “instead of giving people a \$100,000 FEMA trailer it would have been so much better to give the survivors \$100,000 along with the individual agency to relocate to where they could build a long-term life; but that’s not the way the government works.” The pastor went on to note that the former neighborhood residents lacked voice, influence and vote in the decisions made about their neighborhood.

We also worked with staff to name the challenges to engaging in racially equitable/just ways. For a long time, Week of Compassion has engaged in long-term recovery projects in ways that prioritize economic need. This practice means that the work of community-rebuild happens primarily in rural areas or in urban centers where economic impoverishment is high. While the largest percentage of Week of Compassion investment in long-term recovery projects is in communities of color, white leaders administer the agencies engaged in partner efforts, whether religious or community agencies. Marginalized communities being served rarely have agency or leadership roles. Where financial lenders are involved, these organizations often operate out of white normative underwriting policies. When both predominantly white leaders and leaders of color are at the table, decisions tend to be made with a heavy-handed imbalance of bias for the protection of white interests or control.

One white community partner explicitly named her own interest in this protection and control as she cautioned against prioritizing race equity:

*We work with everyone; we’re not racist, but here’s something to consider in racial equity work. Despite our good intentions, a focus on racial equity could have a reverse effect if people feel pressure to exclude people if they are not a person of color. When you are in disaster recovery, constantly hearing people’s stories and seeing their homes and lives destroyed causes a great deal of mental, emotional fatigue and anguish. The vast majority of disaster recovery (DR) persons are white volunteers and there is always a shortage of enough volunteers and new blood in DR organizations. If they feel the extra pressure of not being able to assist someone due to equity numbers or because they are not a minority,*

*it could add to the fatigue and anguish and create loss of commitment. This could end up reducing positive outcomes for everyone and have a reverse effect.*

While the challenges to racially equitable and just long-term disaster recovery are many, the findings in this report support staff insight. Engaging in long-term recovery as a primary focus has the potential to be much more beneficial for communities of color than either the current immediate relief grants or a more racially equitable distribution of those grants (currently recipients of these grants are majority white). Immediate relief grants will never address the long-term racial inequalities inherent in US society. Long-term recovery projects that invest in communities in an economically generative way do have the possibility of righting societal injustice that perpetuates racial disparities in human thriving.

This investment is especially necessary when people have been displaced for periods of time and seek to recover their communities. In order to engage in more racially/economically equitable and just long-term recovery, Week of Compassion will need to develop a vision centered around *transformed communities*. That vision will need to begin with the question of strategic direction:

- Are we in this recovery process to return a community to its former state; to replace rental housing with rental housing; to recreate neighborhoods with little access to transportation, business opportunities, job access?
- Or do we want to rebuild in ways that provide infrastructure that improves local access to necessities in these communities?
- Do we want to invest in generating cumulative wealth through building the assets of a community, which can then be reinvested in that same community?

Week of Compassion currently engages in a multi-partnered long-term disaster recovery project in Dayton that has already provided many clues for what a generative and sustainable community investment response might look like.

- This project begins with the vision of replacing what was rental property with affordable property ownership for first time home-buyers; creating access to low-cost mortgages for those home-owners; and providing home-buyers with financial services to get them mortgage ready.
- The project relies on a local Community Development Financial Institution (funded through government tax credits and grants) to develop residential affordable homes with affordable mortgage payments, volunteer labor for much of the home build from multiple denominations, and a good deal of support from local authorities.
- It also includes people from the affected community in the planning and implementation of the project, though staff believes there could be much more accountability to this community's African American leaders. As well, purchase of materials from Black-owned businesses would also increase the intentional community investment process.

Staff reports that this project came together through a number of collaborations with people committed to doing disaster response in ways that increased the wealth in the community (home ownership). The project is built on the premise that assets will remain in the community

because these homeowners are invested in building business and services that serve the needs of the residents. We advise thorough evaluation of this project to build on community transformation strategies for replication in other disaster zones. Implementation of the recommendations below would provide a foundation to engage these kinds of communal transformation projects: capital investment in community well-being for long-term community sustainability that creates shared control of resources and decision-making for the community with the residents who live there.

**Recommendation 1:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion build on recent practice and learning through recent projects, intentionally shift Week of Compassion's domestic response primarily towards long-term disaster recovery and resettlement; operationalize that shift in budget allocations, standardized policies of engagement, and partner relationships; and communicate that shift publicly.* Shift staff time allocations in ways that prioritize promoting congregational investment in funding regenerative community rebuilds, providing volunteer labor, and sponsoring refugee and internal human displacement resettlement. This allows for Week of Compassion's limited funds to be used primarily to support communities of color and rural white communities (as well as persons who are in need of relocation), where Disciples have presence locally. This shift prioritizes Week of Compassion's true investment to build sustainable communities for residents harmed. Status quo repair is not the goal, but rather heightening residential access to resources and control over accumulated assets.

**Recommendation 2:** This second recommendation follows the first. *We recommend that Week of Compassion say yes to community partnership projects that advance access to sustainable resources and regenerative growth and intentionally decline (with transparent communication about racially inequitable perceived practices) those that don't involve economic relocation of capital in the hands of the communities. Support economic and racial equity in these projects, accounting for generational lack of access to resources and the impacts of this long-term deficit investment.*

This strategy must also be explained and used to attract congregational support in long-term recovery. As one pastor suggested, "If we are going to move from being a congregation that gives generously through charitable offerings to a congregation that is more invested in changing the root causes of social inequity, then we have to be supported to be a congregation that is building a culture of mission 'with' not 'to' other communities. We have to be equipped with the kinds of tools it takes to empower people for racially and economically just mission."

**Recommendation 3:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion engage in long-term response projects where there is Disciples presence in the geographic area, where Week of Compassion can have a significant voice in the planning and implementation strategy. This presence also includes partnerships with those who share Week of Compassion's antiracist commitment for accountability to leadership from the communities served, prioritizing the presence of leaders of color and grassroots organizations of color from the earliest stages.* We recognize that this is increasingly the practice of staff. We recommend that this practice be formalized as part of the

standard process or guiding principles in determining how to prioritize long-term response projects as well as limited funds.

**Recommendation 4:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion provide education, training, and collaboration with congregations of Color and with White congregations to build an antiracist model of engagement with hands-on mission for long-term recovery projects and resettlement of those who are displaced by disasters (along with current plans for refugee resettlement).*

Several local pastors of color interviewed for this project who had worked with Week of Compassion on education or strategic planning expressed a desire for more collaboration. Other pastors of color who were not familiar with Week of Compassion expressed surprise that denominational resources and opportunity for collaboration were even available. That said, pastors of color who were not familiar with Week of Compassion made it clear they were seeking collaboration that honored their gifts and capacities, expressing hesitance about investing in a relationship with a partner determined to educate, fix or treat them as needy. This concern, it may go without saying, comes from lived experience with other predominantly white institutions that treated them in exactly this fashion, which is part of the landscape Week of Compassion will need to address as it seeks to build out deeper relationships in congregations of color.

Among suggestions from some clergy about deepening relationships with communities of color were listening circles with clergy from the three racial ethnic ministries as a means of establishing independent relationships, beginning to build trust, and better understanding the needs, gifts and entry points for those communities in the long-term recovery efforts.

**Recommendation 5:** *We recommend, where grants to partners are the only means of support for a long-term project, that Week of Compassion has clear guidelines for saying no to the request or use these grants to leverage a larger voice at the table.*

Some reasons to deny a request:

- inconsistent with Week of Compassion's values
- inconsistent with Week of Compassion's desired project outcome
- administered by majority white-led organization with little understanding of racial equity or little demonstrated understanding of the root causes of systemic racism

## ANTIRACIST COMMUNITY RECOVERY PROJECTS (sometimes known as Volunteering)

*There's got to be acknowledgment that if we're going to achieve systemic change, we've got to reshuffle the power dynamics. We've got to be organizers in our sector and think like organizers.*

– Kevin Ryan, Ford Foundation

Volunteer mission projects to aid community recovery following climate/natural disasters are fraught with potential, multi-dimensional misuses of power. When we ask the questions of who is benefitting and who is being harmed in most service-learning experiences, the list of misuses of power is quite long. We recall from this interrogative power analysis, that when evaluating these experiences the misuse of power does not require malice to cause harm. Theologically, God's power—a creative force born of love, imbued with care, connection, and compassion—is misused by faith communities all the time; not the least of this misuse being volunteer mission experiences.

Disciples “volunteers” (almost always white and middle class) bear no ill-intent. Yet, while they may be conscious of their privileged position as they enter a disaster-ridden zone, they often lack consciousness of explicit power differentials inherent in models of “charitable giving”—the Us/Them, I-have/You-receive dynamics. Though some volunteers carry race- and class-based implicit bias and make racist/classist statements in ear-shot of local residents, the misuses of power often don't carry overt racism, even though most of the communities served are communities of color. Disaster response projects, like nearly all volunteer mission projects in the US, rely on covert, well-intended, and unconscious strategies that result in impacts of harm, exclusion, and diminishment for communities of color and other marginalized areas (e.g. rural, white Appalachia). The power arrangement, inherent to most volunteer work projects, minoritizes communities of color by casting people of color as “the needy” and those from the outside as “heroic helpers and fixers.” In addition, this strategy promotes continuing power differentials between those who control resources (and the uses of those resources) and those who lack both access to and control over necessary community resources.

Volunteerism in long-term community recovery often reinforces the ideology of white superiority—white donors calling the shots because it is white money/white time offered, along with behaviors that manifest from assumptions that wealth, formal education, and traditional leadership experience will offer the “best” solutions. These dynamics form a relational hierarchy with little long-term connectional relationship resulting in symptomatic repair without community, system-wide change. Thus, various forms of harm are inflicted:

- “Our” understanding of community well-being is the “best” measure and standard for community investment resulting in an imposition of status quo values/norms that do not lead to long-term community transformation

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**Volunteerism in long-term community recovery often reinforces the ideology of white superiority.**

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- Repair to status quo without systemic dismantling of inequitable access to resources resulting in band-aid receipt of resources rather than a shift to more equitable access to and control over resource structures by local communities of color
- Construction of new projects without the input, advice, skill, and wisdom of people in the community resulting in a mismatch of resources to communal need and “ineffective/inefficient charity”
- Deficit thinking about what people lack rather than assets-based thinking about people’s lived experience/wisdom; this deficit thinking often leads to stereotypically biased and/or xenophobic labeling or behaviors which harm People of Color, personally and collectively

**Recommendation #1:** We recommend that Week of Compassion ensures that anti-bias/antiracism training is a part of the preparation for all outside groups who mobilize to engage in long-term recovery. Personal awareness of implicit bias against “others” must be a part of the outcomes of this work. Along with this personal awareness, is education about the power dynamics inherent to the model of well-intended church folk dropping into communities for a time and then retreating to their own “safer” environments.

Further: recast the vision for outcomes in these projects by prioritizing accountability to leaders of color in the community in hands-on mission. This means having leadership from the community at the helm of decision-making at every stage in the planning, preparation, and implementation of long-term projects utilizing labor from outside the communities. “Volunteer experiences” should be constructed to prioritize the long-term needs of the community, not the needs of the volunteers (though both sets of needs can be served).

We also recommend shifting the language away from “Volunteering” or “Volunteer Mission Projects.” We suggest that these projects be named with a lens that focuses on the community interest being served through a partnership instead of a focus on who’s “sacrificing hours” to help and fix someone else’s community. Language matters. Language like “community reparation partners” is rooted in a worldview that relies on disciples of Jesus to upend the power dynamics of oppressive models of relating.

Finally, we recommend designing these projects through the recruitment of congregational participants in a way that helps volunteers better understand themselves as partners in ministry with communities served. This cultivation of mission-partners is an on-going process perhaps best built within congregations that engage this work yearly. his engagement should build the skills of leaders to imagine and influence a Culture of Mission in their congregations; enhancing congregational capacity for on-going disaster response ministry.

Beyond the predominant power inequity grounded in outside groups coming into “fix” broken communities, disaster recovery projects sit in the midst of the communal harm caused by long-term societal inequities. The disproportional destruction suffered in communities of color (and poor white communities) is tied to an economic system, a housing system, a transportation system, a food distribution system, an education system and a religious system that provides

access and control of resources in disproportional advantage to society's white residents and disproportionate harm to residents of color.

Generational accumulated wealth is much higher for white people; household income levels are higher, on average, for white households than any other groups except for a few Asian groups of Americans, which are often comprised of multigenerational working families. Further, natural disasters have proportionally greater impact on low-wealth areas and communities of color (often already affected by environmentally racist impacts) that have had disproportional access to infrastructure preparedness (e.g. levees, clean pipes, tornado/hurricane resistant housing).

Because the distribution of capital and other resources in the US continues to favor investment in predominantly white areas, volunteer service-learning projects are not normally arranged to mitigate this inequity, but to address the symptomatic impact of societal harm to communities of color and other oppressed communities. Thus, they often result in strategies of repair that leave communities with continued lack of access to the resources necessary for life. This strategy of long-term recovery does not provide the necessary redistribution of capital investment in communities that could result in long-term transformation.

**Recommendation 2:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion educate and equip community partners through exposure to projects that invest in sustainable, regenerative economic growth.* This education of outside partners about the context and history of community systemic harm prior to the disaster and the intent to promote long-term community health through building the assets controlled by the community is imperative.

*We recommend that community laborers and leaders be compensated for their time and skills alongside the use of "volunteer" laborers who are building their skills.* Use community owned businesses to source projects where possible. Challenge value assumptions normalized by white dominant society by promoting:

- Processes that question monolithic thinking that reinforces white dominant norms as "the better" or "the only" ways community life should be organized
- Training for outside partners that delegitimizes notions of meritocracy and entitlement for white people as the hardest working or most deserving. As well, training that upends the ideology that People of Color lack access to resources because of their choices and abilities rather than systemic exclusion from access and control of resources
- Partner experiences that question tendencies of white self-affirmation as "doing good," or that benefit workers through the use of experiences for resumes/etc or the use of experiences as tactics of preservation of white innocence.
- Alternative visions to US philanthropic ideas that "generosity/charity" is what "good Christians" do; exposure to lived experience of generosity enhanced by systemic equity in the distribution of resources.

Also important to the discussion of the problematic nature of volunteerism is a review of the grounding values out of which nonprofit mission projects are crafted. Often decisions are made according to white institutional values:

**Recommendation #3:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion challenge White Institutional Values that root a worldview of “volunteerism” in all aspects of the work.*

Examples of these values:

*Either/Or Thinking* – This value shows up in decision-making conversations about recovery projects in a number of ways: “We can fund either this or that but not both.” “Your way is not the best, therefore we are not compromising on my idea or searching for a third alternative.” “We are in charge of this project and we believe we know more and don’t need ‘their’ input.”

*Scarcity Worldview* – In volunteerism projects, this way of grounding decision-making begins with the assumption that there is a lack of resources (time, money, human-assets). Because of a shortage, resources must be distributed with heavy control that secures their use according to the norms and values of the distributors. This scarcity mind-set ensures replication of status quo problem-solving and limits imagination for creative discovery for new approaches. It also suggests that there is not enough to go around. Decisions get made in ways that protect the wealth of some at the expense of the needs of many. Scarcity assumptions perpetuate the notions that we have resource inadequacies rather than systemic resource distribution. A scarcity worldview also results in statements like, “I don’t have any power to change the way things are” and “Because we are so small, we don’t have much influence.”

*Secrecy* – More than just the tendency to make top-down decisions in behind-closed-door settings, secrecy includes any means that limits transparent conversation between the leadership of a recovering community and those coming to volunteer. Secrecy is the practice of withholding information; but it is also about not soliciting information, not including community leadership in the education of outside volunteers, and not building relational connection.

*Competitive Individualism* – US culture is embedded with an ethos of hyper-individualism that issues forth in notions of meritocracy, elitism, and protection of “me and mine.” Ours is a culture of drive toward accumulation, advantage, achievement, and winning. This drive minimizes collaborative efforts and keeps us from recognizing not only the assets of others, but the possibilities of mutual relational benefits. It also keeps us from the affirmation of what partner organizations do better than we do.

Robette Dias, the Executive Director of Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training, suggests that the rootedness of these “white institutional values” in our work leads to a consolidation of power (in distribution and control of resources) and hierarchical ways of being. She also notes that the rootedness leads to really efficient ways of being that maintain patterns of racist inauthenticity and impact, rather than provoking antiracist change. *Thus, every project must lean into practices rooted in anti-oppression transforming values of Both/And Thinking, A*

*Worldview of Abundance, Transparency in Communication and Decision-Making, and Collaborative/Cooperative ways of sharing power. Additionally, local partners must be exposed to Disciples commitments to upholding these values.*

**Recommendation 4:** *We recommend that Week of Compassion vet partner organizations engaging in the long-term recovery projects (including the hosting of volunteers) to ensure local leaders/organizations are involved in the leadership of projects.* Of the input from staff, this point rose to the precipice of importance. Staff spoke of the challenges of getting representatives of color from communities affected by disasters to the tables of decision making. This dynamic must be addressed so that

- Leadership in decision-making always includes residents from the recovering community to enhance accountability to community norms and lifeways
- Vendors and suppliers of color, especially local business owners, should be used whenever possible
- Partners should include leadership committed to infrastructure improvement for long-term community development
- Partners should be thoroughly committed to building affordable housing and the economic development of communities
- Recovery projects should include community religious leaders of color who can offer ethical guidance and moral leadership for project implementation

## **Fundraising Strategies**

*Philanthropy is not synonymous with social justice, social change, or even charity. In fact, philanthropy, like extreme poverty, is simply a byproduct of social, gender, racial, and economic injustice.*

*– Rodney Foxworth, Philanthropy Will Not Save Us*

For every charitable entity seeking to engage in racial equity, there is a palpable tension between the work and raising funds for the work. This tension arises from the fact that wealth disparities create the disparate impact of disasters on people of color, while fundraising best practices encourage charitable organizations to glorify donors and otherize recipients in order to get the highest returns.

Within the field of development (fundraising), fundraising professionals have been working harder and more intentionally in recent years to avoid a few of the following tropes that yield a lot of money but at a cost to organizational integrity:

- “White saviorism:” creating a narrative of white people rescuing people of color.
- “Poverty tourism:” people of means visiting the community an organization serves, more as a roadside attraction than as a means to deepen relationship.
- “Diva Donors:” catering to the comfort of donors sometimes at the expense of mission or at the very least in ways that misuse staff time.

While the awareness of these negative practices within donor cultivation has grown (and Week of Compassion does a great deal of donor cultivation, as does any nonprofit seeking to fund worthy work), there is a growing commitment among racial equity-oriented nonprofit organizations to build healthier constructs for donor relations.

The network known as Community-Centric Fundraising proposes these principles as the means of shifting fundraising culture from one that avoids talking about root causes of inequity and begins to build out a culture that engages donors as partners in the work of racial equity:<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <https://communitycentricfundraising.org/resources/>

1. Fundraising must be grounded in race, equity, and social justice.	6. We treat donors as partners, and this means that we are transparent, and occasionally have difficult conversations.
2. Individual organizational missions are not as important as the collective community.	7. We foster a sense of belonging, not othering.
3. Nonprofits are generous with and mutually supportive of one another.	8. We promote the understanding that everyone (donors, staff, funders, board members, volunteers) personally benefits from engaging in the work of social justice – it's not just charity and compassion.
4. All who engage in strengthening the community are equally valued, whether volunteer, staff, donor, or board member.	9. We see the work of social justice as holistic and transformative, not transactional.
5. Time is valued equally as money.	10. We recognize that healing and liberation requires a commitment to economic justice.

In a post from the renowned blog “Nonprofit AF” on this subject, Vu Le shared some concrete anti-racist donor engagement practices:<sup>16</sup>

- Board, staff and donors from a nonprofit went through a workshop engaging them around their family’s history of wealth accumulation. One donor realized her family had profited off of the theft of Indigenous land and realized she needs to invest more deeply in Indigenous land rights work.
- One nonprofit sent all of their major donors copies of Ijeomo Oluo’s book *So You Want to Talk About Race* and hosted a book group to deepen staff and donors’ collective understanding of an issue their organization needed to address.
- A fundraiser encountered someone whose generational wealth came from chemical weapons and is exploring how to have a conversation with the donor about financial giving as a means of atonement.

While donors are in different stages of awareness about racial equity as a part of Week of Compassion’s work, and while the annual appeal letter to the whole church is not necessarily the place to educate people about how dominant culture values misshape the entire charitable sector, *the good news is that the annual appeal letter is not the only place Week of Compassion can journey with donors on the themes of racial equity and racial justice in domestic disaster relief and recovery.* A few recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** There is a fairly consistent narrative that Week of Compassion only fundraises once a year. However, Week of Compassion’s presence at regional and general assemblies, opportunities for church leaders to travel on delegations, and much of the communication that comes out of Week of Compassion all serve as additional touch points with

<sup>16</sup>

<https://nonprofitaf.com/2020/06/its-time-we-fundraise-in-a-way-that-doesnt-uphold-white-moderation-and-white-supremacy/>

donors and potential donors. *We recommend that a joint fundraising and communication strategy engage the Community Centric Fundraising principles and determine where those principles might be incorporated into Week of Compassion’s engagement with potential donors, volunteers and other supporters.* A great starting place for this strategy is the CCF checklist: [https://communitycentricfundraising.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CCF\\_Aligned\\_Actions\\_List.pdf](https://communitycentricfundraising.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CCF_Aligned_Actions_List.pdf)

**Recommendation 2:** The pressure of incorporating an anti-oppression or racial equity baseline into fundraising is generally too great a risk for staff to take on without explicit support and collaboration from the board. Sandhya has a secular nonprofit client. During a meeting with the nonprofit’s executive director and her development consultant, Sandhya heard the ED say to the development consultant, “when you do your training with the board, please know that at least two board members have already asked me to confirm that our new fundraising strategy will be grounded in Diversity/Equity/Inclusion principles.” In fact, it was the ED’s idea for the fundraising consultant to meet with Sandhya before that training, but knowing the consultant would want to take the safe approach to fundraising, it was a huge gift to say “Hey, my board needs you to do it this other way.” Especially in an organization led by a person of color who is expected to perform at a higher level in order to be accepted as an adequate leader, board support of equity-based fundraising is essential to its success. *We recommend the board and staff engage in a planning process around its fundraising strategy, with an eye to engaging donors as partners who can be trusted to engage in intentional conversations about racial equity. We further recommend that the role of the board in supporting fundraising be made explicit, even if it is primarily in permission giving more than in collaborating on the raising of funds.*<sup>17</sup>

**Recommendation 3:** To reiterate, for Week of Compassion (as is the case for most charitable organizations), communications and fundraising are virtually inseparable. *We recommend that Week of Compassion’s communications staff and all staff involved in fundraising work together on a collaborative strategy to introduce a framework of racial equity and racial justice into broader communications.* This will be discussed further in the next section.

**Recommendation 4:** More of an imperative that underlies this section rather than its own recommendation, *we cannot state strongly enough that at every point in the fundraising process, both board and staff ask the question “How is our messaging exhibiting active accountability to people of color, whether donors, recipients, or partners in some other*

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<sup>17</sup> A potential starting place is to watch and discuss this video in conversation with the CCF principles: <https://bloomerang.co/blog/video-its-not-either-or-raising-money-with-an-anti-racist-approach/>

*fashion?”* We further recommend that as Week of Compassion builds its muscle around this practice, that it commits to bringing these practices to their partners both within and beyond Disciples Center.

## **Communications Strategies**

*As communicators, our power lies in storytelling. We choose the narratives, messengers, words, and images that persuade people to change their minds or take action. With that power comes a responsibility to resist perpetuating racist systems and do better.*

*– Farra Trompeter, Big Duck Communications*

One of the anti-oppression Transforming Values the staff have worked with over the last nine months with Lori and Sandhya has been “Transparent Communication that guards personal integrity.” While that value generally means engaging conflict directly and having honest conversations (to avoid passive aggressive forms of communication that concentrate power with white people), it is also germane to building out an anti-oppressive communications strategy.

*A brief acknowledgement: While a communications strategy for Week of Compassion would, by necessity, incorporate global as well as domestic work, we believe that in many ways, this would provide constructive alignment, given that some of Week of Compassion’s most visionary work happens among its global partners.*

Week of Compassion is not alone in feeling a tension between the ministry they are called to do and what they believe their donors, volunteers and supporters are capable of hearing. However, extensive research has shown that well-crafted communications about racial equity principles do two things: (1) deepen relationships with people of color, and (2) deepen understanding among many white people about why cross-racial solidarity and explicit race equity commitments actually benefit everyone.

The good news is that there are many excellent resources on how to intentionally incorporate race equity and racial justice into nonprofit communications which, in connection with theological and denominational messaging practices already in place, will help Week of Compassion strengthen its community members around their own commitment to anti-racism and race equity.

**Recommendation 1:** Communicate this racial equity review process. Share who made it possible (Oreon E Scott, staff, board, Reconciliation, key leaders from across the life of the church) and why it’s an act of ministry, and what it might yield for this beloved mission of the church. Share what might be different and better as a result. Share how you’re seeing the work differently. Anti-racism work that’s done in secret unintentionally plays into the false narrative that this work needs to be hidden from people too fragile to handle it.

**Recommendation 2:** Engage in honest discussion as a full staff around when, whether and how to communicate the work with a race equity lens on a regular basis. Discuss where the

hesitations lie and what the costs and potential benefits are. Talk through which specific programs are worth the risk and which aren't. Name whether there are ways to mitigate those costs for the sake of building up the community's ability to show up for racial justice.

**Recommendation 3:** *Compare the current style guide to "The Progressive Style Guide;"* explore whether there are any tools in it that might be helpful to add to Week of Compassion's current style guide.

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS\\_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf)

**Recommendation 4:** The lack of a communications strategy at Week of Compassion makes it difficult to communicate about the racial equity work in an intentional and strategic way over time. *Consider the VPSA structure for periodic messaging around programs with a race equity component. It is proven to be effective in bringing on a diverse cross-section of the community around multiple justice issues. Incorporate it into a race equity-grounded communications strategy.* Further, pay attention to how Week of Compassion's deepening commitment to the climate crisis and its work around race equity intersect in ways the church needs to know about so that it has increasing opportunities to engage constructively in solutions.

<https://www.opportunityagenda.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/2017.02.04%20-%20%20Ten%20Lessons%20for%20Talking%20About%20Race%20-%20FINAL-1.pdf>

In addition, as with the previous section on fundraising, *we recommend strongly that all communications ask "how is this messaging accountable to and supportive of people of color?"*

The nonprofit communications firm Big Duck has an excellent list of ten questions that can contribute to honing in more specifically around this question and building an anti-racist communications strategy:

<https://bigduck.com/insights/integrate-racial-equity-practices-into-your-brand-and-communications/>

You may also find the following tools helpful in building out your racial justice communications strategy:

- <https://prosper-strategies.com/equity-resources/>
- <https://generocity.org/philly/2019/08/19/creating-content-heres-an-equity-screen-to-use-from-nonprofit-af/>
- <https://www.opportunityagenda.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/2019.05.06%20Toolkit%20Without%20Comic%20Book.pdf>

## Honesty about what the work will really take

*Act now, because people are dying now in this unjust system. How many lives have been ground up by racial prejudice and hate? How many opportunities have we already lost? Act and talk and learn and [mess] up and learn some more and act again and do better. We have to do this all at once. We have to learn and fight at the same time. Because people have been waiting far too long for their chance to live as equals in this society.*

*– Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race*

The purpose of this report was two-fold for us as consultants: 1) Believing that racial equity and justice can only be achieved through missional intention, we offered four significant shifts to focus Week of Compassion in its Antiracist organizational identity. 2) Shifts in mission also require shifts in programmatic emphasis, communication, and fundraising to support those shifts. Thus, we evaluated and recommended changes to incorporated Antiracist praxis and ways of being into the areas reviewed. These recommendations are not strategies to implement, yet they point to those strategies.

Appendix A: The tools for Racial Equity Impact Assessment is our final deliverable in this report. This REIA will filter the strategies, protocols, policies Week of Compassion Board and Staff utilize to operationalize the recommendations, if accepted. Strategic implementation for programmatic racial equity/justice will be closer to the mark when this evaluative impact assessment is utilized. We spent a good bit of time teaching staff to use these tools and have used them in this report. Moving forward the use of these tools will take great diligence; but the outcome is to have a racial equity/justice lens on all protocols, policies, and decisions made. For this reason, we suggest that all board members and staff familiarize themselves with this report and the REIA.

In order to better understand Antiracist organizational development we also recommend the following video: Beyond Diversity: How To Build A Truly Anti-Racist Organization: <https://everydayfeminism.com/build-anti-racist-organization/> for board members and new staff. It is an overview of the analysis of power that upholds white dominance in institutions that Vy and Caroline were introduced to in August, 2021. (Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training, produced by Everyday Feminism)

As the last nine months of work between the consultants and staff illustrated, two things remain true:

- Week of Compassion board and staff exhibit a deep commitment to racial equity in their day-to-day practices.
- Because that commitment lives in the day-to-day decisions of staff and hasn't been operationalized, said commitments will likely roll back when and if a few key staff and board members change.

Part of the reason so few ministries in the Christian Church succeed in integrating antiracism values into the actual governance, mission and policies of the ministries is because of the threat to white supremacy culture that such values pose. One general ministry leader shared the following description of the task: “It is a process of conflict resolution that involves unfettering the embeddedness of white dominance in all of our life.” That is no small feat, and it is also the only way to genuinely establish the culture Week of Compassion seeks to create in this era.

Implementing, operationalizing, and practicing with consistency the Anti-oppression Transforming Values can serve as a simple starting point for engaging board and staff in building the muscles necessary to do the work proposed in this report. And that’s the key: engaging the content with regularity and discipline. For some organizations, this means that during each staff meeting, they take 15 minutes to talk about how they can each practice one of the values that week:

- Both-and Thinking with a bias towards action (where are you encountering resistance to your work because of an either-or framework? where are people so caught up in all of the complexities of an issue that it gets in the way of trying something and then evaluating it rather than doing nothing?)
- Collaboration that guards personal integrity (What is a project where you could engage a thought partner who functions out of an explicit anti-oppression lens? Where could you be bringing an anti-oppression partner into a project you’re working on?)
- Abundant Worldview that uses resources responsibly (where is scarcity thinking showing up in a group decision making process, and how could you think differently about resources in ways that shift that process or project, particularly by considering non-financial resources that are available?)
- Transparent Communication that honors confidentiality (where am i making decisions on my own that could involve others? where is there an opportunity to communicate my work to people who might grow or benefit from learning about it?)

However these values get practiced, the importance is to practice them with regularity, to internalize them, and to embed them in how decisions are made, how communication occurs, how community is built and how work is prioritized and implemented.

Another practice that showed up throughout the report is around **accountability to communities of color**. Often this practice gets ignored in the church because of the amount of time that goes into creating relationships, working around existing systems in order to create those systems, and so on.

Organizer and author Adrienne Maree Brown speaks regularly on the need to “organize at the speed of trust.” White supremacy culture rewards speed and efficiency and often criticizes work that goes at a pace slow enough to build bridges with marginalized groups. For Week of Compassion to build deeper relationships with and accountability to communities of color will require intention and time. It will require listening and journeying. It is a very different model than how Week of Compassion has historically done its work, since it is not responsive but proactive and not event-driven but driven by relationship. That said, it requires the deep listening that Week of Compassion has exhibited so well.

Another challenge we recognize in this work is the reality that Week of Compassion functions within a larger church committed to white supremacy culture in a philanthropic industry committed to white supremacy culture in a nation committed to white supremacy culture. Repeatedly staff have named **how hard it is to effect culture shift within those larger systems and structures of white supremacy culture.**

We want to name that ultimately, this work will require inviting those larger institutions and systems to head in the same direction with you, rather than to just do the work knowing that it will get lost in the larger ethos that surrounds you. Ask open ended questions about how your partners are being accountable to communities of color in their planning processes. Share what you're doing and learning to dismantle systemic racism and ask what they're doing. Part of the work is actually to both humbly and boldly invite others on the journey with you. Over time, you will see a shift as a result.

Absolutely the most terrifying part of fully taking on the work of racial equity and racial justice as a philanthropic organization is the ever present fear that this will alienate donors. That is why there are both fundraising and communications recommendations. However, this is also why the work of racial equity and justice needs to be discussed deeply by the board so the board can decide the extent to which they want to embrace said strategy, their level of commitment to help communicate the shift in positive ways, and how much of a risk they're willing to take in terms of giving. While the reality is that organizations that make this shift tend to see an overall consistency or even uptick in giving, that shift involves communicating in ways that encourage additional giving from like-minded donors and inspiring new donors, in case previous donors are deeply resistant to racial justice. This needs to be a decision *and a strategy* shared by board and staff alike, with eyes open. As one (incredibly supportive) interviewee joked they had said to Vy about the much needed work of racial equity at Week of Compassion, "you think they hate you now? Just wait!"

This journey will be hard. One interviewee quoted famous spiritual psychologist Edwin Friedman who said, "unmotivated people are invulnerable to change." However, another interviewee noted that Week of Compassion does not need to, nor morally should it, be driven by the desires of people in the church who are unmotivated by systemic racism. This interviewee also shared that the church's consistent work in this field had helped them shift from resistor to advocate:

*Twenty-plus years ago when we first started talking about this, I thought "I'm not a racist." That was where I started, and over time, colleagues and friends pushed me to grow. We've grown but we're not there yet. We're never going to be there because this is a journey. So i think when it comes to Week of Compassion, having that lens of an anti-racist, pro-reconciling...these are issues that will take more than just a grant to fix. It's going to be messy. You're going to get criticized. And I think of Jesus who had a very conflicted ministry, but he started most of the conflict. So if the goal is just to keep everybody happy, that'll never be achieved.*

*But I think this is a popular ministry doing things people can easily get behind. So we need to recognize that the ministry has an obligation to bring folks along because that's also about the mission.*

At its core, this work is foundational to the gospel. Ignoring the vision for investing in communal racial and economic justice means Week of Compassion will not be able to effectively or fully fulfill its mission. Week of Compassion, like all other church institutions, can continue to be drawn into a philanthropic culture that consolidates power and wealth for white society at the expense of communities of color. Instead, this report seeks to acknowledge the challenges inherent in counter-cultural dominance while also pointing Week of Compassion (and the larger church) toward stronger, more inspiring, and more life-giving domestic response that brings beloved community to local communities.

## **In Conclusion**

It has been a great honor to work with Vy and Caroline on this project as well as the board and the many Week of Compassion supporters who contributed wisdom to the shaping of this report.

We are excited to learn how Week of Compassion implements these changes over time as part of a broader strategic plan.

And we are grateful for your ongoing commitment to create what Dr. King referred to as Beloved Community and what we often call God's realm here on earth, as the Lord's Prayer commands of us.

With gratitude,

Sandhya Jha and Lori Adams

## Appendix A: Going Forward: Racial Equity Impact Assessment

In 2013, Race Forward introduced the idea of utilizing Racial Equity Impact Assessments for organizations seeking to operationalize Antiracist practice and decision-making.

<https://www.raceforward.org> These assessments are a collection of tools to help filter data and opinions that feed into daily and long-term, racially equitable/just strategic policy/priority shifts.

From Race Forward:

**What are Racial Equity Impact Assessments?** *A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.*

**Why are they needed?** *REIAs are used to reduce, eliminate and prevent racial discrimination and inequities. The persistence of deep racial disparities and divisions across society is evidence of institutional racism—the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes. When racial equity is not consciously addressed, racial inequality is often unconsciously replicated.*

**When should it be conducted?** *REIAs are best conducted during the decision-making process, prior to enacting new proposals. They are used to inform decisions, much like environmental impact statements, fiscal impact reports and workplace risk assessments.*

Over the course of the last nine months, Vy and Caroline have been thoroughly acquainted with tools we suggest using to implement the recommendations in this report. We suggest that the board and new staff be trained on how to use these tools prior to implementing proposed strategic change. This REIA tool kit is comprised of some tools developed and introduced to staff in its August, 2021 workshop with Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training. Others are tools developed or expanded in this review process. Utilization of these tools can be used to drive enactment of new proposals as suggested above. They can also be used to evaluate *strategic shifts in Week of Compassion culture, practice, policy, partner relationships, stakeholder education, protocols, etc. to measure whether the intended shift in outcome had the desired Antiracist impact.*

**TOOL #1: Developing an Antiracist Identity: How does the proposed strategy, process, etc. reflect the cultural intention of Week of Compassion to move into an Antiracist Identity as a Practice or a Way of Being**

Anti-oppression work is shifting the ways we “be” together not primarily shifting the ways we “do”. Moving toward racial equity and racial justice requires that we move beyond diverse multiculturalism as the goal. In practice, Anti-oppression work is not about completing checked boxes on a “to-do” list. An antiracist identity shift is:

- A true shift in the way we make meaning in the world, hold and live out of values, & understand the liberation of all creation theologically/cosmologically
- Reflected in the multiple layers of the culture (both societal and institutional). We tend to focus on shifting what we can see (like worship liturgy), rather than beginning with the root norms, standards, and values that shape the character and form of what we see
- Guided by Ways of Being as envisioned through an Antiracist lens that releases us to collective liberatory imagination sheds light on new ways of organizing communal life. This way of seeing, making meaning, and behaving is rooted in identity markers that are:
  - **RACE AWARE AND RACE CONSCIOUS**
  - Informed by a **POWER ANALYSIS** of how systemic racism impacts all people of color, as well as white people in specific ways
  - Aware of how systemic racism is **EMBEDDED** in institutional culture and practice
  - **CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS** of how racism operates in intersectional ways that exacerbate oppression, especially the relationship between racial and economic oppression
  - **GROUNDING IN ACCOUNTABILITY** to communities of color committed to dismantle the white dominant center
  - Sustained by **INTENTIONAL practices and CREATIVE collaborations** that build a critical mass of support for this work
  - **SEEKING** the **LIBERATION** of all living beings and the Earth

**TOOL #2: Shifting the Impact of Response and Recovery Protocols toward Racially Equitable/Just Outcomes Using a Power Analysis to determine: how racial inequity in the distribution of service/resources can be minimized and/or how racial equity can be maximized.**

The use of a power analysis follows the assumption that institutions in the US (including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)) are invested in preserving status quo advantage, benefit, or comfort for white society that results in consequential harm, exclusion, or disadvantage for people of color (Indigenous, Black/African American, Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Arab American). This investment in “whiteness” (white dominant norms and ways of being/thinking and the consequential harm to communities of color can be conscious or unconscious, well-intended or ill-intended, overt or covert. This investment in whiteness, in fact, most often *does not* contain malice or ill intent. The impact of harm, however, is everywhere. As one board member said, “it is a Twenty four/7, 365 days a year crisis that ensures that many people are not able to have a full life.” While there are certainly white folks who may not have

access to a “full life” in the US based on sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, etc., their oppression does not include a culturally structured bias against indigeneity, foreignness, or dark skin tone. Racism exacerbates every other oppression.

A racial power analysis, then, involves these questions to score a cost/benefit assessment.

- A) How might this project, policy or grant...
  - Uphold and legitimize white dominant societal norms, standards, and ways of being/thinking and advantage white people?
  - Diminish, harm, exploit, exclude, delegitimize people and communities of color?
  
- B) Are there changes to the proposal that could benefit marginalized communities (including poor, rural white communities) at a higher rate, minimize harm to those communities, or invest in those communities with practices that promote greater equity?
  
- C) The final question is a moral one. How will this decision or policy advance liberation for all people and the Earth?

As suggested above, normalizing the asking of these questions actually initiates and sustains an organization identity shift.

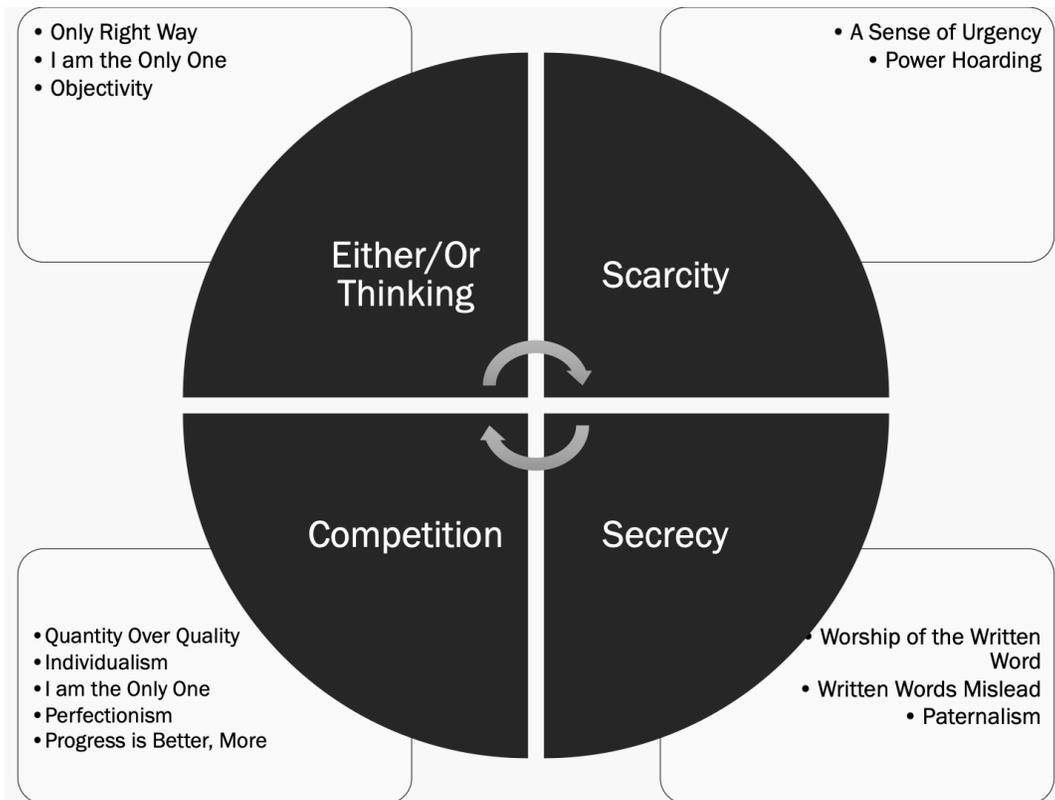
### **Tool #3 Exploring and Employing values that support collective antiracist ways of being and counter the white dominant operational status quo.**

This values tool is two-fold exploration (white institutional values/antiracist transforming values. Naming and claiming how the white institutional values are showing up help organizational awareness of the rootedness of oppressive values. Naming and claiming transforming values as the roots of an antiracist identity help shift organizational structures in moving away from hierarchical, top-down control of decision-making, use of resources etc. to imagine how Week of Compassion could operate in alternative ways.

The first step is to name that Week of Compassion is invested in upholding “white institutional” values; it is an on-going practice. The intent in utilizing this tool is to become aware of the embeddedness of a worldview locking in status quo power dynamics.

- A. How is the proposed strategy/policy/protocol and its implementation reflective of White Institutional Values? (Either/Or Thinking; Scarcity Worldview; Secrecy (Control of Information and Outcomes); Competitive Individualism

B. How is the proposed strategy and its implementation replicating status quo accountability, consolidation of top-down decision-making and status quo efficiency

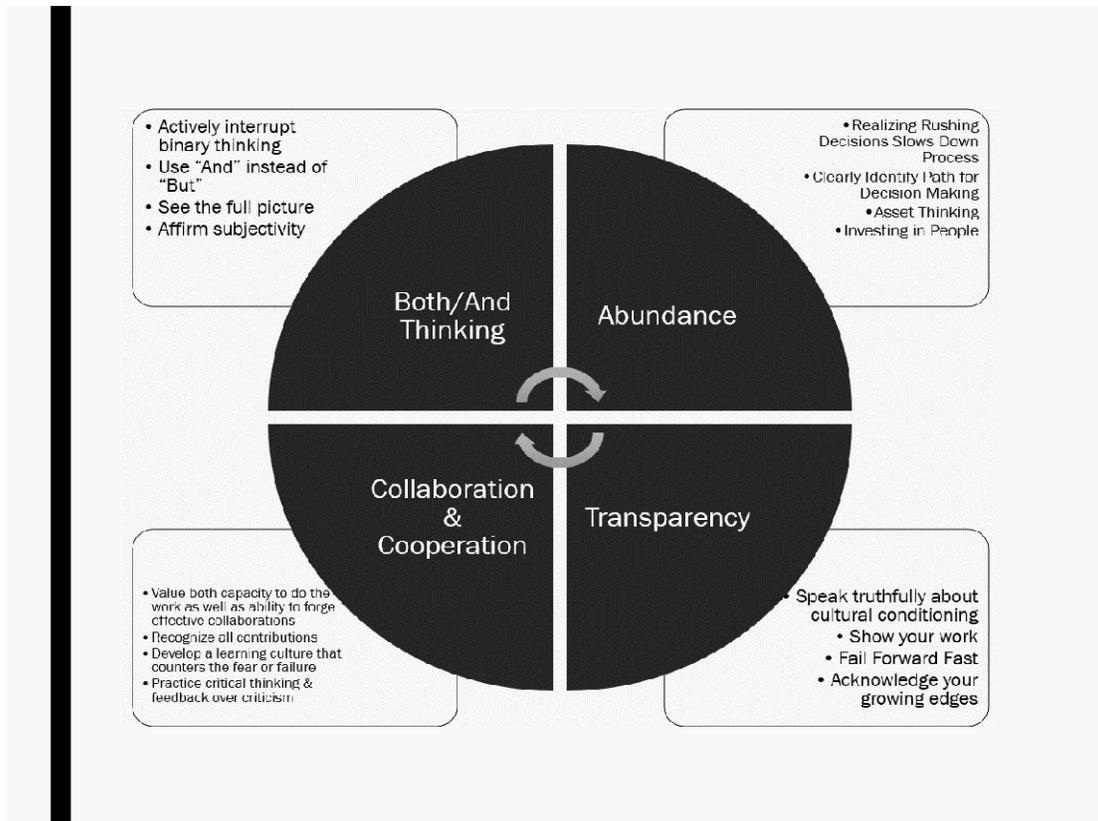


These values were developed by Robette Dias, Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training and were explored with staff during the August, 2021 workshop. [www.crossroadsantiracism.org](http://www.crossroadsantiracism.org); The behaviors that result (in the boxes) are characteristics of white supremacy culture defined by Tema Okun: <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>

A second step is to ask how the proposed strategy, process or decision could be enhanced in racially equitable ways if the decision-making processes were lodged in Antiracist Transforming Values? (Both/And Thinking; Abundant Worldview; Transparent Communication; Collaboration and Cooperation)

C. Can the harmful impacts named in the first step be mitigated by a shift in values? Where are we seeing the transforming values showing up in our decision-making processes?

D. How will the proposed strategy enhance accountability to communities of color and shared power with these communities? Can these hoped-for outcomes be maximized? How?



These values were developed by Robette Dias, Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training and were explored with staff during the August, 2021 workshop. [www.crossroadsantiracism.org](http://www.crossroadsantiracism.org); The behaviors that result (in the boxes) are alternatives to those norms and characteristics of white supremacy culture defined by Tema Okun: <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>

**Tool #4: Shifting the impact of response and recovery protocols toward building sustainable, regenerative communities of color**

This shift uses a set of lenses to filter whether the policy, protocol, or project attends to racially equitable and just outcomes.

The questions seek to move toward policies in partnership with communities that result in regenerative economic strength:

- A. Does the project, policy or grant...
  - Shift economic control to communities?
  - Democratize wealth and the workplace?
  - Advance ecological restoration?
  - Drive racial justice and social equity?

- Relocalize most production and consumption?
  - Retain and restore cultures and traditions (of communities)?
- B. According to the following graph, how are we (or our community partners and grantees, aligned with priorities that prioritize Racial Equity and Racial Justice?

Table based in part on the following content:

[https://racialequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GWARJL\\_15\\_0903.pdf](https://racialequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GWARJL_15_0903.pdf)

Racial Equality Lens	Racial Equity Lens	Racial Justice Lens
Distributes resources based on client requests	Analyzes data and information about race and ethnicity	Understands and acknowledges racial history
Prioritizes resource distribution to white base of the organization while also responding to community of color impact with proportional response	Understands disparities and the reasons they exist and acts proactively to respond to disproportionate impacts on communities of color	Creates a shared affirmative vision of a fair and inclusive society
Responds to immediate problems without addressing root causes	Looks at structural root causes of problems	Focuses explicitly on building civic, cultural, economic, and political power by those most impacted
Names race only in terms of proportional impact	Names race explicitly when talking about problems and solutions	Emphasizes transformative solutions that impact multiple systems

A racial equality lens attends to the symptoms of distress affecting all race groups and distributes resources in amounts equal to the proportion of racial populations affected. A racial equity lens separates symptoms from causes, making up for the impacts generational disadvantage experienced in a given community. A racial justice lens brings into view the need to confront how power is being used to distribute resources in ways that consistently benefit white society and harm, exclude, or disadvantage communities and people of color. Racial justice strategies call for the redistribution of resources and the systemic transformation necessary for real long-term, sustainable change.

## Appendix B: Recommended Resources

### *Resources on how white supremacy culture functions within disaster relief work:*

- NPR, “Why FEMA Aid is Unavailable To Many Who Need It The Most”  
<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/29/1004347023/why-fema-aid-is-unavailable-to-many-who-need-it-the-most>
- NPR, “As Western Wildfires Worsen, FEMA Is Denying Most People Who Ask For Help”  
<https://www.npr.org/2021/07/01/1010897265/as-western-wildfires-worsen-fema-is-denying-most-people-who-ask-for-help>
- *New York Times*, “Why Does Disaster Aid Often Favor White People?”  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/climate/FEMA-race-climate.html>
- NPR, “Natural Disasters Widen Racial Wealth Gap”  
<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2018/08/20/300913/natural-disasters-widen-racial-wealth-gap-ricc-researchers-find/>  
*Full study from Rice University referenced:*  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180820164234.htm>
- *A Social Vulnerability Index for Disaster Management*  
<https://svi.cdc.gov/A%20Social%20Vulnerability%20Index%20for%20Disaster%20Management.pdf>

This article (2011) suggests a social vulnerability risk assessment tool for indicating why risk for devastating impact is higher among communities (including poor, racialized communities of color, etc.) per population than among others. It also suggests that this assessment tool can be used in a cycle of disaster response that looks at 1) response to immediate disaster; 2) Recovery efforts and resources directed at a community, 3) Advocacy for Policy Changes and Mitigation of potential impacts of future impacts, and 4) Preparedness for potential impacts.

- National Advisory Council Report to the FEMA Administrator, November 2020  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_nac-report\\_11-2020.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nac-report_11-2020.pdf)
- *Recognizing Racism in Volunteer Engagement, MAVA*  
[https://mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=5&club\\_id=286912&item\\_id=55066](https://mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=5&club_id=286912&item_id=55066)
- NOAA, *Enhancing Engagement for Risk Communication for Underserved Communities: Research Findings and Emerging Best Practices*  
<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/underserved-communities.pdf>

### **Books/Book Chapters:**

- *The Wrong Complexion for Protection*, Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright  
<https://bookshop.org/books/the-wrong-complexion-for-protection-how-the-government-response-to-disaster-endangers-african-american-communities/9780814799932>
- *The Social Roots of Risk*, Kathleen Tierney  
<https://www.amazon.com/Social-Roots-Risk-Resilience-Reliability/dp/0804791392>
- *Hurricane Harvey's Aftermath: Place, Race, and Inequality in Disaster Recovery*, by Kevin M. Fitzpatrick, Matthew L. Spialek  
<https://academic.oup.com/sf/article-abstract/100/2/e7/6278407>
- *UN Report on Climate Change:*  
<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20604.doc.htm?msclkid=456d8747cd4b11eca685054dbc62e030>.
- *Systemic racism goes beyond police. Reform human and social services (usatoday.com):*  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/06/29/systemic-racism-goes-beyond-police-reform-human-and-social-services-column/3237645001/>

### **Resources for Understanding and Addressing the challenges of Race Inequity in Philanthropy:**

- *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*  
<https://libcom.org/files/incite-the-revolution-will-not-be-funded-beyond-the-nonprofit-industrial-complex-2.pdf>
- *Decolonizing Wealth Project:*  
<https://decolonizingwealth.com/> Resources from Edgar Villanueva
- *Mismatched: Philanthropy's Response to the Call for Racial Justice*,  
<https://racialequity.org/mismatched/>
- *DEI Strategy Strategy is Limited and Potentially Harmful: So Now What?*, by Maggie Potapchuk;  
[http://www.mpassociates.us/uploads/3/7/1/0/37103967/dei\\_strategy\\_so\\_now\\_what\\_potapchuk\\_nov4.21\\_final.pdf](http://www.mpassociates.us/uploads/3/7/1/0/37103967/dei_strategy_so_now_what_potapchuk_nov4.21_final.pdf)
- *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It)* by Robert D. Lupton <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/11869727-toxic-charity>

**Resources to help Understand and Implement the recommendations in this report:**

- Recommended for all staff, board members, new staff, and partners:  
Video: *Beyond Diversity: How To Build A Truly Anti-Racist Organization*:  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/build-anti-racist-organization/>,
- *Money as Medicine*, by Edgar Villanueva,  
[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/money\\_as\\_medicine](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/money_as_medicine)
- *Climate Justice Alliance Website*, <https://climatejusticealliance.org>, especially regenerative economics:  
<https://climatejusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Just-Transition-Framework-copy.png>
- *Race to Lead: Building Movements for Social Change*,  
<https://buildingmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Race-to-Lead-ED-CEO-Report-2.8.22.pdf>
- *Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training*: <https://crossroadsantiracism.org>;  
particularly for board, new staff, and partners:  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/build-anti-racist-organization/>
- *Tema Okun on Divorcing White Supremacy Culture*:  
<https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/>
- [How to Be Anti-Racist: A Social Worker’s Perspective | MSW@USC](#)
- *Creating a Communications Styleguide*  
[https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS\\_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.sumofus.org/images/SUMOFUS_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf)
- *Ten Lessons for Talking about Race and Racism*:  
<https://www.opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/lessons-talking-about-race-racism-and-racial-justice?msclid=2080aaafcd6e11eca8e5194273d43a5a>
- *Equity Resources for Nonprofit Communicators and Fundraisers*  
<https://prosper-strategies.com/equity-resources/>
- *Creating Content? Here’s an Equity Screen to Use from Equity AF*  
<https://generocity.org/philly/2019/08/19/creating-content-heres-an-equity-screen-to-use-from-nonprofit-af/>
- *Vision, Values and Voice*  
<https://www.opportunityagenda.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/2019.05.06%20Toolkit%20Without%20Comic%20Book.pdf>

## Appendix C: Expenditures by category of response for five years trailing

2017 STRATEGIES AND % SUPPORTING POC						
		CYCLE OF RESPONSE				Percentage of Total for Each Form of Disaster
		Immediate Relief	Recovery	Advocacy	Preparedness	
FORM OF DISASTER	Climate/Natural	Household Grants: \$305403 (14% POC)	Rebuild: \$167,608 (87% support POC*)	Puerto Rico: 10,000		\$684,743.00 = 76.9% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$86217 (83% POC)	Other Needs (e.g. livelihoods): \$22,000 (100% support POC)			
		Congregational Grants: \$48,515 (40% POC)	Volunteers: \$ 0			
		Immediate Relief (Trauma care): \$15,000 (100% multiracial)	Disciples Volunteering Funds: \$30,000			
		% of Immediate Relief = 80.7%	% of Recovery = 90.1%	% of A = 12.2%		
		% of Total Paid Out = 51.1%	% of Total Paid Out = 24.7%	% of Total Paid Out = 1.1%		
	Human-Caused	Household Grants: \$1550 (52% POC)	Flint: \$9000 (100% support POC)			\$12,100.00 = 1.4% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$800 (0% POC)				
		Congregational Grants: \$750 (100% POC)				
		% of Immediate Relief = .55%	% of Recovery = 3.7%			
	Health	% of Total Paid Out = .35%	% of Total Paid Out = 1%			\$7,250.00 = .8% of total domestic response grants
				Advocacy support: 7250		
				% of A = 8.8%		
	Human Displacement			% of Total Paid Out = .8%		\$185,750.00 = 20.9% of total domestic response grants
		direct support to congregations/Obra: \$4750	Immigration Attorney: \$15,000	RIM: 65,000		
		partner support: 101,000				
% of Immediate Relief = 18.7%		% of Recovery = 6.2%	% of Advocacy = 79%			
	% of Total Paid Out = 11.9%	% of Total Paid Out = 1.7%	% of Total = 7.3%			
		Total Immediate Relief \$563,985 (63.4%)	Total Recovery \$243,608 (27.4%)	Total Advocacy \$82,250 (9.2%)	Total Preparedness 0 (0%)	TOTAL PAID \$1,289,587

2018 STRATEGIES AND % SUPPORTING POC						
FORM OF DISASTER		CYCLE OF RESPONSE				Percentage of Total for Each Form of Disaster
		Immediate Relief	Recovery	Advocacy	Preparedness	
FORM OF DISASTER	Climate/Natural	Household Grants: \$78,670 (6% POC)	Rebuild: \$303,500 (90% support POC*)		Community Prep Training: \$5,250 (100% POC)-Puerto Rico	\$528,509.00 = 82% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$59,780 (13% POC)	Other Needs (e.g. livelihoods): \$14609.03 (100% support POC)			
		Congregational Grants: \$22,500 (44% POC)	Volunteers: \$4200 (100% support POC*)			
		Immediate Relief (Trauma care): \$15,000 (100% multiracial)	Disciples Volunteering Funds: 25,000 **			
		% of Immediate Relief = 87.4%	% of Recovery = 93.3%		% of Preparedness = 100%	
	% of Total Paid Out = 27.3%	% of Total Paid Out = 53.9%		% of Total Paid Out = .81%		
	Human-Caused	Household Grants: \$1950 (51% POC)				\$5,450.00 = ..85% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$0 (% POC)				
		Congregational Grants: \$3500 (79% POC)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 2.7%				
	Health		Advocacy: \$5000			\$5,000.00 = .78% of total domestic response grants
			% of Recovery = 1.3%			
			% of Total Paid Out = .8%			
	Human Displacement	Congregational/Local : 500 (solidarity grant)	Immigration Attorney: \$9,999	RIM: \$65,000		\$104,925.00 = 16.3% of total domestic response grants
		Partner support: \$50,534 (legal services)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 9.4%	% of Recovery = 1.5%	% of Advocacy = 100%		
% of Total Paid Out = 4%		% of Total Paid Out = .78%	% of Total Paid Out = 5%			
		<b>Total Immediate Relief \$201,325 (31.3%)</b>	<b>Total Recovery \$372,309 (57.8%)</b>	<b>Total Advocacy \$65,000 (10.1%)</b>	<b>Total Preparedness \$5,250.00 (.8%)</b>	<b>TOTAL PAID \$643,884</b>

2019 STRATEGIES AND % SUPPORTING POC						
FORM OF DISASTER		CYCLE OF RESPONSE				Percentage of Total for Each Form of Disaster
		Immediate Relief	Recovery	Advocacy	Preparedness	
FORM OF DISASTER	Climate/Natural	Household Grants: \$38,900 (22% POC)	Rebuild: \$399,695 (88% support POC)	\$15,500 (97% POC)	Preparedness Training: 280 (25% POC)	\$644,543.00 = 81.6% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$11,360 (9% POC)	Other Needs (e.g. livelihoods): \$119,021 (87% support POC)			
		Congregational Grants: \$20,800 (20% POC)	Volunteers: \$987 (0% support POC)			
		Immediate Relief (Trauma care): \$15,000 (100% multiracial)	Disciples Volunteering Funds: 23,000			
		% of Immediate Relief = 55%	% of Recovery = 98.2%	% of A = 19.3%	% of Preparedness = 100%	
	% of Total Paid Out = 10.9%	% of Total Paid Out = 68.7%	% of Total = 1.9%	% of Total Paid Out = .03%		
	Human-Caused	Household Grants: \$2850 (39% POC)				\$2,850.00 = .4% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$0 (% POC)				
		Congregational Grants: \$0 (% POC)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 1.8%				
	Health					
	Human Displacement	Congregational/Local Support: 5425	Immigration Attorney: 20,000	RIM: 65,000		\$142,500.00 = 18% of total domestic response grants
		Partner Support: 14,500				
		% of Immediate Relief = 9.9%	% of Recovery = 5.4%	% of Advocacy = 100%		
% of Total Paid Out = 3.1%		% of Total Paid Out = 3.1%	% of Total = 10.1%			
		<b>Total Immediate Relief \$156,410 (19.8%)</b>	<b>Total Recovery \$552,703 (70%)</b>	<b>Total Advocacy \$80,500 (10.2%)</b>	<b>Total Preparedness \$280</b>	<b>TOTAL PAID \$789,893</b>

2020 STRATEGIES AND % SUPPORTING POC						
		CYCLE OF RESPONSE				Percentage of Total for Each Form of Disaster
		Immediate Relief	Recovery	Advocacy	Preparedness	
FORM OF DISASTER	Climate/Natural	Household Grants: \$68,359 (29% POC)	Rebuild: \$627,945 (86% support POC)		Community Preparedness: 20,000 (100% POC)	\$782,554.00 = 60.7% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$10,300 (63% POC)	Other Needs (e.g. livelihoods): \$10,000 (65% support POC)		Green Chalice Collaboration: \$10,000	
		Congregational Grants: \$19,750 (33% POC)	Volunteers: \$600 (100% support POC)		Translation of Materials: \$600 (100% POC)	
		Immediate Relief (Trauma care): \$15,000 (100% multiracial)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 6.4%	% of Recovery = 98.5%		% of Preparedness = 100%	
	% of Total Paid Out = 2.7%	% of Total Paid Out = 49.5%		% of Total Paid Out = 2.4%		
	Human-Caused	Household Grants: \$2000 (50% POC)				\$5250.00 = .4% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: \$0 (% POC)				
		Congregational Grants: \$3250 (85% POC)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 1%				
	Health	COVID Food ministries: \$96,600 (57% POC)				\$375,950.00 = 29.1% of total domestic response grants
		COVID Household grants: \$279,350 (92% POC)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 69%				
	Human Displacement	Congregational/Local : 500 (solidarity grant)	Immigration Attorney: \$9,999	RIM: \$65,000		\$126,033.00 = 9.8% of total domestic response grants
		Partner support: \$50,534 (legal services)				
		% of Immediate Relief = 9.4%	% of Recovery = 1.5%	% of Advocacy = 100%		
% of Total Paid Out = 4%		% of Total Paid Out = .78%	% of Total Paid Out = 5%			
		<b>Total Immediate Relief \$545,443 (42.3%)</b>	<b>Total Recovery \$648,544 (50.3%)</b>	<b>Total Advocacy \$65,000 (5%)</b>	<b>Total Preparedness \$30,600.00 (2.4%)</b>	<b>TOTAL PAID \$1,289,587</b>

2021 STRATEGIES AND % SUPPORTING POC						
		CYCLE OF RESPONSE				Percentage of Total for Each Form of Disaster
		Immediate Relief	Recovery	Advocacy	Preparedness	
FORM OF DISASTER	Climate/Natural	Household Grants: 97,050 (32% POC)	Rebuild: 200,736 (79% support POC)		\$590 - translation of prep materials (100% support for POC)	\$363596.00 = 57.5% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: 25540 (37% POC)	Other Needs (e.g. livelihoods): 2000 (75% support POC)			
		Congregational Grants: 30250 (37% POC)	Volunteers: 7430 (100% support POC)			
		% of Immediate Relief = 44.1%	% of Recovery = 95.5%		% of Preparedness = 100%	
		% of Total Paid Out = 24.2%	% of Total Paid Out = 33.23%		% of Total Paid Out = .11%	
	% of Climate/Natural = 42%	% of Climate/Natural = 57.8%		% of Climate/Natural = 0.2%		
	Human-Caused	Household Grants: 3500 (43% POC)				\$8500.00 = 1.3% of total domestic response grants
		Community Grants: 2000 (100% POC)				
		Congregational Grants: 3000 (25% POC)				
	Health	COVID Food ministries: 26,600 - (60% POC)				\$26,600.00 = 4.2% of total domestic response grants
		% of Immediate Relief = 7.7%				
		% of Total Paid Out = 4.2%				
	Human Displacement	Afghans Welcome Grants: \$33,200 (all white congregations; beneficiaries POC)	Immigration Attorney: 10,000	RIM: \$65000		\$23370.00 = 37% of total domestic response grants
		Partner support: 125500				
		% of Immediate Relief = 45.8%	% of Recovery = 4.5%	% of Advocacy = 100%		
		% of Total Paid Out = 25.1%	% of Total Paid Out = 1.6%	% of Total Paid Out = 10.3%		
		<b>Total Immediate Relief \$346,640 (55%)</b>	<b>Total Recovery \$220,166 (35%)</b>	<b>Total Advocacy \$65,000 (10%)</b>	<b>Total Preparedness \$590.00 (.09%)</b>	<b>TOTAL PAID \$632,396</b>

## Appendix D: Survey data

### Week of Compassion Fall 2021 Domestic Disaster Relief and Recovery Stakeholder Survey

#### Overall survey data

During the fall of 2021, Week of Compassion engaged a segmented survey of multiple stakeholders regarding racial equity and the impact of Week of Compassion's domestic disaster relief and recovery.

The data below represent a limited subset of people, since people had to opt into the survey, reflecting potential bias among respondents both towards (in favor of) Week of Compassion's work and towards addressing racial injustice in society. The survey was emailed, with two follow-up reminders as the submission date approached.

Below is data about respondents' self-disclosed identity, relationship to Week of Compassion, sense of how Week of Compassion does and/or should prioritize its domestic disaster relief and recovery work, and respondents' sense of how to prioritize racial equity in that work.

*The survey does not reflect Week of Compassion's work but serves to help the reader understand the wider community's perceptions of that work* (and how people learn about the work of Week of Compassion).

This data can serve to help Week of Compassion staff and board understand

- how Week of Compassion is perceived,
- how a broad swathe of Week of Compassion supporters understand issues of racial justice as relates to domestic disasters,
- where education might help move supporters into alignment with the anti-oppression goals the Week of Compassion staff and board are building out and integrating into the DNA of the organization, and
- where existing support articulated in this report can be leveraged for communications strategies that help the broader Week of Compassion community know that there is widespread support for this agenda.

Largely, though, its primary purpose is to develop a sense of where various stakeholders stand and what they care about and what they have not yet begun to think about, so that both the

implementation of and communications strategy around a racial equity framework for domestic disaster response and preparedness can be done with greater intention.

One recurring theme of less importance to Week of Compassion than to the denomination's overall anti-racism work: of the people who had participated in denominational anti-racism work, the overall experience was that it had helped various denominational entities grow. That said, when frustrations were expressed, frustrations were about a focus on awareness with little continuing work on implementation. (This wasn't usually a critique of trainings so much as the lack of follow up beyond the trainings.) A lesson for Week of Compassion is that among those in the denomination who care about racial equity, there is some real longing for practical application of those values and opportunities to consciously apply anti-racism values to real life ministry.

### **ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS:**

Number of Respondents: 68 (out of 147 contacted)

Over half of respondents had a donor relationship with Week of Compassion, individually and congregationally.

About 67% identified as white/anglo/euroamerican

About 18% identified as Black/African American.

About 7% identified as Latinx.

About 4% identified as mixed race.

1.5% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander.

1.5% identified as Indigenous/Native American.

Over 60% have been in relationship with Week of Compassion over 20 years, 15% for five years or fewer, and the rest between six and 20 years.

### **UNDERSTANDING OF WEEK OF COMPASSION:**

Of respondents, 58% believe Week of Compassion is equally a fund and a program; 42% believe it is primarily a fund.

In response to the question, *What do you understand as the current purpose of Week of Compassion, specifically in regards to DOMESTIC disaster response? Please check all that apply:*

<b>58</b>	<b>85.29%</b>	Funding congregations and local agencies to respond in the immediate aftermath
<b>55</b>	<b>80.88%</b>	Providing logistical support to congregations in the immediate aftermath
<b>54</b>	<b>79.41%</b>	Funding of individual/family needs in the immediate aftermath (in the first six months)
<b>50</b>	<b>73.53%</b>	Funding congregations and local agencies to support rebuilding
<b>49</b>	<b>72.06%</b>	Facilitating volunteer opportunities for rebuilding
<b>45</b>	<b>66.18%</b>	Providing logistical support to congregations seeking to support rebuilding communities
<b>38</b>	<b>55.88%</b>	Supporting congregational preparedness: workshops, trainings, guidebook to help congregations prepare their members, buildings, and ministries for disasters to mitigate risk and develop response plans
<b>30</b>	<b>44.12%</b>	Funding of individuals to rebuild (in the several years following)
<b>27</b>	<b>39.71%</b>	Supporting congregations in long-term advocacy to reduce community/regional climate change that contributes to the increase in natural disasters
<b>26</b>	<b>38.24%</b>	Providing advocacy training and support to congregations and local agencies seeking to access government funds and other government support in rebuilding
<b>23</b>	<b>33.82%</b>	Funding congregations and local agencies to support preventative work (work that reduces the impact of future disasters in an area, such as levees in flood-prone areas)
<b>22</b>	<b>32.35%</b>	Providing advocacy training and support to congregations and local agencies seeking to access government funds and other government support in preventative work
<b>1</b>	<b>1.47%</b>	Especially the first part of the list, the latter to lesser degrees and, probably primarily through partnerships

*Who does Week of Compassion currently serve, from your perspective? (Do you have a sense that it prioritizes homeowners or tenants, for example, or congregations with long histories of denominational connections, or that it is able to reach people equally across race, class, historic relationship to denominational structures, and so forth?)*

50	73.53%	Individual congregations experiencing the effects of natural disasters
44	64.71%	Local agencies orchestrating relief and recovery efforts
41	60.29%	Primarily congregations with all levels of denominational connection who are in need
41	60.29%	Regions
38	55.88%	Ecumenical partners
38	55.88%	homeowners/tenants who are participants in Disciples congregations
7	10.29%	Primarily congregations with long histories of denominational connection
1	1.47%	NGO's in areas around the world working on community development
1	1.47%	national organizations that also work on community development.
1	1.47%	people in need around the world, but with some special attention to Disciples communities who have suffered disaster or who seek to respond to disasters, inequity, and migration
1	1.47%	In our experience Week of Compassion provided support for efforts presented by the Long Term Recovery Groups without regard to race of church affiliation
1	1.47%	Im not sure

In response to the question *Who shapes Week of Compassion's priorities, from your perspective? Choose any or all that fit:*

54	79.41%	Week of Compassion staff
52	76.47%	Week of Compassion board
36	52.94%	Disaster relief organizations with whom Week of Compassion partners (Church World Service, Volunteers of America, etc.)
22	32.35%	general ministries of the Christian Church
21	30.88%	Local organizations in communities impacted by disasters
21	30.88%	ecumenical partners
13	19.12%	Congregations who contribute financially
10	14.71%	Congregations who volunteer

9	13.24%	Major individual donors
9	13.24%	Other

Multiple communications channels reinforce Week of Compassion’s message, from special offering materials to the newsletter to informal communication such as discussion in collaborative settings:

*What experiences or communications shape your understanding of Week of Compassion and its mission? Please check all that apply:*

41	60.29%	Congregational announcements and fundraising for Week of Compassion following a disaster
39	57.35%	Congregational announcements and fundraising for Week of Compassion during the Special Offering in February of each year
33	48.53%	My organization having partnered with Week of Compassion
31	45.59%	My organization having received a Week of Compassion grant
29	42.65%	Newsletter
28	41.18%	Facebook
18	26.47%	Other
17	25.00%	Hearing about its work in board meetings or collaborative settings
16	23.53%	Having served on the board
16	23.53%	Having volunteered with Week of Compassion or Disciples Volunteering programs through Disciples Home Mission
5	7.35%	Twitter

**RESPONDENTS ON RACE:**

*Column U responses overall: What is your sense of how domestic disasters affect communities of color compared to white communities?*

61	89.71%	Communities of color experience a greater impact
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4	5.88%	All communities are affected to the same degree
1	1.47%	In our area some areas have a higher concentration of people of color who are impacted collectively. In other areas, people of all colors are impacted equally due to the inherent poverty in the region.
1	1.47%	Poor and marginalized communities

**Column W responses overall:** Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources immediately following a domestic disaster?

59	86.76%	Yes
9	13.24%	Maybe

**Column X responses overall:** Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources during the rebuilding phase after a domestic disaster?

66	97.06%	Yes
6	8.82%	Maybe

**Column Y responses overall:** Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources to promote preventative measures that reduce the severity of future domestic disasters?

59	86.76%	Yes
7	10.29%	Maybe

**Column Z responses overall:** Research indicates a connection between climate change and an increase in natural disasters. Additional research indicates that communities of color experience a more significant impact on communities of color around this increase in natural disasters. Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies to support advocacy to respond to this intersection of climate change and its disparate impact on communities of color?

52	76.47%	Yes
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10	14.71%	Maybe
6	8.82%	No

**CONCLUSION ABOUT OVERALL DATA RESULTS**

The best way to utilize the data regarding all respondents across segments of stakeholders is to (a) remember that this survey reflects people who believe in Week of Compassion and probably to some extent also believe in racial equity, (b) note where overall perceptions differ from Week of Compassion’s actual work, in order to determine what stories and communications can shift those perceptions over time, and (c) recognize how you can share these survey results so the broader community learns what broad support there is for Week of Compassion prioritizing that. It is always an organizational, cultural and communications win to say “we’re prioritizing this because it’s right, and also, our community wants us to prioritize it.”

**Survey data by segmented groups**

The purpose of this section is to have context for the individual comments of respondents based on their particular relationship to Week of Compassion. People on the board will have access to different information than volunteers. Individual donors will have different perspectives than ecumenical partners. Most of the aggregated data in the “overall survey data” section will not be disaggregated here, because the numbers of responses per group are too small. There will be some data in this section, but it will primarily focus on individual responses that expounded on their yes/no answers in prior questions and will also include information not reducible to data points. *[note: While it won’t be statistically significant, if you would like disaggregated data on a particular question from the overall survey data section, please ask and it can be provided.]*

**BOARD RESPONSES:**

9 out of 9 respondents

Prior experience with racial equity among board members includes:

- Disciples anti-racism trainings
- Participation in Black Ministers’ Retreat
- Book and movie discussion groups

- Professional development seminars on racial equity in the workplace.
- Student programming
- Board trainings
- Embedding anti-racism into strategic planning
- Living Justice program (DDH Chicago / Reconciliation Ministry)
- Kaleidoscope Institute
- UCC trainings.
- Community organizing.
- 

Quotes from responses:

- “Raising awareness is the key first step, to be closely followed by an action that lives out our commitment. I know that was the goal of Church Extension; I know it is the goal of our General, Regional and congregational manifestations. for [my congregation] we need to be committed to hiring practices around racial equity. Since we have had little staff turn-over, we have not had the opportunity to do that, but it is something we need to be proactive with.”
- “The Week of Compassion Board of Stewards is required to maintain diversity in selection of its members.”
- “I have participated in many anti-racism trainings through search committees as well as YA camps. More recently, I have participated in racial equity training (just a tiny bit) with another General Ministry Board. The racial equity training outcomes/goals were aligned with the definition provided. While the definition seems quite simple, the actual work and dismantling the unequitable structures established even within the church is not so simple.”
- “Yes. At its best these efforts have realigned personal and corporate understanding and practice in profound ways. Sometimes it is difficult for even the best training to get beyond treating anti-racism as primarily a question of guilt or innocence and of individual achievement. Economic dimensions are particularly difficult to address. Not surprisingly, at their less optimal, these efforts have focused too much on consciousness-raising for white middle-American Disciples and have made POC subjects of discussion rather than participants in it.”
- “The trainings are really good, providing background, practical information, and strategies for moving forward. The implementation is where I think sometimes the process gets stuck. The trainers leave, some people are impacted, but the organization as a whole does not necessarily implement strategies that were discussed.”

**Following the question “Is your overall understanding of Week of Compassion that it is primarily Both in equal measure (5), A program that provides training, staff support, and**

educational and planning resources in response to disasters (0), or A fund or foundation, distributing money in response to disasters (4),

**Here is a sample of explanations for those responses:**

- “As a board member I have seen the growth of staff support, education, and disaster planning as a significant part of the ministry. I think the general perception remains the Week of Compassion is a fund that distributes money.”
- “Within the parameters of the Church, it is emphasized that Week of Compassion is a fund, which responds to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). However, over the last several years, it is clear that the work cannot solely be funding. There have been multiple changes on various levels which require Week of Compassion to provide some programming (volunteers, disaster preparedness training, etc.). I see this continuing to be the trend as partners and other organizations are diminishing their responsibilities due to funding, staffing, etc.”
- “This is one of the most vital ministries of the Christian Church (DoC) - vital not only in terms of the importance of its work, but in terms of how it works in partnership with other ecumenical/interfaith partners and on the ground in very concrete ways.”
- “I understand Week of Compassion to do both, but not in equal measure, but it is better known denominationally for the latter”
- “Though it is a fund and not really a program, the staff does an excellent job of providing education, training and supporting to congregations and the general church, in addition to the financial support they provide to programs within and outside the Christian Church.”

After responding to the question about **what they believed were the current priorities of Week of Compassion regarding domestic disaster relief and recovery:**

- 8 Providing logistical support to congregations in the immediate aftermath
- 8 Providing logistical support to congregations seeking to support rebuilding communities
- 7 Funding congregations and local agencies to respond in the immediate aftermath
- 7 Funding congregations and local agencies to support rebuilding
- 6 Funding of individual/family needs in the immediate aftermath (in the first six months)
- 6 Facilitating volunteer opportunities for rebuilding
- 5 Supporting congregational preparedness: workshops, trainings, guidebook to help congregations prepare their members, buildings, and ministries for disasters to mitigate risk and develop response plans
- 4 Providing advocacy training and support to congregations and local agencies seeking to access government funds and other government support in rebuilding

- 3 Providing advocacy training and support to congregations and local agencies seeking to access government funds and other government support in preventative work
- 2 Supporting congregations in long-term advocacy to reduce community/regional climate change that contributes to the increase in natural disasters
- 2 Funding congregations and local agencies to support preventative work (work that reduces the impact of future disasters in an area, such as levees in flood-prone areas)
- 1 Supporting congregations in long-term advocacy to reduce community/regional climate change that contributes to the increase in natural disasters
- 1 Especially the first part of the list, the latter to lesser degrees and, probably primarily through partnerships
- 1 Funding of individuals to rebuild (in the several years following)

Here are the responses to **If there are any that you did not check, do you believe they SHOULD be part of the ministry's purpose? If so, please list them here.**

- I appreciate the way the Week of Compassion helps out in the immediate aftermath. I also appreciate that the Week of Compassion funds are used best for long-term development and prevention education.
- As a board member I know that Caroline addresses every one of those issues. But I also know that one person cannot possibly include every aspect of this part of our ministry. I have checked the ones that I think can reasonably be managed by one person. I am aware that changes in the structures and personnel of our partners have an impact on what is on Caroline's plate. **\*\***(ummm. I just received the posting for the Disaster Response Coordinator. From my fingers to Vy's ears?)
- While this is not on the list above, due to the work Week of Compassion already supports in refugee aid, I believe that Week of Compassion needs to be more involved in the way the Church is responding to refugee work; not necessarily in advocacy, as much as equipping regions and congregations with concrete ways to support refugee ministries locally.
- It's worthwhile to consider whether more of the latter part of the list should receive greater prominence. These could be important parts of addressing systemic racial inequality
- I am sure in the years since I have been actively involved, Week of Compassion is doing more than what I have checked off. I absolutely believe they should be involved in any climate change advocacy, if they are not already.
- Oh my goodness! Reading through the list they do all these things and it is already A LOT!!

**Who does Week of Compassion currently serve, from your perspective?(Do you have a sense that it prioritizes homeowners or tenants, for example, or congregations with long histories of denominational connections, or that it is able to reach people equally across race, class, historic relationship to denominational structures, and so forth?)**

- 6 Individual congregations experiencing the effects of natural disasters
- 6 Primarily congregations with all levels of denominational connection who are in need
- 5 Ecumenical partners
- 4 homeowners/tenants who are participants in Disciples congregations
- 4 Regions
- 3 Local agencies orchestrating relief and recovery efforts
- 2 Primarily congregations with long histories of denominational connection
- 1 NGO's in areas around the world working on community development
- 1 national organizations that also work on community development.
- 1 people in need around the world, but with some special attention to Disciples communities who have suffered disaster or who seek to respond to disasters, inequity, and migration

**Are there any changes or expansions you would like to see Week of Compassion make in who it serves as you understand it? OR: In your opinion, who should be the recipients of Week of Compassion relief and recovery efforts?**

- I think you all are amazing. Be careful of mission creep that you don't try to do too much.
- I think a wise option is to direct most funding to the individual congregations. They are most likely aware of the needs and resources in their community. The regional office might not know how to connect the needs and resources in a specific place. A local congregation will be able to determine who best to serve - within or without the denomination.
- Serve all, but prioritize the poorest communities and countries
- "Congregations who are connected to their regional offices are ""on the radar"" for general ministries through the regional office. My concern are the smaller congregations who may be a Disciples congregation, but not involved regionally or nationally. Are they being checked on by their region should disaster strike?"
- How are Obra, National Convocation, or NAPAD congregations staying connected with regional ministers if there are language barriers? Are these congregations being taken care of in the same way by regional offices and the general ministries?"
- Week of Compassion does a remarkable job of stretching and balancing its resources
- If there is a pattern of support to congregations with historic ties over all congregations, I believe there needs to be a shift to make support broader.

**Who shapes Week of Compassion's priorities, from your perspective? Choose any or all that fit:**

- 9 Week of Compassion staff
- 7 Week of Compassion board
- 7 Disaster relief organizations with whom Week of Compassion partners (Church World Service, Volunteers of America, etc.)
- 3 Congregations who contribute financially
- 3 Local organizations in communities impacted by disasters
- 2 general ministries of the Christian Church
- 2 ecumenical partners
- 2 Major individual donors
- 1 Congregations who volunteer
- 1 Other

**Please share one sentence on why you chose the answer(s) you did.**

- That's been my direct experience
- The staff envisions how best to fulfill the mission of WOC, hears from the partners and suggests priorities to the board who in turn, advise the staff.
- My lack of real knowledge of how it is decided
- Each partner has an important role to play in determining priorities
- Over the last several years, I have witnessed how public policy has affected the work Week of Compassion has been engaged in. We have to be aware of how our nation's policies and politics are affecting the work and requiring changes to be made.
- The excellent staff have keen attention and awareness of domestic and global issues and superlative relations with partner organizations. They also do a very good job of working with folks on the ground. The board backs them up. I see many of these other groups as having certain but lesser roles to play.
- Those are patterns I experienced while on the board
- The staff does a great job of informing and seeking the input of the Board. Even though the Board only meets twice a year, their opinion is still sought out via the Executive Committee and, at times, via virtual communications in case of a special need. The Board has input on the Budget, sustainable development proposals and emergency proposals. The staff has more detailed day-to-day knowledge that allows them to make decisions quickly, when needed. Having a Board that is intentionally varied, with regards to the people who sit on it, helps to maintain a multi-faceted perspective when it comes

to shaping priorities. The staff is very intentional making sure the Board is representative of the many different people found within the Church.

**Are there changes, additions or expansions you would like to see Week of Compassion make in who shapes its priorities, based on the options above?**

- nope
- No specific changes. A strong relationship with the general ministries of the Christian Church (DoC) is wise. As a fund, the Week of Compassion has a powerful image and presence that is dependent on the overall strength of the denomination. Awareness of diverse visions for Week of Compassion may enhance our ministry.
- I do not have enough information to respond
- I could imagine more grassroots connections and more donor connections both, but the central decision making processes function well as is.
- If giving patterns influence assistance, Week of Compassion should work to break down that preference

**What experiences or communications shape your understanding of Week of Compassion and its mission? Please check all that apply:** What experiences or communications shape your understanding of Week of Compassion and its mission? Please check all that apply:

- 9 Having served on the board
- 6 Newsletter
- 5 Facebook
- 5 Congregational announcements and fundraising for Week of Compassion during the Special Offering in February of each year
- 4 Congregational announcements and fundraising for Week of Compassion following a disaster
- 3 Hearing about its work in board meetings or collaborative settings
- 2 My organization having partnered with Week of Compassion
- 2 Other
- 1 Having volunteered with Week of Compassion or Disciples Volunteering programs through Disciples Home Mission
- 1 My organization having received a Week of Compassion grant

**If you have encountered Week of Compassion's communications, are there any stories or types of information that stick out in your memory (personal stories, congregational stories, information about conditions in areas facing a disaster). Please focus on domestic disaster response.**

- so many

- The personal stories always reinforce the impact on an individual - not on a house, or a road, or a community. I think the stories that highlight what a congregation is facing - or how a congregation is able to respond - can be very relatable to folks in the pews. The challenge is to have the opportunity to share this information with others. For some - there is a time crunch on Sunday mornings. Some pastors and/or outreach folks are not connected or confident with technology. In reality, there is something significant to mention every week - every day - about the needs and work of Week of Compassion. The challenge is to be selective and not overload the people in the pews.
- Stories of the disasters in Mexico with two hurricanes hitting the area back to back
- Those that highlight how Week of Compassion meets a need that has been overlooked by many and how Week of Compassion remains for long term assistance.
- "As a donor, the types of stories that are impactful to me are the individuals' stories. The faces and names of these individuals leave a lasting impression of a particular individual and the effect of a disaster to them specifically.
- As a board member, the information that is most meaningful are the numbers; both financial and statistics. The percentage of an individual's contribution that goes toward the intended purpose. The number of people displaced by the hurricane. The number of years it takes to recover and rebuild after experiencing a disaster. These are sharable and impactful to those hearing the statistics about how Week of Compassion is making an impact. "
- The more than we can imagine theme, videos and materials both, which were focused on Puerto Rico, but applicable to efforts in the 50 states and to global both.
- no
- information about conditions in areas facing a disaster

**If there is anything you would like to add about Week of Compassion's purpose as you understand it, please do.**

- The challenge is to be wise and compassionate stewards of the gifts that are shared with us.

**What is your sense of how domestic disasters affect communities of color compared to white communities?**

9 Communities of color experience a greater impact

**Please share why you chose the answer you did.**

- obvious--they don't have access many times to resources.
- My sense is stereotypical. Communities of color may be located in areas of lower value, in properties of lower value that are more susceptible to natural weather related events

(flooding by being closer to levies, in lower lying areas, in structures incapable of withstanding the forces of wind and water)

- Communities of color historically have diminished infrastructure systems, less desirable locations, higher density, fewer resources and less wealth than white communities.
- Media shows white communities receiving lights on faster and rebuilding sooner than communities of color
- Communities of color have been economically disadvantaged in the US and therefore are unable to afford housing in affluent areas. These communities are unable to leave flood prone or areas prone to the impact of hurricane damages probably caused by climate change.
- Having served on the board, I see how long it takes for communities to rebuild after a disaster. However, the rebuilding is only supported by resources. Communities with less resources rebuild slower than communities with greater resources. Often times, these are communities of color who are taking years longer to rebuild.
- Structural economic inequalities, environmental racism, difficulties in accessing political power, underfunded community organizations, etc.
- because the data bears this out throughout history
- Unfortunately, the economic disparity in communities of color serve to magnify problems. It may not be because it is a community of color per se, but because the economic conditions do not allow for the same kind of response as in more economically stable or affluent communities. So, a difficult situation only becomes much more challenging.

**Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources immediately following a domestic disaster?**

9 Yes

**Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources during the rebuilding phase after a domestic disaster?**

9 Yes

**Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies for communities of color to have better access to disaster and recovery resources to promote preventative measures that reduce the severity of future domestic disasters?**

9 Yes

**Research indicates a connection between climate change and an increase in natural disasters. Additional research indicates that communities of color experience a more significant impact on communities of color around this increase in natural disasters. Do you have an interest in Week of Compassion researching strategies to support advocacy to respond to this intersection of climate change and its disparate impact on communities of color?**

8 Yes

1 Maybe

**If you have additional comments on the last four questions, please comment here.**

- I almost put "maybe" on a few of those questions. It is a shift - valid and necessary to move from responding to advocacy. Every issue mentioned clearly connects with our mission and vision - to alleviate suffering, to transform suffering into hope. It will be a step on the pathway to advocate for change and add an additional focus on our work.
- This is a systemic issue - not just an issue of how Week of Compassion is responding to communities of color. Many other walls will need to be torn down to respond equally to communities of color, and I am glad to know that Week of Compassion is already engaging in this conversation.

*Note: Many board members have DOC anti-racism training, and some have done book studies with their congregations. (Several noted frustration that the denominational process offers strategies for implementation of anti-racism practices but these rarely get implemented once the trainers leave.) In addition, some board members have experience with DEI protocols re: employment and staff development and may be able to contribute to ongoing practices for Week of Compassion to adopt.*

### **CONGREGATIONAL DONOR RESPONSES:**

2 responses out of 7 invitations

*Note: This and future segments will be more abbreviated than the board segment. Data will only be include they vary significantly from the data points in the overall survey.*

Two respondents, both Anglo, from Anglo contexts. Both have anti-racism exposure in the denomination. Both have over 20 years' connection to Week of Compassion.

Both consider Week of Compassion primarily a fund. (The choices were a fund, a programming entity, or both in equal measure.)

- “The choices above leave out a lot. The work with local partners doesn't seem to fit in either option, but it is very important, I think. Also the development work.”
- “I know Week of Compassion has a broad scope but I see focus as funding help.”

After sharing who they believe Week of Compassion supports, the follow up question was if there is anyone not on the list that Week of Compassion should prioritize. One respondent noted “those most in need.”

After responding to the question about who determines the direction of Week of Compassion, here were the respondents’ comments:

- "My congregation is a strong supporter of WOC, but I don't believe we have exerted influence on its priorities. I imagine there might be some influence from DOM or DHM, but probably not from General Ministries as such.”
- “I haven’t thought too much about it. I trust Week of Compassion process to get to great needs.”

When asked if any particular stories from Week of Compassion communications stuck out to respondents, here was one response:

- We have benefited greatly from having Week of Compassion guest preachers in February for Week of Compassion Sunday. Hearing their stories and getting to know them as persons has been a major factor in building support for Week of Compassion in our congregation.

When explaining why they responded that people of color experience disparate effects from natural disasters, here were their responses:

- Communities of color are less likely to be protected from the effects of disasters, more likely to live in sub-standard housing which is more vulnerable, and less likely to be insured.
- So many natural disasters cause more damage in impoverished areas.

**CONGREGATIONS WHO WORKED ON DISASTER RELIEF RESPONSES:**

4 responses out of 7 invitations

*It is worth noting that of the four respondents in this group, one did not identify as someone whose congregation had worked on disaster relief.*

All respondents had anti-racism exposure. In sharing their experience of anti-racism training in the workplace or the Disciples, these two comments were worth noting:

- “Neither [Disciples] workshop seemed to focus on "meaningfully involving those most impacted by structural racial inequity in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives.” They were educational, experiential and powerful, but not strategic.”
- “My experience in the Disciples is that we often talk the talk, but struggle to actually get to racial equity -- we are better at the process piece than at the outcome piece. Our intentions are often better than our results.”

All respondents had over 20 years of connection with Week of Compassion.

Two respondents understand Week of Compassion to be primarily a fund, and two understand it as an equal balance of program and funding. One comment explained why that respondent answered “primarily a fund:”

- The answer to the above question hinges on the word "primarily". I believe WOC's work has evolved from almost completely a fund to developing more and more program qualities. It is still primarily a fund, but it may yet move closer and closer to balance.

In expounding on their responses regarding where they understand Week of Compassion’s work is focused, here were several comments:

- At one time, I thought individuals outside of Disciples should be funded but in past few years, I have come to see we just can't do it all; we need to emphasize on working through local congregations and agencies first and foremost.
- Realistically, there are fewer and fewer Disciples congregations able to engage in such complicated and time-consuming work as advocacy in community and governmental structures. And, the Week of Compassion staff is already stretched very thin. I'm not sure what the answer is, but it seems that supportive regional church staff members can help to discern where Week of Compassion staff might best find fertile ground for this work.
- If Week of Compassion were bigger, both in terms of funds and staff, it could do all of the above. While it is still primarily a fund, new areas will need to be developed slowly, if at all. Sadly, I am aware of turf debates regarding fund vs program at the General level of the Disciples.

In response to the question about whether there are additional people or groups who might shape Week of Compassion’s priorities, here were a couple of responses:

- It would be ideal to have an advisory committee or even an ad-hoc panel formed of those who have received assistance in some form. Their experiences, impressions,

critiques (if any), and ideas could either affirm what we are already doing or inform our future activities and approach.

- I hope all of those voices are heard and considered. I always am concerned that we work in concert with those ecumenical partners who are willing.

In responding to the question about the stories that have stuck out in Week of Compassion's communications, here were a couple of responses:

- I enjoy the personal stories as told by local pastors about WOC's response
- The story of how a church in my region was supported during and after floods in that area. The help was swift, targeted and effective. The entire church was grateful and responded shortly thereafter with a successful campaign to raise funds for WOC. That seems a perfect example of receiving and giving help, a model of the Kingdom of Christ.

In response to the question inviting additional comments about Week of Compassion's work overall, here was one comment:

- One of the many things I appreciate about Week of Compassion is the diligent research, effective networks, and communications excellence they bring to bear as they seek to raise and distribute the resources the world needs to heal from natural disasters and the scourge of the refugee crisis.

All four respondents agreed people of color experience a disproportionate effect of disasters. Here is why, from their perspectives:

- Communities of color more often live in areas at risk to natural disasters (flood zones, coastal areas, etc)
- Communities of color more often than not have limited resources and infrastructure to address the disaster
- The information I read and watch shows communities of color being disproportionately affected because their housing is often of lesser quality and is located in less-desirable areas where there is less protection from disasters - both natural and human-made. Communities of color don't have the same level of representation in our governing bodies and thus don't receive the same government funding when disaster strikes their neighborhoods and communities. It appears that even when disasters strike in communities of mixed colors that white people have more resources to recover and don't suffer as much in the long term.
- Very simply -- environmental racism for certain domestic disasters. Also, I sense that white communities can sometimes tap into money resources that may be available to all, but the word gets out better to white communities.

In response to the series of questions about whether Week of Compassion should explore racial equity in disaster relief, recovery, preparedness and even climate change, and why they answered the way they did (all yes on the first three, two yes, one maybe and one no on the last), here were their responses:

- I appreciate someone asking these questions as I am guessing such things are not being done? I am not aware of them if they are. In addition, I think such questions need to be addressed in relation to those in poverty; the impoverished are far more affected by natural disasters than the privileged.
- Without additional funding and staff, it does not seem realistic to add this critical research function to the broad range of responsibilities of Week of Compassion employees.
- My last answer is "Maybe" for a simple reasons -- money and focus. Can we do all of the things on this page AND still do what Week of Compassion is known for? I don't know.

*Note: It is interesting to note how in both survey responses and interviews, respondents were incredibly protective of Week of Compassion staff's capacity. There is a lot of intentional scaling back of imagination based on the assumption that Week of Compassion cannot scale up. It is worth engaging that assumption of scarcity as the team continues to work on what its next steps are.*

#### **ECUMENICAL PARTNER RESPONSES:**

5 responses out of 8 invitations

In response to the question about anti-racism or DEI training at their workplace, here were a few interesting responses:

- As an agency we seek to have staff members who represent the cultures and languages of our county. As a Long Term Recovery Group, we seek leaders who represent the variety of cultures present in the County to be sure that all who may need disaster assistance have information, access to services, and influence over the design of services to meet the needs of local people who are affected by those disasters.
- We hold regular DEI training events and in our shared ministry work to center those who have historically be marginalized.
- HR training, developing Long-Term Recovery Groups that reflect the local community affected by the disaster, training local disaster survivors to work as disaster case managers

3 respondents see Week of Compassion as both a fund and a program. 2 see it primarily as a fund. Here's why:

- Fifteen years ago, I would have chosen the first answer - a fund. A gradual shift has led to the meaningful expansion of how Week of Compassion fulfills its mission. Both descriptions may not be exactly in equal measure, but leaving either out of the picture would fail to accurately capture Week of Compassion today.
- We are less familiar with the training and staff supports available through Week Of Compassion but we had strong leadership in the early going so those needs were less than resources to assist the thousands who had damages and needed labor and materials for recovery.
- These two options listed above have become blurry with the staff changes with Disciples Volunteering.

After checking which ministries the respondents believe Week of Compassion does, they were asked if there were any boxes they didn't check but believe Week of Compassion SHOULD address. Here were two responses:

- Supporting congregations in long-term advocacy and mitigation to reduce the impact of climate change (which contributes to the increase in natural disasters)
- All proactive work should be part of the ministry's purpose, but I also recognize how difficult it is to do both response and preparedness/mitigation with a small staff and resources, especially given the increased frequency and severity of disasters now with our changing climate patterns.

Respondents were asked to check boxes regarding who Week of Compassion serves, and then invited to reflect on who else Week of Compassion SHOULD serve if that wasn't reflected in their previous answer. Here are two responses to that question:

- The challenge, related to my answer to the previous question, is as much about overcoming - or expanding from - its history and existing denominational structures. The benefits of historic connectedness for some congregations is not a point of privilege from Week of Compassion; rather, it is a reflection that some congregations have a head start when it comes to knowing who to turn to when they have need.
- We love that you support the Long Term Recovery Group in our county where the most vulnerable members of the community are served first.

In response to who determines Week of Compassion's priorities, here were a few observations:

- It seems to me that the priorities of Week of Compassion are shaped largely by the internal stakeholders who are influenced by the needs of impacted communities. Ultimately, I would say that people impacted by disasters shape the mission and

priorities of Week of Compassion but, since this wasn't a choice, I chose the internal church stakeholders.

- The staff track where funds are designated or volunteer response to know where the denomination can respond. With undesignated funds, staff is able to track and communicate with partners and local recovery agencies to find the areas that are in most needs after a disaster to direct funds to support unmet needs.
- Week of Compassion has a clear purpose and mission and the priorities flow from that. It is important that the voices of those invested in and impacted by its work give shape to those priorities - and conversely that larger systemic influences do not.

All of the respondents believe that domestic disasters have a greater impact on communities of color. Here is why, from their perspectives:

- Communities of color are disproportionately located in more vulnerable geographic locations and have received less investment in mitigation and infrastructure.
- In our county, there are more non-whites than white who meet the vulnerability standards for the long term recovery group (elderly, limited incomes, disabled, single parents with small children)
- It is well studied and documented that communities of color and other marginalized communities. experience a greater impact.
- Because disasters disproportionately impact people who are already on the margins/vulnerable, particularly those of color. I know this through objective research and through personal field experience.
- Because the neighborhoods that are most vulnerable to greater impact from disaster tend to be the communities of color

There was a series of questions about whether respondents would like Week of Compassion to explore how to create greater access for people of color to access support at various phases of recovery and preparedness, or to explore the intersections of racial justice and the climate crisis. Four out of five said yes to these questions. (One said maybe to the first three and no to the climate crisis question.) When asked to comment on their answers, here is one response:

- I would view such work as an act of good stewardship that is perfectly in line with the purposes and priorities of Week of Compassion and is also an important anti-racist practice in both process and outcome.

#### **GENERAL CHURCH RESPONSES:**

4 responses out of 11 invited

Exposure to anti-racism training:

- As an employee of a general ministry, our board selection process is intentional about having individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Our governing documents have been audited from an anti-racist perspective. I have participated in biennial anti-racism training as part of my work (except this year). Our executives are chosen using the Executive Search Model adopted by the General Assembly to promote equity.
- PRAR Trainings, Workshops and Seminars in workplace
- Anti-racism/pro-reconciliation training (3 day training) and then yearly HR training
- In my work we have intentionally and systematically been on a journey to address structural and relational inequities; I am also a part of a regional training team
- My first two-day training was approximately 8 years ago and I have had an opportunity to build on that via shorter trainings at retreats. The emphasis on systemic issues was particularly helpful to me as a recipient of white privilege - to be able to see how systems are stacked against individuals and communities that are not predominately white Western European.
- Quite often this has taken the form of serial trainings, more recently I am seeing processes that are beyond training and into structural evaluation and hopefully reform, reshaping, recreating

Respondents were asked if they understood Week of Compassion as primarily a fund, primarily a program or both equally (2 chose fund, 2 chose both). Here are a couple of comments on why they answered as they did:

- I needed a fourth choice ... I am not sure the funding and programming are equal and I don't see the long-term socioeconomic development in those responses that I suspect is happening.
- I think it is common to say that Week of Compassion does not do "program" but I think that comment does not adequately reflect either what doing "program" means or the work of WOC. Mostly when I've heard that it was from a perspective of fear that if Week of Compassion was seen to do "program" it would scare funders away - that part of the strength of Week of Compassion is that it appeared neutral so that anyone could feel good giving to it - but I personally think that is a messaging issue to be solved and should not be a limit to the ways Week of Compassion might actually function and grow.

In response to whether there were additional things Week of Compassion should focus on beyond the list that was provided, here was one comment:

- Education and advocacy; with increasing climate change and the attendant global concerns including the migration of peoples, advocacy and education seem extremely important

In expanding on who they think shapes Week of Compassion's mission, here were a few reflections:

- In what I think can sometimes be a limiting reality, donors as cultivated by Week of Compassion and other denomination staff seem to have an outsized influence on how Week of Compassion names its priorities. Ecumenical partners and other relief orgs are part of the ecosystem to which Week of Compassion should be responsible for shaping priorities and I think in many ways this already exists.
- Wondering if, with the broad range of both international and domestic responses, if they almost need two parts in their board to guide funding decisions.
- Continued responsiveness to global partnerships and the realities named in those contexts; push the donor base and those cultivated those donor bases a bit to see the role of program and advocacy.

In reflecting on Week of Compassion's work in general, here was one comment:

- I am not sure this is where this should be named but I do think the future of Week of Compassion should be extra-denominational given the declines in this denomination and the increasing need

All respondents believe people of color experience greater impact due to domestic disasters.

Here are their reasons why:

- Unfortunately, communities of color tend to be closer to sources of flooding, sometimes live in substandard housing, and have fewer resources like insurance and savings to fall back on.
- In most cases the communities of color have fewer resources on hand immediately, the white communities have financial resources so they move forward immediately with the rebuilding, where the community of color must wait for organizations to mobilize and bring help
- Domestic disasters is such a broad term in which to understand impact. In general communities of color experience greater impact because of less economic resiliency given historic bleeding of assets and/or economic under sourcing; white communities also get more attention and follow up resourcing; infrastructure development practices to mitigate effects of future disasters also goes more readily and abundantly to white communities

## **GRANT RECIPIENTS RESPONSES:**

9 responses out of 23 invited

*(Note: there were several comments among this particular segment about Indigenous land rights and Indigenous justice issues that showed up in the question about respondents' racial equity training, in contrast with overall survey responses where this specific issue didn't show up by name.)*

When asked about any additional things Week of Compassion could focus on, here was one comment:

- Supporting advocates for climate change reduction, dissemination of scientific evidence of how climate change happens and how it affects everyone

In response to the question about any additional groups Week of Compassion could serve:

- Week of Compassion has to be both where Disciples (flesh and blood people, part of this Christian movement) are engaged in disaster response AND also the presence of God's love and justice when Disciples cannot be there.
- Temporary relief to Pastor to who loose their secular jobs and strictly depend on that salary
- Getting Alaska more involved/educated
- The people who don't own a home or business are at the bottom of the list for aide before, during and after a disaster.

In sharing who shapes Week of Compassion's priorities from their perspective and also what additions they might want to make, here were a few interesting comments:

- I believe that Week of Compassion's priorities are primarily affected by staff and their relationships--especially relationships with colleagues (ordained and lay) in ecumenical organizations, congregations, and the wider denomination.
- DOC congregation who knows of a disaster started the process to send aid.
- I know that calling Caroline or Vy is something that is easy and brings the whole church present to the suffering of my community in times of disaster. I wonder how others navigate this system.
- There are rural communities in Alaska that are slowly becoming submerged by rising sea water and have to be relocated to higher ground.

While this didn't show up in quite the right place in the survey, one sharing of a personal story about domestic disasters that one respondent shared was this:

- "Personal stories of how Dec 2020 - Feb 2021, where the community of mostly euro-american received all the disaster relief and Klukwan, an Alaska native community didn't receive any aid. There were many land slides that isolated klukwan from, power, communications and medical care for 3-8 days each time there was another landslide.

One final comment about Week of Compassion's mission and the respondents' understanding of it:

- It is a fund that supports programs, churches, ministries, and organizations. It took a long time for it to "click" that they're the ones equipping the work, not "doing it" directly.

7 of the respondents said people of color face a more significant impact from natural disasters; 2 said natural disasters affect everyone equally regardless of race. Here were the reasons for their responses:

- Week of Compassion serves all areas regardless of who is effected by a disaster. From my knowledge, Week of Compassion does not discriminate in its ways of helping others.
- Because I know that communities of color often have less resources, both because of depressed wages today, the lack of generational wealth (i.e. endowments, having well constructed, maintained facilities, less home ownership/more renting), and the effects of environmental racism (e.g. owning property in areas that more prone to flooding)
- poorer infrastructure
- Living environment of individuals is what makes them a disaster victim
- Access to power and wealth, basic services, travel, options
- Personal experience and knowledge from family and friends

### **INDIVIDUAL DONORS RESPONSES:**

4 responses out of 7 invited

One comment related to whether Week of Compassion is more a fund or a program ministry:

- Formerly Week of Compassion has primarily relied on CWS and other agencies to do the disaster response trainings

In terms of where they'd like to see Week of Compassion do additional work:

- I'm unsure of the work around the work of advocacy with WOC
- I believe funding of preventative measures of communities and congregations in mitigating the consequences of future disasters is an important appropriate area for future Week of Compassion funding and support.

In terms of who Week of Compassion should serve, one comment:

- I believe priority relationships should be carried on with DOC and UCC congregations and their local partner agencies before and following disasters in their communities.

Here are communications that resonated with respondents:

- Several congregations in tornado areas and their involvement
- Personal stories and on the ground reports
- U.S. southern borderland migrant camp conditions described following staff visits

In regards to any additional comments respondents may have about Week of Compassion's overall work:

- I think expansion of domestic preparedness outreach by Week of Compassion is timely and important

#### **LOCAL PARTNERS RESPONSES:**

10 responses out of 10 invitations

Local partners varied from having had no anti-racism exposure to high level understanding of anti-racism and deep democracy organizing principles baked into their organizations' practices.

Of the ten respondents, six have only been working with Week of Compassion 0-5 years.

Because these partners are outside the life of the Disciples, their responses regarding WOC's operations were a little broader and have been combined here rather than divided by question.

Some of the comments from respondents in this category included:

- Week of compassion has given our organization grant dollars to purchase materials needed and we supply volunteer labor to repair the homes in our County. This is done for all persons, regardless of ethnicity or race. In that time hurricanes, tornado and floods have adversely affected the communities in our County.
- Week of Compassion does wonderful work
- This organization is willing to partner with diverse communities.
- I am so impressed with Week of Compassion, especially when compared to my denomination's response group

- Working together with other denominations allows funding to go much farther in assisting those persons adversely affected by disaster. Funding individual denominations or church's is not financially as effective as joint cooperative efforts.
- Funding seemed especially fluid when compared to other agencies doing similar work. Excellent partnership with similar organizations (we'll fund this if you'll fund that, etc.). Out of the ordinary cases could be relayed in conversations with our rep, solutions were found easily and quickly.
- [in response to the question of who else should/could shape Week of Compassion's priorities:] Definitely include local organizations closest to those impacted by disasters
- We are grateful for its help and assistance to provide safe, affordable, hurricane resistant housing to low income farmworker families

In regards specifically to communications (what stories stay with the respondents:

- I receive email stories that tell of the week of Compassion's response in time of disaster.
- What sticks with me is the fact that Week of Compassion is ready, willing, and able to provide support to those who needed when times are most challenging. It is great to see how the hard work of volunteers and the smart financial investments create a positive change and help communities navigate through their recovery.
- have not encountered
- Stories of people having their faith, hope and lives restored.
- My agency sent in a story that was shared through Week of Compassion internet site.

**What is your sense of how domestic disasters affect communities of color compared to white communities?**

9 Communities of color experience a greater impact

1 In our area some areas have a higher concentration of people of color who are impacted collectively. In other areas, people of all colors are impacted equally due to the inherent poverty in the region.

**Please share why you chose the answer you did.**

- Where I live the community of color is living in housing that is substandard in terms of construction and ability to withstand the forces of nature.
- Communities of color face more challenges because they tend to be in a different socio-economic bracket if you like. They have less access to services, have less of a safety net (savings), and truly depend on assistance to bounce back.
- Communities of color are more likely to be economically disadvantaged and ill prepared to proactively prepare for disasters and worse, to have the funds to repair and/or rebuild homes impacted by disaster

- Personal experience assisting families across our County and hearing regional stories.
- Disasters happen to all, but weak infrastructure and homes are usually most impacted. They usually belong to the poor and marginalized.
- In our county, the communities of color primarily live in housing that is not built to withstand hurricane force winds, and are located in areas that are not upgraded with adequate storm sewer systems, i.e., flooding occurs more easily because of water backup.
- In our work we see BIPOC people suffer more damage and face more barriers to recovery. We also see that BIPOC people are questioned, doubted and denied much more often.
- Communities of color seem to be more financially challenged. They are sometimes forced to choose between making their homes stable and secure or feeding their families and paying the essential bills. In a lot of these poor communities, it is not just the ones of color either. White communities are experiencing these impacts as well.
- Low income farmworker families are underserved and, if one or more family members are undocumented, they do not receive any help.
- Communities of color are typically located in areas more prone to natural disasters (near waterways and/or areas that flood quickly). Residents tend to not have insurance necessary for quick response/recovery. Residents have difficulties in navigating the help available and have lots of pride/postpone seeking help.

Respondents mostly (9-1, 7-3) would be interested in Week of Compassion looking at how to respond to people of color accessing more resources or information about disaster relief/recovery/preparedness. Here's why or why not:

- In the context of where I live we have tried several strategies to communicate the necessity of people of color being aware of and responsive to the resources that are available when disaster occurs. We have not been very successful.
- Funding needs to go to those in need regardless of color, race or culture.
- By and large most communities of color in our area are self/isolated from being open to such efforts to help them understand and be open to the resources that are available.
- If this type of research is done, please share results with local Recovery Teams.

### **REGIONAL MINISTRY PARTNERS RESPONSES:**

16 responded out of 55 invited

In responding to questions about their experience with anti-racism or racial equity work, here were a few responses:

- Our region has a very strong AR/PR team; training is required of all pastors. We also sponsor an annual civil right pilgrimage that is attended primarily by Euro-Americans but has a significant number of people of color. We have nine Convocation churches that form an active cohort with an annual assembly.
- Over the years I have served the church in various roles across local, regional, national expressions of the church. While I have been invited in processes, boards, and hirings I have felt like my opportunities were examples of racial inclusion and not a sign of racial equity.
- My employer (a public hospital) includes EDI regularly in training to ALL departments. They also sponsor race based caucuses to discuss racial equity issues, concerns, and progress allowing employees to attend during the workday.
- I am excited about the seeds of a new conversation regarding intentional strategic transformation around the church. I attended one workshop in 2020 and we have hosted several town halls in our region on how to shape new stories of redemption and transformation.
- Yes. I've attended the mandatory clergy anti-racism trainings. But outside of that, the only time I've encountered any intentional anti-racist work is when I have led and initiated it within predominantly white congregations. I was pleased that the book *Room at the Table* was a primary text in my polity class during my journey to ordination. We have so much work to do, and I for one am committed to it.
- Yes. Developing a common vocabulary has happened, while hearing the pain of others, and learning to disagree without unplugging.
- I have participated in many anti-racism training and courses. I have yet to see the intentional strategy embodied in practice and I have many years of experience with which to make this statement. Too many.

In responding to the question about WHAT Week of Compassion prioritizes and whether they want to add anything to the list, here were their responses:

- All are good. It depends on focus and capacity.
- Preparing and Advocating for climate change mitigations.
- I know there is less focus on providing for immediate needs now, so not sure how much. I'm not aware of prevention training but if there is, it needs to be publicized more. It would be a great idea. I don't know
- The list is pretty inclusive of the list of partners that I know of.
- "I am simply unaware of all that Week of Compassion does."
- Yes!

- Advocacy training and support with congregations and local agencies seeking to access government for preventative work and preparedness for natural disasters and the climate crisis.

In response to the question about WHO Week of Compassion serves and whether they wanted to nuance or add to their responses, here were some comments:

- I was very grateful that WofC provided aid to undocumented families that didn't qualify for the government's Covid relief payments
- Congregations fully support and provide funding to WOC, and not so much Reconciliation. I would love to see some intersectional work with Week of Compassion and Reconciliation
- I don't think there should be any changes at this time.
- Priority should be DoC related individuals, families and churches, but we can share!
- Need and opportunity should determine the recipients
- Communities and partners who are CC(DOC) connected and those who are most vulnerable in our communities whether DOC or not.

In responding to WHO SHAPES the direction of Week of Compassion:

- I believe it is up to ecumenical partners, staff and board to set the priorities -- and if they are well chosen, they will have their ear to the ground to hear the input of others on this list. I don't think this is an organization to be led by group consensus of all portions of the network in which it is embedded. I believe those in the network (not the core mission holders) need to be able to trust the leaders, send their suggestions and believe in the integrity of the mission and it's leaders. I do think it is good to seek input, but this is not the same as a congregation or a regional church. Important to not mistake "agency" for "congregation" I think Week of Compassion can be a partner with other whole church ministries while keeping its integrity.
- Board members should come from all parts of the country and other places DOCs serve to represent the eyes and ears of the whole church.
- I would like local communities to be able to decide what their needs are.
- Peoples and Communities who have a vested interest in the wellbeing of their communities.

14 of the 15 respondents say people of color experience disproportionate impact in domestic disasters. Here's why, from their perspective:

- I believe an analysis of the results of disasters would confirm my answer.

- I've heard that often; communities of color often have higher poverty rates to begin with, are more likely to live in at risk areas, etc.
- Disparities in income, wealth, access to services. Red-lining, where people live.
- Just look at the news reports. Other organizational and national relief monies fund and reach white communities first.
- I am African American I have seen first hand the disparity between the races especially people of color.
- Because communities of color are often poorer before a disaster.
- Communities of color have less access to insurance that provides full coverage for whatever disaster that comes.
- Communities of color may have fewer resources and more liabilities when disasters occur.
- My experience with Hurricane Harvey recovery suggests to me that insurance, networks, and government response favored white communities
- The need is greater for those struggling to get by, let alone face the consequences of a disaster.
- Communities of color are notoriously located in areas with inadequate infrastructure and low priority to city, county, and state governments when it comes to funding and maintaining property and emergency response systems, as well as preventative planning.
- From watching the patterns of vulnerability and sustainability patterns of life in US and Canada. Those with least margin for functional needs being met are often the ones with least resilience to disaster. Also housing/food supplies/distribution of services area already slim in some places and these are often places hit by disaster.
- Stories and Statistics bear witness to the truth of this.
- Weaker infrastructure making communities of color more vulnerable

14 of 16 or all 16 responded in the affirmative to whether they would support Week of Compassion explored equity for people of color regarding education and/or access regarding domestic disaster relief, recovery and mitigation. Here are some additional observations related to those responses:

- In my experiences, many of our Anglo congregations are more likely to request help b/c they feel more entitled to the help, or more aware that it exists and is for them. I find many of our Hispanic congregations kind of figure all of that is for the Anglos, so they are less likely to ask for assistance. I think W of C does a VERY good job of trying to reach out, but I hope we continue and expand that proactive focus.
- Yes, political advocacy can plug the leaks so we don't need to bail the water.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSES:**

4 responses out of 10 invitations

Regarding respondents' experience with anti-racism training, here was a particularly interesting response:

- Our Elders & Board naming and claiming anti-racism & reconciling priority for our own congregation; learning about spatial justice through partnership with New Eyes Village (Mission: New Eyes Villages will introduce and facilitate Black Culture to a small yet vital community. This is not a RELIGIOUS community, however, we are motivated by the spirit of Christ.)

In expounding on whether there are additional priorities Week of Compassion should consider in terms of WHAT work they do, here were a couple of comments:

- Supporting congregations in long-term advocacy to reduce community/regional climate change that contributes to the increase in natural disasters
- I'm not sure what the Week of Compassion's ministry is. I've seen Caroline Hamilton Arnold do an educational workshop for Disciples Youth that was excellent. More recently, she has taken responsibility for Disciples Volunteering in Josh Baird's absence. These are both great!

In responding to what communications have stayed with them and were particularly effective, here were two responses (neither of which falls under communications as we would define it, but were still useful comments):

- Week of Compassion's involvement with the youth is wonderful!! I hope that is still continuing. The workshops and education that I saw Caroline present should be more widespread and include adults that have the ability to provide funding.
- At the DoC Annual Conference in Des Moines, IA. I had the opportunity to attend a breakout session on Volunteering, led by Josh Baird, and learned about the need of Long-term volunteers in partnership with Brethren Disaster Ministries. Since August of 2020 I have had the opportunity several times to be a Household Leader in Dayton, OH and Bayboro, NC. It was an honor to provide meals to the volunteers who came in to work in these respective cities to families to either get back to their homes that were damaged by either a tornado or flooded out. or to have a new home built for them.

Three of the four respondents feel that people of color experience more significant effects from domestic disasters. Here's why, from their perspectives:

- Environmental racism, systemic neglect of infrastructure in communities of color

- I have worked disaster and seen the results.
- Two reasons: First, in some places, the civil engineering of the city was designed to lessen chances of flooding in the higher income neighborhoods to the detriment of the lower income neighborhoods. Secondly, lower income families have to choose priorities and often home insurance has to be dropped as a priority leaving them devastated in a disaster.
- We can't control Mother Nature but sometimes it seems storms hit the lower zip code areas more often.

In responding to the series of questions about whether Week of Compassion should explore addressing equity issues for people of color regarding disaster relief, preparedness and mitigation (including climate change), here were some additional comments:

- We need to work on informing folks of color how they can help with rebuilding after disaster. We need to involve them in the process. They are very talented people.
- In my volunteering, I see that the families being helped are predominantly of minority race. Oftentimes, it's because they have not had proper home insurance. Maybe if there was a program to help them have insurance or better preparations that would be better than needing the volunteer help to rebuild. I don't know what happens immediately after the disaster. I was in Mississippi five weeks after Katrina hit and Disciples Volunteering and Week of Compassion were there and helping. My perception of recent experiences are that Week of Compassion may be there with funds and the buckets of clean up kits, but mostly what I see happen is BDM and DV pick up the projects that are still in need after the insurance companies and FEMA have done what they will and some are still left behind in need.
- It does seem that there is a lot of "hoops" that people need to jump thru in order to receive help and that it is a long process.

## **Appendix E: Summary of interviews**

Week of Compassion staff brainstormed with consultants about people who would represent the breadth of stakeholders (ecumenical partners, volunteers, recipients, congregational and regional and general ministry partners). In addition to that list, the heads of the denomination's racial/ethnic ministries provided the names of pastors from their communities who represented the breadth of those communities, including pastors with deep, cursory, no, or even negative interactions with Week of Compassion, to capture the reality of people of color's experiences with the ministry. Below are some of their observations, by theme:

Pulled Quotes from Interviews:

### **Fundraising**

People being interviewed commented on the value of Week of Compassion being providing both funds and programming. They noted that the organization's deep commitment to staying on mission increases goodwill towards it, and one interviewee in particular affirmed that the director makes sure messaging from all staff is consistently in line with the mission also.

Several people spoke of the overwhelming love for Week of Compassion: as one pastor commented about raising money for Week of Compassion, they described it as "the sexy fundraising arm of the church" but also talked about "Week of Compassion fatigue" because of climate disaster frequency. They said it had been easy to raise awareness and easy to raise money for this ministry for the past 35 years until now..."People are saying, oh that's just one more tornado, one more flood, one more fire."

### **History of WOC**

Several people familiar with Week of Compassion commented on how Johnny Wray relied heavily on individual charisma to run the ministry, and Amy Gopp sought to use a similar model. All commented on how Vy Nguyen had invited them into contributing to a shift in organizational culture and governance. One said he remembered texting with Vy "are you ready to be bold?" The board of stewards and the lines of accountability it created were acknowledged by those who were familiar with the history of Week of Compassion..

One general church leader who was interviewed commented about another major shift, "It was a fund, seen as a fund, and its only role was to make grants. It is no longer that; it's become a core ministry. where there's been tension, that's the root of the tension. There are ministries saying all you should do is give us the money, whereas Week of Compassion says our role isn't just funding. Our role is the mission. So we have to have accountability and transparency, which has created some growing pains that I see. But I don't think you can have mission without money but you also can't have money without mission."

One leader expressed great enthusiasm for the changes over the past five years while noting two areas of continued concern: that key decisions are still often made by one or two people without inclusion of additional key voices and wisdom in the process. Additionally they raised concerns that there is not system-wide understanding of what volunteering and partnering look like and like volunteerism and partnering mean. "Misuse of power when individuals are making decisions is prolific," they noted.

One other reality named in one interview was the ways in which white power structures create very specific and aggressive forms of pressure in relation to an executive of color. One person interviewed noted that part of the importance of Week of Compassion board's makeup was the need for the board to be able to stand with and support Vy in the face of that ongoing pressure (which might increase as Week of Compassion deepens its racial equity and racial justice commitments).

### **Covid Response to Undocumented Citizens**

One interviewee in particular noted that Week of Compassion had responded incredibly well to "people who didn't have status... the stimulus was missing them." The pastor, part of the Convencion, noted, "in our conventions, people knew Week of Compassion was there. If they did more of that, it would build trust. It established great precedent." Another Hispanic pastor with less trust in Week of Compassion stated that he didn't realize that program existed, since he no longer read their communications.

### **Long-term Recovery**

When asked about prioritizing immediate response, long term recovery, and emergency preparedness (including or not including advocacy), most respondents did not have strong opinions since all felt important. There was a mixed response on the role of advocacy, because on the one hand it is critical in this era of growing climate crisis while on the other hand it creates additional demands on an already stretched staff. One respondent commented about priorities, "Week of Compassion should be working on long term relief; leave it to the congregations to do the things that are urgent. Perhaps bring some resources to have available but try to facilitate for Week of Compassion to empower the congregations who are the closest to the ground. Community is eager to help and we need to give freedom to the congregations to respond." This respondent had benefited from disaster preparedness training by Week of Compassion.

### **Cycle of Preparedness**

In determining how to prioritize, one pastor felt the priority needed to be on response and recovery, “like education...people on the higher income scale need to be educated that there’s disparate impact. Once Week of Compassion leaves, these are your neighbors. How do we see these as your neighbors facing worse conditions? You’re going to be ok when this is over but others will have to work twice as hard.”

Another recommended preparedness as a priority for the following reason:

“Working on the preparedness is so important because Week of Compassion is limited. How do we educate our community on how to be ready instead of waiting til it happens? Sometimes we only ask for handouts as a last resort; we’d rather get out of the problem to begin with. Really help communities prepare for disasters. Also we might work to build a store of items in case of emergency in any of these areas since we’re in the track of these hurricanes, so that we don’t have to wait until the moment of the disaster. Something prepared and ready to be shipped out, to assist...Cuba, PR, Miami since we’re impacted by that. If something happened here we could mobilize on each other’s behalf. But that needs a lot of coordination. It would work to keep us prepared.”

Pastors asked for forms in other languages, noting other places where this has been a barrier: “If you’re behind on your electric bill, there’s financial support but they need their grandchildren to translate forms.”

Pastors of color wondered about expanding staff in order to increase cultural access points, while they also brought the awareness that communicating the mission of Week of Compassion could not only rest on the shoulders of overworked Week of Compassion staff, and that regions needed to promote Week of Compassion seminars that empower and train local churches across cultures and race. One pastor suggested that trainings and workshops have embedded within them information and tools for pastors and laypeople to better understand the disparities and impact of those disparities as part of all Week of Compassion trainings.

One interviewee stated the following: “I’m in the margins of this community as an international student. I don’t have enough information. I’m less connected with the local community. The main route for information is from my son’s school, especially related to covid-19. The other is the region. How do other people get information about how to respond to disasters?”

### **Long-Term Recovery**

Interviewees sensed a tension in prioritizing different parts of Week of Compassion’s work. As one grantee noted, “I understand the call to shift from being primarily an immediate response unit to a recovery and preparedness ministry as imperative given the increasing severity of natural disasters and their disproportionate impact on communities of color and white rural (often impoverished) areas. Yet, long-term work is so different from short-term focus...it requires a different set of staff skills/partnerships. It requires a different mindset of thinking

about climate change, human population shifts, and what it means to be church-presence in the midst of immediate crisis.”

One general unit partner offered the following rigorous reflection on long-term recovery as a priority:

I believe that there are a few things in this story that remain useful insights as Week of Compassion seeks to live into an antiracist identity. 1) Move away from primary emphasis on response grants. My perception is that the ministry remains focused on “being in the work as long as the cameras are rolling.” A long-term investment in building wells and infrastructure in Puerto Rico, for example, is key to mitigating the impacts of natural disaster. “This is not the sexy work.” 2) Shift mission models from “help/fix” modes of engagement to models that engage partnerships that are long-term 3) Engage in building partnerships of trust and shared power so that when disasters happen, the response and recovery can rely on already established relationships. This includes stronger communication strategies about who and what Week of Compassion is and can be in relationship with racial/ethnic congregations.

Echoing the board discussion, one Hispanic partner noted that people of color need to be part of the planning from the beginning. They also added, “also, we don’t want your help long term. We have some pride. We got here on our own and want to do it on our own.”

Community and congregational partners who had worked with Week of Compassion celebrated its presence with them in times of disaster, both white and people of color, particularly in light of some disaster relief being years-long processes. As one partner noted, “We could not have assisted the number of people we have without WOC’s initial and ongoing valuable input and counsel regarding running disaster recovery operations.

In addition, the financial support and its flexibility enabled us to truly set up to partner with others and be enabled to serve Hurricane \_\_\_\_\_ survivors better and for a longer period of time. We appreciate the accountability expected from Week of Compassion while still maintaining enough flexibility to be able to leverage and stretch the funding to serve more efficiently.”

One volunteer suggested as a component of long term recovery that “getting generational wealth into communities is a way of important reallocation of funding for communities and families in need.” Another person noted that long term recovery provides opportunities for leadership development in rural and urban communities that are often underresourced, providing an opportunity for Week of Compassion to practice anti-oppression in long-term recovery work depending on who they engage and what relationships that allows to form

One regional representative talked about how volunteering and long term recovery created opportunities for people who don’t see themselves as racist to learn about racism on different terrain and bring those lessons home, depending on how volunteering is shaped..

A few interviewees were familiar with Week of Compassion's work in Dayton and celebrated how that project builds equity and reallocates resources.

One interviewee noted that volunteers don't need all the details, but "what they do need is to understand the big picture: Why is it we are following the lead of the \_\_\_\_\_ Urban Development group and building a LEED certified community that the people who used to live there can not afford?" The same interviewee noted how hard it is to be a small player in such a big field, dedicated to these counter cultural values. "We can take offerings with us to cut through red-tape [and not be beholden to government priorities]. But that is a band-aid. So we have to learn what to say yes to and what to say no to at the outset. Is this project being done in ways that are racially and economically equitable?"

One interviewee emphasized that in organizing overseas trips and Youth Mission Trips there should be a focus on building a culture of mission with, not culture of mission to, meaning to be accountable to the leadership of the people we are trying to engage.

One pastor referred to a model used in their city that felt relevant to Week of Compassion's work around racial equity: build diversity of leaders to talk about what is mission; what is partnership; what is antiracism? What does it look like to be accountable to these leaders (which means including education about racism and building antiracism). Also, they encouraged bringing clarity about what volunteers are bringing to the table: e.g. what assets other than time and resources do you bring to the relationship. This diminishes the sense of "we go to them, they share their culture, we share our time and money" dynamic and shifts to a mutual exchange of gifts model.

## **Imagine Justice**

Among the dreams that interviewees cast were the following:

- The two most important things that can be done to encourage long-term recovery are to invest in affordable housing (and the infrastructure in neighborhoods to help people thrive) and job training/skills building so people have access to livable wages.
- Working hard to make sure justice stays there. Ambassadors, instigators, encouragers, overseers, maintainers. We need someone to inform us of the good work we're doing and keep us on that path. That's harder work--to keep people in that momentum: cheerleaders.
- The bible says we're a body and we need everyone. When something's out of balance, it makes their work even more strenuous.
- Move from race disparity to race thriving model. affordable housing is a huge challenge as well as chronic hunger--fires don't affect us in terms of burning down our houses because we don't have houses; but smoke exacerbates poor health.
- The biggest crisis, homelessness in our community, crosses lines of ethnicity. How does Week of Compassion help our org respond to that need, connecting us to other people.

They can't do the work but how do we get convencion together, connecting to other org's doing the work. The biggest contribution can be the networks where we can come alongside.

- Help us sit at the tables to change systems of injustice, and connect us to the people really bringing change.
- Training. If people know what to do when they need it, that would help. In the moment of crisis, they can't come up with creative solutions. Quick response to mitigate the emergency if we have plans in place.
- I'm happy just to imagine that future. [Week of Compassion's] best work is to provide effective information and making a connection. The rest of the work depends on each congregation, so we all should work together: SOLIDARITY.

### **Would adding requirements around racial equity make our grant process too burdensome?**

- It depends on how racial equity is defined. Will it exclude people with desperate need because they are not considered a minority? If it does, is that truly equitable?
- What requirements would you put in place, and how would you equitably ensure that no one of any race is discriminated against?
- How do we lovingly keep in mind that poverty, illness, age, disabilities, or other barriers do not discriminate against a person based solely on race? A human who is poor, is poor. A human who is ill or wounded, is ill or wounded. A person who is elderly, is elderly. A person who is disabled, is disabled. A person who suffered damage in a disaster and cannot afford to fix their home is a person in need, regardless of color or culture.
- Initially, it may make it too burdensome to track for some small groups that are just starting to organize to respond to disasters. Disaster recovery groups that have been around for a while should start to track the data for accountability.
- You could include in the MOU and grant process that no one should be turned away based on inequitable standards.

### **Disciples Volunteering**

- Whenever there are volunteer trainings, that's another opportunity to name the systemic issues that are out there, with the short and long term volunteers. Be careful of how you say things; be sensitive to what you say. Make sure survivors will not be traumatized by what they went through in the fifties and sixties.
- I'm noticing shifts in volunteering: people who are volunteering need education in how to listen. Need to mitigate the "boss in charge" culture. Leaders need to feel like volunteers are having good experiences and that building relationships with people in homes . Teaching people skills as well as helping them form an understanding of people who are living in different circumstances from themselves.
- It is also all about building trust with volunteers and with home owners.

- We need buy-in with people we serve (in congregations and in communities). Buy-in from congregants is extremely important. Where are we going, why are we going, what is the long-term strategy.
- We have to build relationships without harming people of color so that people's minds can crack open and their race bias is challenged. This has to be a goal of these mission trips.
- A volunteer may not understand the people they are helping. We have to work hard to help volunteers not express judgment and build relationships of by modeling how to cross differences.
- You have to treat people the way you want to be treated. Leaders have to care and that modeling is the best way of mentoring volunteers. God plays a role in it. All human beings deserving of affirmation.

### **Communication/Partnership-building:**

- I don't know if Week of Compassion has a convocation representative, or NAPAD or Convencion; if those representatives are part of that conversation. We are about to create our own convocation in our region. I think people of color denominations should be having a voice at these tables. One way to further anti-racism is to include these representatives. I'm about to connect our church to DOM. Does the Convocation help connect local churches to our global church? I have Jamaican members who are now connecting to DOM's work in Jamaica.
- Antiracism begins with representation--from people impacted; from constituency groups with invitations to be at tables and invitations to do the work
- Not to criticize, they're in different layers and they could communicate. I know that there are crises everywhere and I'm not asking to be treated differently. But five years after Maria, I haven't heard from them. I'm not interested, they're not interested, it's fine.
- [We're not even] starting with the money. We're starting with the relationship; we can raise the money. [a pastor's experience with outreach during disasters, which they want to share as a model for Week of Compassion.]
- The response to the fire in Oregon was different for white and Hispanic communities. We need to identify leaders in community because trust is completely different. The anglo church hasn't worked with the Hispanic community previously; how are they going to learn how to do it right now? In Medford the Chukkese community is organizing differently. We need to connect with the organization that has the trust of the people there so you can partner with them, and THEN the local church can be brought in to partner with that organization. In Oregon the divisions are clear between community and help. Low income communities live in different conditions. A trailer community – farm workers – was completely wiped out. But if the church doesn't have relationship with them, they won't tell the church the information.

- It's a tricky thing: asking questions of racially equitable distribution from a communication standpoint: it comes across as "oh you poor people who need our help." Or "all people of color are also poor and in need." We have to make the case solidly that because disasters are impacting neighborhoods of color at higher rates, we have to invest in neighborhoods of color at higher rates. We have to move away from "charity" language to language of building stronger communities with infrastructure to be resilient.

## **Advocacy**

- The denomination seems to be more and more progressive. You can't have someone like William Barber and not be progressive. What does it look like to hire clergy for that?... We need to create a counter-institutional voice, like Green Chalice but POLITICAL.
- Week of Compassion needs broader information about what community is in need. We need to record that. We need to have deep conversation with impacted people and communities about what they need. Then they can be involved with advocacy. We cannot program if we don't know about the audience.
- We could use education and being a voice for political causes to bring that awareness and to say that we're here to help.
- Let's identify that we can do many things – we're not powerless, we can do things to improve in that area. And perhaps to tell the churches that they are also powerful ... People ask me, "how can you do things with Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela?" We believe we can do it because God is that powerful. The church needs to believe that we are part of the solution and that this is important to do.

## **Value of Abundance:**

- Our community cannot get this information because there's no connection between each racial-ethnic congregation and Week of Compassion (NAPAD pastor) Siloing of racial ethnic ministries pits communities and congregations against each other in a divide/conquer strategy that leaves them competing for info and resources

## **Value of Collaboration:**

- In 18 years, Hurricane \_\_\_\_\_ was the one experience where we all came together, at least at the beginning. We have simple things in family crisis where we try to help each other, but it's nothing that requires a lot of work like this. Because I have experience with the containers, and I was the leader, that made it possible. I came from the business world and used to bring containers for goods from China to Colombia. I know how to deal with the ship company. Skills, vision, and leadership in that particular moment. But also there was collaboration.
- We come together in crisis, but then we come apart.

- In communities of color, they have had centuries of with the message “you don’t have anything and what you have is less than... [we need to collaborate] not in a “let me show you how it’s done” way but linking arms and learning from each other.
- Further collaborative work with Reconciliation and also DOM will further the work of justice. Week of Compassion is already working with refugees and asylum and migrant workers. Whenever there’s a programmatic piece, if we can strengthen the programming to bring to the forefront the need for systemic change (climate, economic, environmental, racial disparities) I would like to see it on the forefront of the program, to partner with regions so the policies you’re doing and advocacy, everyone working is knowledgeable and unafraid to say “no, this isn’t right.” We have to put “no” in our toolkits.
- When I hear Week of Compassion and Reconciliation, I see them working together to make both offices better.
- We could work with the Reconciliation office to be more sensitive to the Black and Brown need. As Terri said, we need to eliminate barriers to the love of Jesus. The disparity is there; the systems are there that need to be broken down. People of color are not able to provide all the needs of their families to winterize, summerize. A lot of people are not aware, or they turn their head. They need to become more aware of the needs of people.

#### **Value of Transparency:**

- [Our critical work now is] owning the history and finding new ways to move forward.

#### **Value of Both/And Thinking**

- Some measure of immediate response remains critical, even though long-term asset-based development is necessary. [A colleague] characterizes asset-based development as (a) building accountabilities to and (b) drawing on the leadership and assets of communities impacted. It’s very similar to the patterns of Global Ministries / Week of Compassion’s global response.
- I would urge Week of Compassion to be forthright about its antiracism commitments. Some spaces are more intentional than others about reaching people of color: [Of all the boards I’ve served on,] New Church has been more successful and Christian Church Foundation less so.

#### **Shift in Accountability:**

- Average Black congregations do not understand Week of Compassion. How can our congregations be partners?

- When you are at the bottom and you are fighting for mere presence, then other requirements [in grant applications] are more than you can take on.
- The shift in accountability requires:
  1. Education
  2. A Board that is inclusive
  3. Staffing of Color is imperative
  4. From the standpoint of the African American community, we have to do a major overhaul of leadership, education and intentionality of what we want them to be. We have two generations that have no interest in the larger church—none.
  5. Listening Groups to say what Week of Compassion needs to be. We need different strategies for building relationships with different historic groups...we can't be concerned about mass change. Ambassadors come from big churches... Mississippi Blvd. and Dale Braxton-like people. We need to find 10-20 ambassadors to be in partnership with and to be listening to: "What do you need Week of Compassion to be? What is a disaster? What have we learned and what are the new strategies necessary?" We have work to do
- What does asset-based accountability look like? How do you measure the effectiveness of shifting decision-making to leaders of color who may be driving value-focused decisions about which assets are important to communal life? And then how do you scale and replicate the learning?
- Accountability has to be something about the responsibility to a community's own culture/knowledge/way of life and not so personality driven (as Global Ministries has been; as Week of Compassion was). It means staying for the long-haul: not only go and help immediately, but stay, pray, share. It calls for a shift in communication with partners and communities. It also requires an evaluative process that yields different actions: we learned this...now we are going to change this.

### **Shift to Racial Equity and Justice**

- [There are] people who are impervious to insight/awareness: "my goodness is unquestionable." "It is a process of conflict resolution that involves unfettering the embeddedness of white dominance in all of our life.
- Take advantage of the time: redefine restoration. White people have to confront white people. Use power to dismantle hierarchy.
- White patriarchal supremacist culture is not a binary: it's not race only; it's not black/white. It is intersectional. It has to be undone by also addressing racial identity development. To confront white supremacy culture, we have to examine how it is at work.
- Willingness to change is first step: dissatisfaction with the status quo. "Unmotivated people are invulnerable to change"—Edwin Friedman
- Advocacy for a shift has to come from white male power wielders. We have to address the "Black tax," where a dollar doesn't go as far, leading to generational inequity. So

make sure it's 1000 to a Black church and 500 to a white church because of the systemic inequity that has existed...and also build into congregations the caveat of accountability to an antiracism analysis; otherwise it is reparations only, and systems don't change.

- We have to have a culture shift because the whole church is personality driven.
- We should adopt a model of accompaniment.
- White people have to TEACH white people accountability.
- Week of Compassion can come to any table and make the rules because the money is there. We need clear communication that Week of Compassion is looking to dismantle the racism in its mission/structures; it does not have the authority to dismantle racism in the whole church. What does equity mean for Week of Compassion, not what does it mean for the whole church. Vy has inherited a model of being that is anti-antiracist.

## **Appendix F: About the consultants**

**Lori Adams** (she/her/hers) has been working with national, regional, local and international nonprofit organizations for 35 years in the areas of operations, organizational development, and leader development. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Lori began working in institutional antiracism transformation beginning in 1995, co-leading the denominational work through the Office of the General Minister and President. Since then, she has served as a member of several antiracism transformation teams and facilitated antiracism and cultural competency work across the life of several national organizations. In 2015, Lori joined the staff of Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training. She now works on contract with Crossroads and a few other organizations. She lives in Boone County, IN with her spouse, Patti, with whom she has shared a home and a passion for anti-oppression work for 28 years.

**Sandhya Jha** (she/they) is an anti-oppression consultant who particularly loves helping organizations get Diversity/Equity/Inclusion teams off the ground. With 25 years in social justice history and 15 years of history with antiracism work, Sandhya is also founder and former executive director of the Oakland Peace Center, a collective of 40 organizations working to create equity, access, and dignity as the means of creating peace in Oakland and the Bay Area. Sandhya has worked in Congress, for a national religious liberty organization, for both regional and local ministries, and with a regional housing policy organization. An ordained pastor with a master's in public policy, Sandhya is comfortable in the pulpit, on the picket line, or hanging out with friends and friends-to-be over a good cup of tea and a good story. They recently submitted the manuscript for their fifth book with Chalice Press.