THE GREAT TURNING

Report from Black, Latinx, and White Gatherings

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Belonging and its counterpart annexation are profound forces affecting all of our communities.

Their power signals the significance of our work with three demographic groups (Black, Latinx, and white). By spending time in these three racially defined groups, we were able to dive deeply into questions at the heart of belonging that we would not have been able to address solely through a multiracial gathering.

Gathering Questions

What do we actually mean when we say our movements are grounded in the love of the people and the planet in these times?

How do we define and manifest the love we profess?

What are the places of thriving and growth we can claim? And where do our visions and practices fall short?

What must we do to disrupt our own internal spaces of brokenness and trauma and move toward a world of healing, joy, and possibility?

To seek to belong in the U.S., at this moment in time, means to navigate contested, often violent spaces where the force of white supremacy and its concurrent myth of a universal, singular story threatens to destroy us. We must engage the question of belonging in messier, but more truthful, ways if we are ever going to heal.

The conditions for belonging were not givens even in our own groups of Black, Latinx, and white leaders. Sexuality, gender, wealth, geography, ability, age, institutional affiliation, religion, and language all challenged any facile notion of belonging.

But, because we were able to explore the fullness of our stories and our truths outside the pressure of a white supremacist, universalizing gaze, we were able to be more honest about where we find ourselves at this moment.

The results were profound.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS REPORT

The report below outlines our methodologies, our findings, and our recommendations for future work with each population. Each group report, like each group, is different. They reflect the divergences in ways we understand our struggle and the primary questions we need to wrestle with at the moment. We did not try to neatly align the divergent experiences of our groups but rather allowed the methodologies and orientations of each group to speak for themselves.

While the groups were different, one clear throughline was the shared sense that demographic gatherings like these are essential now. Everyone who took part in our gatherings felt both a personal need for more time in the kind of spaces we convened and the larger cultural necessity of such spaces for creating the conditions for change that we will need in the years to come. Participants let us know that they longed for gatherings like ours where they don't just speak their truths, but also explore and interrogate those truths in communities with enough shared language that they can resonate, challenge, affirm, and deepen their sense of belonging.

Exploring the rich data, which we gleaned from these groups, and our follow-up conversations with participants, confirmed the need to continue this work. Gatherings like ours ultimately lead to more healthy multiracial spaces where we can ask honestly for what we need, give freely what we can, and love deeply without depleting ourselves by loving what won't love us back. They also confirmed our need to expand our reach to include other communities of color. In particular, as we deepen our understanding of belonging in intracommunal space and across communities, we feel the gap of Indigenous and Asian American demographic collaboration.

Our hope is that as you read this report, you will see the power and possibility of the gatherings we created, the necessity of deepening this engagement with these groups, and the need to include other communities whose stories also shape the larger narrative of spirit, identity, and belonging so essential to our collective survival.

BLACK DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

INTRODUCTION AND FRAMING

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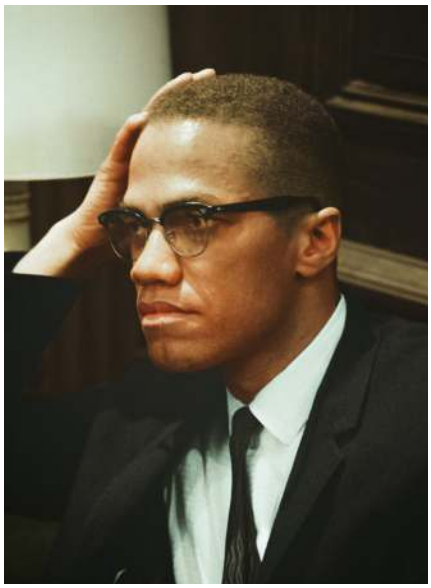
In his famous 1963 speech, "A Message to the Grassroots," Malcolm X stood before a diverse crowd of Black leaders in Detroit, Michigan and announced his desire to **"have an off-the-cuff conversation between you and me. US."**

Enjoining the crowd to "forget about our differences" in favor of finding a way to address the perpetual problem of global anti-Blackness—a social, political, and economic ordering that has caused suffering and death to the bodies, minds, and spirits of Black folks for centuries—Malcolm defined this "chat," like his ministry more broadly, as a search for an actionable way forward that embodied the full worth and dignity of Black people at its core. If America was defined as a place where Black folk "catch hell" because "it does not want us here," what would it take to create a different reality, one rooted in the concrete will, desire, and aspiration of Black people to be whole and free in a world that has historically treated such longing with disdain and disregard?

Such ruminations were neither casual nor academic. The combination of Malcolm's first-hand experience of the brutalizing impact of anti-Black racism and the merciless violence unleashed on Black folk in response to national and global freedom struggles highlighted the necessity for Black folks to imagine how the liberation they longed for could be achieved. Although Malcolm would not live long enough to concretely articulate what that liberation would look like, the opening moments of "A Message to the Grassroots" suggested that, above all else, Black folks required a spiritual and physical space apart: a space where, regardless of the differences of class, color, religion, gender, and education that obviously distinguished us, we must be united in the project of making a way for ourselves out of the no-way that is America.



Almost 60 years [after "A Message to the Grassroots" speech], the needs for space and liberation that Malcolm articulated still resonate.

Almost 60 years later, the needs for space and liberation that Malcolm articulated still resonate. Indeed, when we embarked on each of our conversations with the Black leaders we assembled for "The Great Turning Project," we called on the spirit of our ancestor Malcolm X to ground us in the work. We replaced his language of "forgetting our differences" with our recognition that multiplicity is one of the most potent weapons in the fight against supremacist logics. But Malcolm's particular wisdom lies in his ability to call Black folks into our Blackness from all corners of our being. Blackness as a fertile space of imagining freedom. Blackness as a disruptive space that undercuts the universalizing gaze of whiteness. Blackness as a space where we struggle because we love who we are and who we are becoming in the flesh.

The following reflections represent the thinking of a diverse collection of leaders who dared to explore what the substance of being called into our

Blackness might yield in this historical moment. What is the particular transformative work that Black leaders of faith and moral courage are called to bear witness to and take action around in these times? What resources do we need in order to make a way for us? And what stands in our way of our efforts?

The following explores these questions.

WHO ARE WE

Over the course of six weeks (February 2021–March 2021), our team of three interviewers gathered a dynamic group of 29 Black leaders from across a broad spectrum of belief, ideology, and theological orientation in six focus groups. From an original list of 67 folks, the subset we engaged included clergy and lay leaders working in or professionally affiliated with historically Black churches and other Protestant denominations, scholars and academics, large and small not-for-profit organizational leaders, and self-identified entrepreneurs, artists, and independent consultants working at the intersection of social justice and Black community empowerment.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF OUR BLACK LEADERS

15	Protestant Christians
14	Muslims
2	Jews
2	Buddhists
2	Members of African traditional religions
1	Unitarian Universalist
1	Atheist/humanist

Even as we strove for religious or spiritual diversity among participants, an overwhelming majority identified as Protestant Christian (15 folks). Of that 15, all but five identified as clergy from historically Black denominations. The remainder were members of majority white denominations, and three participants ministered within majority white settings. The other religious traditions break down along the following lines: four Muslims; two Jews, two Buddhists, two members of African traditional religions, and one Unitarian Universalist. There was also one atheist/humanist in the group.

Regardless of named affiliation, conversations were overwhelmingly steeped in the rhetoric and narratives of Christianity in general and a Black Church-based theopolitical understanding in particular. This was true even for folks who did not currently identify as Christian: Most of them had either converted to other traditions from Christianity or had family members still in the faith. Only three of the non-Christian participants identified as standing completely outside of that tradition. Regardless of affiliation, a significant number of people spoke of the value of multiple belonging or hybrid religious practice as a key survival skill for being Black and Christian in America. Four participants explicitly identified as belonging to multiple communities of practice.

Overall, the 29 participants hailed from 11 U.S. states: five from the Southeast (Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and Kentucky), six from the Midwest (Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota, and Indiana), and seven from the Northeast (Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York). Of the two who were not born in the U.S., one was originally from Nigeria and the other from Sudan.

In terms of gender identity, the group consisted of 10 cisgender heterosexual women, seven cisgender heterosexual men, four cisgender lesbian women, two transgender women, and three transgender men.

Our 90-minute conversations included six to nine participants who self-selected into groups based on their availability. We convened a total of six groups. Participants were not informed of the composition of their groups prior to their arrival but were provided with the questions in advance.

The goals for these conversations were three-fold:

To provide a space for honest engagement for Black leaders to collectively address who we are as a community and who we want to be for each other.

To interrogate what it means to hold ourselves and others accountable for the hurt and harm perpetrated against us.

To imagine a future rooted in moral visions that take the survival and thriving of Black lives seriously.

To accomplish these goals, the leadership team constructed a series of questions designed to elucidate the state of the current "theo-ethical" landscape of the U.S. Three issues dominated the news cycle at the time of our research: the coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 U.S. presidential election cycle, and the racial justice uprisings that followed the police killing of George Floyd. The questions were formulated in light of these issues.

Two questions, originally asked in the first three focus groups, offered narrative examples to help foreground issues of Black freedom and liberation and intracommunal belonging. The first focused on Black economic freedom, highlighting the increase in Black support for Donald Trump in the 2020 election to interrogate varying perspectives on freedom and economic empowerment in the Black community. The second amplified the imbalance in media coverage of police shootings of unarmed Black men versus murders of Black trans women.

DOMINANT ISSUES AT THE TIME OF OUR RESEARCH

Participants in the first three groups raised concerns about the narrative overlay of these questions. In particular, folks struggled with the notion of "inclusion and belonging" as a binary way to understand difference and identity in intracommunity conversations. They also challenged our question about belonging that highlighted the murder of Black transgender people. A participant's reflection is worth quoting at length in this context.

> *"'Inclusion and belonging,' when referring to Black trans people or any Black person across lines of difference, has an undertone as if somehow my identity of trans, queer, etc. could ever exclude me from being Black. My transness is always Black. While I think the intention of the question was for us to imagine how the multiplicity of Blackness can be valued, that word "inclusion" in many ways only applies to non-Black spaces, for me. A more resonant word for me would have been "affirming." Affirmation is what I am often desirous of with other Black people and what other Black folks desire from me when identity difference is present. While normally, I don't get tripped up into semantics, I think in this case the distinction is about how I want Black people to approach identity politics versus mainstream identity politics."*

We were grateful for these critiques and adjusted the questions accordingly. The revised set of questions listed in the box below invited participants to reflect on liberation, freedom, and belonging from their context and experience.

Our final focus group questions

Tell us about the spiritual background of your childhood and how it shaped your political worldview.

Black people have long used the language of freedom and liberation to describe our thriving. Yet there is a diversity of opinions about what that freedom looks like, particularly regarding capitalism, economic prosperity, and justice. In light of this diversity, what does Black freedom and liberation mean to you?

What does it mean for us to belong to each other as Black folks, given divisions of class, heteronormativity, and Christian supremacy exist among us? What is the nature of the intracommunal work that needs to happen, and how does that shape wider politics?

WHAT WE LEARNED

The Black Church is a primary institution of influence

There is no question that the most influential institution mentioned throughout our interviews was the Black Church. With retentions of West African spiritualities and roots in the "Invisible Institution" of slave religion, the Black Church in the United States emerged as a formal space created by Black folks for Black folks in the latter half of the 18th century. As Henry Louis Gates notes in his recent text, "The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This is Our Song," the Black Church is best understood as a cultural force that sought to combat the dehumanization, repression, and unrelenting violence toward Black people throughout American history. From the abolitionist movement to the Southern Freedom Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the Black Church has functioned as a central site of organized resistance to white supremacy.

The cultural hegemony of the Black Church nevertheless has pitfalls. From the earliest days of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, critics within the Black community have questioned Black communities' adoption of Christianity as counterintuitive to the goal of Black freedom. Christianity, they argued, was the religion of the oppressor, meant to give false comfort and hope, therefore "obscuring the causes of their oppression and reducing their urge to overturn that oppression" (Gates, p. xv). Those critiques continue today as some of our interviewees lamented the relative inaction of the majority of Black churches on contemporary social justice issues ranging from police brutality to LGBTQIA+ rights. Likewise, there was a sense that when the Black Church attempts to absorb or adopt practices and theologies from predominantly white Christian spaces, the Black Church begins to go askew and lose its potential impact as a prophetic voice and sacred space for communal care.

...the Black Church is best understood as a cultural force that sought to combat the dehumanization, repression, and unrelenting violence toward Black people throughout American history.

Another challenge raised by the dominance of the Black Church is the erasure of Black religious minorities and non-believers. When Blackness is assumed to be inherently Christian and thus at the center of Black spiritual life and imagination, how does this impact our understanding of what's possible for the themes that follow?

Belonging to each other: We are always already Black and creative

The importance of naming the ways we belong to each other—and to a Black diasporic world—was a recurring theme for every leader we engaged. While there was a proud acknowledgment of the historical and contemporary struggles Black folk face nationally and globally, struggle, suffering, and death were not described as what primarily unites us as Black people to each other and as national and global citizens. The white gaze makes those aspects of Black life central. Rather, much emphasis was placed on the creativity and resilience Black folks have exhibited

within the national and global context. Creativity and resilience were emphasized as an antidote to the evils of white supremacy and as a generative space of Black political and social belonging.

The arts, both in terms of their connection to political movements and as an anchor within the individual experiences of participants, figured prominently in how folks understood what it means to be connected to each other. Participants referenced the unifying and counter-cultural influence of Black cultural production. Reflecting on the importance of the arts as "a place of historical resistance and communal building," one participant asserted, "Give us the end of Reconstruction, and we'll give you the blues. Give us Jim Crow, and we'll give you jazz."

During the '80s and '90s in Harlem, African dance collectives emerged as critical sites for healing and political awakening following the demise of the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Arts movements.

This point was driven home when one participant spoke about the emergence of local African dance collectives she participated in throughout the '80s and '90s in Harlem. These spaces emerged as critical sites for healing and political awakening following the demise of the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Arts movements. Noting the role the state played in the infiltration and undercutting of these earlier movements, participants echoed the need for Black-centered spaces that Malcolm X referenced in the speech that grounded our interviews. Intracommunal spaces matter and, in fact, are pivotal to ground the community in its own integrity.

At the same time that participants lifted up Black belonging as rooted in creativity and resilience, they also reflected how Black folks sometimes assume a uniformity of belief and experience that ignores and silences intracommunal differences. The non-Abrahamic and humanist folks we interviewed especially drove this point home. As one participant noted, "We need to be bold in our interrogation of who has been excluded from within Black communities because exclusion of Black people by Black people hurts." This was a nuanced aspect of our conversations because exclusion was not necessarily a matter of being physically turned out of Black spaces. Rather, the folks we interviewed spoke about the dominance of Christian and cisgender-, heterosexual-, and class-based narratives as inherently exclusionary and not reflective of the fullness of Black identity. They rendered invisible the contributions that myriad configurations of Black folk historically have and currently make to Black survival.

This issue of narrative exclusion surfaced in two ways. First, the sheer number of Christians in relation to other folks in the group meant an outsized influence of Christian metaphors and imagery dominated the conversations. Folks of other faiths, especially those from non-Abrahamic traditions, mentioned finding it difficult to enter conversations

easily. Second, belonging that is wrongly characterized as "inclusion vs. exclusion" leads to narrative exclusion. This point was powerfully made by trans participants who emphasized, "We are always and already Black. We do not need to be 'included' in a reality that is always and already our own."

We belong to each other when we are open to learning from each other, and this is not an intellectual question but a spiritual one. The minute we start to discuss "who belongs here," we are straying from the goal: Black freedom.

Freedom and liberation: It's complicated

Participants offered multilayered, complex responses to the question of what liberation means for Black folks. Broadly speaking, liberation was defined as "the right to live, love, worship, and work with freedom from fear." But since Black folks in the U.S. "live in a situation of domestic violence," the capacity to truly exist free from fear is hard to come by. This realization caused some to question the viability of categories such as freedom and liberation as they have been typically defined. As long as we are imagining and attempting to practice freedom and liberation in the context of historical and contemporary anti-Blackness, how can our thoughts and actions actually challenge the status quo? This perspective rose to the forefront of our interviews, especially when the question of capitalism and the economy was addressed.

One participant, for example, announced:

> *"Liberation and freedom as western concepts have to die…Freedom as attached to militarism and the hierarchy of bodies is problematic, so is freedom as it emerges out of nationalism. What are we really after? I don't want to be free in the ways white people are free. I don't want to be free in the ways Black men envision themselves to be free."*

Few participants were able to land on a single notion of what liberation and freedom look like. They placed much stock on recovering the memory of Black radical traditions as key to informing how Black people can engage the political challenges to Black survival in these times.

Folks we interviewed spoke about the dominance of Christian and cisgender-, heterosexual-, and class-based narratives as inherently exclusionary and not reflective of the fullness of Black identity.

Liberation and capitalism

The overwhelming majority of participants had a very critical view of capitalism and did not see a meaningful link between it and any notion of liberation or freedom for Black people. The majority agreed that capitalism is "a predatory system" that is inextricably linked to white supremacy and limits the life chances of Black people. However, this disdain did not stop folks from seeing themselves as active participants in and beneficiaries of the system.

Respondents referred to the impact that defining Black success post-Civil Rights in terms of respectability and personal material gains has had on our people. "Striving has become about reaching for the perks of capitalism," one said, "But the perks of capitalism are really just about reaching for the perks of whiteness." And such striving has dulled our critique of the status quo.

Even as one participant specifically named capitalism "the sin of global society"—a perspective a majority of folks ultimately assented to—our conversations did not allow for deep reflection on what a world beyond capitalism might concretely look like. Folks did, however, offer examples of historical and emerging communities of practice embodied resistance to society as it is currently constructed. One such community, the Acorn Center for Restoration and Freedom, was lifted up as an experiment in Black land ownership and communal living, which seeks to acknowledge, rather than conceal, the theft of land from Indigenous people that is the basis of settler colonialism. The purpose of such spaces is to foster new ways for Black people to practice embodying freedom and liberation outside of the individualism and commodification at the heart of capitalism.

The significance of this example was amplified by the stories of many participants who cited the folkways, mutual aid societies, and abolitionist spaces that have long been an aspect of Black life. A capitalist critique lifted up by several participants was the impact of womanist and Black LGBTQIA+ analysis and framework to imagining a future liberating social order for Black people.

One participant noted, "The perks of capitalism are really just about reaching for the perks of whiteness."

Liberation and accountability

Participants spoke about the need for Black folks to continue to construct containers to figure out the breadth and depth of our accountability to one another. "We have to construct the theologies we need, [as] our movements are incubating a new moment," one participant said. We need to take the space that supports our praxis around what liberation looks like.

Critical steps in this process include:

- Constructing what Blackness means outside of white supremacist frameworks.
- Getting real about the role white liberals play in upholding white supremacy and the need to not appeal to them in our work.
- Understanding that being Black is political and being political is spiritual work.
- Recognizing America as a hostile environment in which to be Black and figuring out how to make accountability to our survival a key political strategy.
- Focusing accountability on the content and quality of how we relate to each other. The understanding of accountability as Black folks doing right by each other had several sources: Black religiosity and spirituality (especially womanist theological perspective), the arts, political affiliation, and ancestral belonging. Regardless of what inspired it, there was an assumption of some level of belonging to Blackness.
- Being accountable to our diversity. There is no monolithic Blackness, so we cannot set up dynamics where we allow one set of Black folks (i.e., cisgender, Christian, middle class) to include another.
- Recognizing we have done and continue to harm to each other while working to create spaces that can hold trauma and grief and offer pathways to healing.

"We have to construct the theologies we need [as] our movements are incubating a new moment."

The necessity of Black communal care

Overall, study participants placed a premium on Black communal spaces of care, seeing them as central to the survival and thriving of Black people. Black communal care spaces ensure our safety and survival through sharing human and material resources. They are based on the understanding that Black folks are all we have and need to survive.

Additionally, Black communal care was identified as a pivotal element of how participants defined belonging and liberation for Black people. Care, accountability, and interconnectedness to other Black people are all key in Black communal care or mutual aid.

From the Black Panthers' breakfast programs to contemporary mutual aid processes that have surfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic, Black people have been creating intentional processes to fill in the gap of resources, support, and genuine care created by state and social conditions.

With that, Black communal care programs have been targeted, policed, and criminalized throughout North American history. Black slaves were not allowed to gather and practice their own rituals; Black mothers were criminalized for receiving familial support while also receiving state resources; and Black Panther Parties were deemed terrorists for creating self-reliant systems of safety and security for their communities.

These historical obstacles notwithstanding, the leaders we interviewed refused to shy away from building intracommunal power to combat external threats of organized anti-Blackness and generate the political power and spiritual will for a world where the fullness of Black life is a powerful given.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It was a pleasure to interview the 29 leaders in this study. Without exception, they demonstrated a generosity of spirit and a candor about the need to deepen relationships with Black people to confront the challenges of this moment.

Inside a centuries-long search for love and justice in North America, and as a contribution to overcoming the global scourge of anti-Blackness, Black people must build a stronger foundation for belonging to and for each other. But this work is not easy.

In recognition of this fact, we closed each session with a word from another ancestor: our mother, Audre Lorde. In her poem, "Between Ourselves," Lorde declared, "Whenever I try to eat the words of easy Blackness as salvation, I taste the color of my grandmother's first betrayal."

"Less a negative assessment of Black communities' failings than a nascent blueprint for building a world worthy of the fullness of Black life, Lorde's declaration pointed us toward a potential next step for the work. That next step requires a multiplicity of Black leaders—within faith communities and beyond—to take the lead in creating the conditions for us to see, feel, hear, touch, and taste each other beyond the trauma, fracture, and not-knowing that upholds white supremacy and anti-Blackness.

As we contemplate taking that next step—as we continue to be in conversation and community with Black leaders whose who are embedded within the myriad, multiple contexts where Black life happens—may we answer our call to hold and love them hard and well.

"Whenever I try to eat the words of easy Blackness as salvation, I taste the color of my grandmother's first betrayal."

—*from* "Between Ourselves," *Audre Lorde*

LATINX DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

SOCIAL CONTEXT

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U.S. Latinx communities fracture over the U.S.' incoherence about the border. Since 1880, the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) has necessitated intermittent influxes of Latinx laborers in order to capitalize on technological advancement.

These successive generations of migrant laborers have joined Mexican families of the U.S. with tenure on this land since the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe, which saw Mexico ceding 55% of its territory to the U.S., including much of present-day Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah. This work has, by design, remained precarious. Mexicans have long been a reliable source of low-paid labor, for instance, in fruit picking, meatpacking, and most recently, in-home health care for aging populations.

A long-heralded decline in white Americans as a demographic group due to lowered birth rates is inversely related to a steady growth of Hispanic populations in the U.S. The non-Hispanic white-alone population is currently the majority group: It is both the largest racial and ethnic group and accounts for greater than a 50% share of the nation's total population. However, according to the US Census Bureau, by 2060, the share of this group is projected to be just 44%, if its population falls from 198 million in 2014 to 182 million in 2060. When the non-Hispanic white-alone population comprises less than 50% of the nation's total population, a point expected in 2044, the U.S. will become a majority-minority nation. No group will have a majority share of the total population, and the United States will become a plurality of racial and ethnic groups.

By 2060, 29% of the United States' population is projected to be Hispanic—more than one quarter of the total population.

By 2060, 29% of the United States is projected to be Hispanic—more than one quarter of the total population. Over the next four decades, as fertility rates are projected to continue falling and modest increases are projected for net international migration, the U.S. population is projected to grow more slowly, and the foreign-born population is projected to grow faster than the native-born population, such that more of the future U.S. population will be foreign-born. Differences in growth between the two groups are projected to taper over time, and the distribution of the population by nativity is projected to remain relatively stable in the last decades of the projections.

This obvious shift for white Americans, from numerical dominance into numerical decline, has occasioned profound status anxiety; this anxiety is especially acute in rural communities, where economic downturns have been unsuccessfully addressed by the U.S. government.

Latinx workers are a vulnerable scapegoat for these persistent problems. During his tenure, President Trump used similar rhetoric against Chinese and Latinx peoples; these groups stood in for threats to American well-being and the U.S.' preeminence in the world. Within these narratives, American people are beset from both without and within. As did Trump before him, President Biden depicts China as a strong economic competitor that poses threats to U.S. well-being and thus maintains the notion of a vulnerable U.S. Yet, Latinx peoples are not thought of as an enemy or competitor group. Instead, they form a constant source of labor for the United States, adding to the overall GDP and paying taxes often without recognition, benefits or due protections in return. Their work forms part of the underclass of poorly protected and remunerated labor that keeps the U.S.' bloated and exploitative economy afloat.

Nevertheless, both white Americans and Latinx people with long tenure in the U.S. readily turn a suspicious eye on newcomers they mistakenly believe are hurting American outcomes. White Americans often compound their concerns for America's economic fates with ethno-traditional sentiment: the idea that as white Americans, they are who America is for or should work for. Trump's "America First" and "forgotten man and woman" discourses turned people in the U.S. against each other by exacerbating feelings of displacement and loss.

With this context in mind, we engaged three listening groups on the subject of the last four years.

METHOD

Together, we convened three listening groups with a total of 19 informants who ranged from 20 years old to 65 years old. Our informants spanned those from 0.5 generations—that is, leaders who are the first from their families to come to the U.S.—to others with five generations of tenure in U.S. borderlands. Participants from 0.5–1 generations came from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Brazil, Peru, Chile, and Mexico. Those with longer tenure in the U.S. were from Miami, Florida; Central and South Texas; and Baja, California. Together, they represent what historian Dan Ramirez has named Latino USA, the northernmost outpost of Latin America.

We conducted three-hour Zoom interviews and a survey, which together comprised our mixed-methods approach.

Our goals for this group were to survey attitudes and viewpoints among Latinx leaders on the following topics:

How did the Trump era affect Latinx people?

What are the key challenges to and opportunities for coalescing faith-based political will and mobilization?

What unites Latinx peoples?

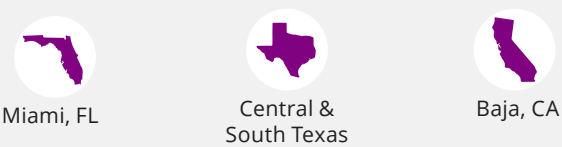
GROUP COMPOSITION

Participants	Age range	Generations in US
19	**20–65** years old	**0.5–5**

GEOGRAPHY

Participants from 0.5–1 generations came from:

Participants from 2–5 generations came from:



KEY THEMES

The Trump years amplified divisions within and between Latinx groups

Trump's approach did not affect all Latinx peoples equally. Divisions within Latinx groups were deepened further as people and groups tried to dissociate themselves from the "rapists" and "thugs" Trump said were coming across the border. There have always However, differences—like those between Cuban-Americans and recent arrivals from Mexico or between first and fourth generation Latinx people—have never been wider.

Before the Trump administration, dropout rates had declined across the southwest states but the years of the Trump administration saw a rise in incarceration rates for Latinx. The effects weren't evenly spread across all Latinx groups, and incarceration rates varied across Indigenous, Black, and Chicano/Mexican-American communities. As these variations are so apparent to our communities, Latinx people have an incentive to identify or un-identify with these respective terms, identities, and experiences.

Overall, Latinx groups experienced Trump differently, and these differences were also experienced within groups. Nearly every Cuban-American Catholic in Miami voted for Trump; nearly every Cuban-American Catholic outside of Miami voted for Biden. Even within the narrow Cuban-American vote, the distinctive texture of Miami can redefine who Cuban-Americans are. Mexican-American communities hold complicated stories depending on the generations in which people arrived. Many recent Mexican-American immigrants lived in daily terror under Trump, while second, third, and fourth generation folks were some of his most passionate supporters. The Trump era affected Latinx people in diverse ways, but that diversity and complexity have yet to be closely examined.

Catholics and Protestants united against border family separations

In the Southwest, Roman Catholic Latinx churches and bishops largely created conditions to act compassionately in the face of the humanitarian crisis at the border. Of course, there were exceptions across Christian leadership, but even New York's Cardinal Dolan, who sided with many of Trump's policies, spoke publicly about the violence of family separation.

Mainline Protestants, especially those from more liberal congregations, also saw the crisis on the border as a moment for the church to step in. The violence of

children locked in cages or separated from families seemed to be seen across all churches as a moral wrong. Their approaches to addressing these concerns, however, were mixed, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic started to take over the national conversation in early 2020. This convergence of Latinx religious adherents on this theme is a clear opportunity and an unexpected source of common sentiment in a divided era.

The theopolitics of Latinx For Trump

The dynamic tensions between pilgrim and settler models for Latinx populations and churches have been present since the acquisition of northern Mexico (1848) and the Hispanic Caribbean (1898). But the Latinx church occupies an unexpected and jarring juncture in 2020 at the end of the Trump era. The patterns and models for being a church have been tested and stressed to an extent not seen in recent memory. The current moment challenges churches in the United States to reconsider their comfort zone and become clear about their privilege atop today's global economic system.

New, amplified voices are calling into question longstanding presumptions of this nation being rooted in Christian principles and history, while decrying the original national sin of racism, whose imprint still presses down heavily on the nation's neck. Loyalty to the American Zion has stopped some U.S.-born Latinx Christians from perceiving the precarious plight of their non-citizens in the U.S. and the vulnerable state of many believers in the Global South.

Yet, many believers continue to live out the gospel in contingent settings—villages, favelas, slums, barrios, colonias, and migrant camps—that cause them to depend on divine succor for basic human needs. They have known war, violence, persecution, ecological disaster, famine, and displacement. That is why John's Revelation resonated so loudly in the ears of persecuted people and why its promise of a new Jerusalem, where a just God sets everything right, seemed so comforting to them (Revelation 21). Such sentiments are rarely heard today among more privileged Christians who seemingly feel at ease in America and angrily leap to the defense of its national myths. The converging crises have unsettled that ease.

New, amplified voices are calling into question longstanding presumptions of this nation being rooted in Christian principles and history, while decrying the original national sin of racism.

Latinx people: Not a collective voice but a coalition

Our groups said "no"— and this was a hard "no"—to a collective identityor the need for one.

They agreed that Latinx priorities should revolve around what it takes to build strong Latinx communities and how Latinx can be in dialogue with adjacent communities—particularly Black folks—in order to promote policies that will help both groups, acknowledging Latinx groups include Afro-Latinx populations.

Differences across regions and country of origin offer broader diversity than most pundits account for. Groups within the broader U.S. Latinx context are better seen as a coalition of Latinx communities rather than a community. While much is shared across our contexts, the thing that gathers Latinx groups is not positive: colonization by either Spanish or U.S. forces. The complexities of identity in the U.S. also compound this with the near-complete erasure of Black and Indigenous people within the broader Latinx community.

For collective action, a coalition (as opposed to distillation of difference under the U.S. census) is desirable because it can honor the needs of different regional, racial, and ethnic groups of Latinx people across the country. The greatest contemporary challenge is to allow space for that to happen. In previous generations, the American Dream and desire to be included in the U.S. drove community members to shape a unified identity, one driven by those with power outside and within the Latinx community.

However, coalitions around causes and shared struggles have proven to be effective in generating regional change. For example, a collaboration between the Filipino and Mexican/Mexican-American farmworkers in California yielded increased benefits for all Latinos and the field-workers in the AAPI community. Coalitions like this that allow for differences between our communities to exist and remain highly visible can help change the material conditions for everyone.

We recognize that some groups currently identified with "Latinx" will not want to be associated with this coalition and may opt out or define themselves as "not like them." This has always been the case. Nevertheless, coalitions are the way to build power, and they do not dissolve or necessitate the distillation of difference.

We recognize that some groups currently identified with "Latinx" will not want to be associated with this coalition and may opt out or define themselves as "not like them."

Agenda-setting for the future

Many participants would like to see the southern border, a site and source of many injustices and rolling crises in the U.S., really proactively addressed with a new policy and made an immediate priority. For instance, the Biden administration will need to hire more immigration judges to process migrants and asylum seekers—particularly children—faster and eliminate horrible border camps. President Biden also needs to track down the children "lost" by the Trump administration and reunite them with their families. The DREAM Act should be made permanent, and people who are brought here at a young age should be given a path to citizenship.

Many of our respondents reported wanting to invest more public monies and resources into public universities and community colleges. These schools serve the most diverse populations in the country, and a major investment in them will help first-generation, poor, and minority folks have better access to education. Also, public education in historically low-income, working-class Latinx neighborhoods needs more funding and care.

During our meetings, respondents reported feeling that a comprehensive infrastructure plan (such as the legislation later passed by the Biden administration) would create thousands of jobs for working people, including Latinx people in construction, concrete pouring, and similar roles. Such a plan would restore failing infrastructure and also become a jobs program, promoting and creating jobs in green energy. Participants also argued that it should be easier to unionize, and the minimum wage needs to be increased.

Finally, the national rhetoric has to move to a place that values Latinx Americans, their work, and their place within U.S. society. Biden can move that along by affirming Latinx people and emphasizing what we contribute to this country.

The national rhetoric has to move to a place that values Latinx Americans, their work, and their place within U.S. society.

CONCLUSIONS

Establishing a strategic, coalitional Latinx identity would help mobilize the Latinx vote. However, such voting-centric discourse does not equal social power: Real social power comes from being in relationship with each other.

Shared initiatives can be a way to develop these relationships. Border reform and education seem promising rallying points.

Mobilizing faith and justice movement partnerships can benefit Latinx people and other people of color. Latinx churches are a strong collective of institutions; bringing them into deeper partnership with movement leadership and voting organizations can strengthen Latinx civic participation.

Establishing a strategic, coalitional Latinx identity would help mobilize the Latinx vote.

Brining Latinx churches into deeper partnership with movement leadership can strengthen Latinx civic participation.

Border reform and education are promising rallying points for fostering Latinx relationships.

WHITE DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

AUTHORS

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We were blessed with a powerful team for this work, including our key organizing partner, **Shifra Bronznick**, our social change resident at Auburn. We were also held by the skillful and generous facilitation of **Rebecca Mintz** and **Julia Metzger-Traber**.

GROUP DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

+ **Practitioners vs. thought leaders**
+ **Depth of engagement**
+ **Diversity**
  Geography, gender, gender identity, sexual orientations, religion, class, and age
+ **Spirituality vs. religiousness**

A movement for dismantling white supremacy toward racial justice and collective liberation requires a multiplicity of strategies. Thus, we understood it to be necessary as part of this project, "Readying Black, Latinx, and White Communities of Faith and Moral Courage for the Great Turning," to specifically convene white folks actively working with other white folks in education, organizing, and healing.

To that end, we convened 15 white participants, three Auburn project leaders, and two paid facilitators facilitators—20 people total, which allowed us to see each other's faces at once on a shared Zoom screen. We began with an invitation to known leaders in our own circles of activism and commitment, and asked them to recommend other people.

We made a number of strategic choices about who we wanted in the "Zoom room," which were as significant in terms of who wasn't in the room as who was. While we wanted participants to share an "axis of similarity," as one of our facilitators put it, they were also diverse.

We prioritized:

Practitioners: In the last few years, there has been an onslaught of books about navigating white supremacy culture, written for and by white folks. That work is important. For the purposes of this gathering, we wanted to prioritize people who had a depth of experience working and living in a multiracial space while dismantling white supremacy culture with white folks. We, therefore, did not include those whose primary engagement was as a thought leader or those who were new to the field.

Depth of engagement over the size of the group: White folks are disproportionately the material beneficiaries of white supremacy culture, even though it is spiritual and psychically bankrupt for all people. As a result, white folks working through white supremacy culture often also navigate shame, guilt, suspicion of other white folks in the field, dread, and more. For these reasons, we knew that it would be critical to do deep relational work with the group. Thus, we made a decision to keep our group size to what could be seen on a single Zoom screen.

Diversity of geography, gender, gender identity, sexual orientations, religion, class, and age

Geography: Some of our most interesting learnings emerged because of our deliberate approach to place and difference. We wanted to be sure that we included folks organizing across different regions of the U.S. and in rural and small towns as well as urban areas. Thus, our group covered all four large geographical regions and spanned from people working nationally, to large cities, to small towns, to rural farms.

Gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation: We knew that the experiences of transgender and genderqueer folks in particular would offer a different access point to navigating white supremacy culture. So we ensured transgender people, nonbinary folks, and those whose work has come out of LGBTQIA+ organizing participated in the group. Ultimately, nearly half of the participants identified as LGBTQIA+.

Religion: Experiences of religious diversity also offered an important vantage point for us. Jewish participants, nearly a quarter of the group, spoke to the long, complex history in the relationship between antisemitism and racism, not often addressed effectively in resistance to white supremacy culture.

Class: Perhaps most compelling, including working-class organizers helped us draw out the cultural bypassing many progressive white folks perpetuate by labeling poor and working-class white people (often Evangelical Christian and Southern) as the primary perpetrators of white supremacy.

Age: Our group was intergenerational. We sought to connect and hear from people who have been in iterations of this work for decades, as well as individuals who are part of millennial leadership.

Ability: Finally, while we did not prioritize differences in ability in advance (something we would correct for moving forward), participants varied in ability and gave us insights into both our facilitation and the often underappreciated tolls of white supremacy culture on disabled people. This became key to our findings.

Prioritizing spirituality over religion: Our gathering was unequivocally spiritual from the discussion framing to our goals and outcomes. One of our working assumptions was that dismantling and healing from white supremacy culture is, first and foremost, spiritual work. We, therefore, chose people with a deep spiritual commitment and practice. Many clergy and religious leaders in the room worked primarily in a congregational setting, but we did not prioritize that experience over the work of organizing in non-religious spaces.

METHODOLOGY

We engaged in one-on-one calls with each invited participant before the gathering; asked the group to commit to five hours together over two days of 2.5-hour sessions; and followed up with small group conversations conversations with two to three members.

This methodology allowed the experiences and expectations of the participants to inform the design of our gathering and our prior weekly facilitator planning meetings. The small group conversations after the event enabled us to hear how we might communicate the themes and experiences from our gathering to a larger public to continue this good work in larger contexts.

Given the urgency of the questions this project poses, our initial vision for this group was two-fold:

Connection—We encouraged participants to listen and share experiences and wisdom about the urgent challenges of this moment. We also reflected on where we want to find ourselves four years from now;

Motion—We wanted to build and sustain momentum. We aimed to develop shared clarity, strategy, and vision among diverse actors who are committed to racial healing work, dismantling white supremacy, and building a more just world.

Our methodology, which prioritized depth of relationship, reflected our best thinking on how to materialize this vision.

THEMES/OUTCOMES

Participants repeatedly remarked on the high level of trust and vulnerability they experienced in the space.

This was particularly notable given the dynamics of white antiracism cultures, which often include distrust, suspicion of fraudulence, a need to prove one's credentials, guilt, and shame.

Our careful prework helped us curate this rare experience. More importantly, it signals a gap in the field as we think about how to grow white collective participation in antiracism and racial justice work. There is a need for spaces where folks on a committed journey can drop into deep conversation with trust, mutuality, and accountability, without having to prove credentials first. We must grow the resiliency and strength of those committed to this work while galvanizing more white folks in the U.S.

The second theme was less surprising: the acute need to address class animosity and elitism, which characterizes much of white antiracism work.

Participants emphasized that contemporary white antiracist expectations—that white folks should have completed a canon of readings and be familiar with concepts like "white fragility" and "white privilege," presuming these readings and concepts on their own lead to deep, facile antiracism commitment—are simply not aligned with the experiences of many working-class, rural, or Southern people. Instead, these expectations can alienate them.

In addition, evangelical or pentacostal labels often become shorthand to discount white working-class, poor, and rural culture, compounding the ways religious identity functions as a class marker. Naming this as a problem for antiracist white community-building is not to say that white supremacy doesn't exist in poorer evangelical and pentecostal spaces or mainline Christian spaces (whether affluent, middle-class, or poor). Rather, it is to say that class, geography, and conservative religious identity perniciously reinforce each other in the popular imagination about race. This reinforcement leaves people in poor and rural communities feeling left out of the national conversation on dismantling white supremacy. It also leaves white folks in more affluent contexts bereft of robust class analysis. Meaningful, transformational racial justice work must break through this chasm.

White folks who experience significant socioeconomic peril and exploitation might be the most stalwart and long-term committed partners in a movement for liberation. Our project revealed a recognition that ending white supremacy represents a shared, mutual interest because white supremacy enables class exploitation—an idea that the organization Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) repeatedly asserts in its movement-building. There's a vital need for community organizing of folks who are deeply impacted by the crushing effects of capitalism. Participants noted an opportunity to address the elitism in antiracism movements while simultaneously base-building in multiracial, low-income communities, particularly in the South.

Meaningful, transformational racial justice work must break through the chasm between classes.

A third, distinct, long-term area of focus emerged around the importance of working with bodies, rituals, and healing spaces.

Attentiveness to embodied practitioners fosters a culture of antiracism and invites attention to the ancestral grief, loss, and assimilation to white supremacy that has spiritually and culturally decimated white people. We found it complicated to convene white people "as white people" amidst the normal pressure to be complicit with white supremacy and an exploitative culture of whiteness. This made our work creating containers of embodiment and community-building all the more important. In retrospect, our decision to convene a small group and work carefully and slowly in our preparation time was central to our success. However, very few spaces beyond our group can hold and grow such practices—especially on a national level.

This lack represents an area of need that is distinct from questions about right analysis or moral practice, though it overlaps. Might white antiracism grow its own culture or spiritual creativity and construction that is simultaneously healing for white people and deeply accountable to communities of color? Could this growth emerge connected to thought and action towards collective reparations and reparative justice as part of our collective healing? Where and how might such communities of practice be nourished and grown? Our group returned to these questions time and again with yearning, clarity, and few answers or models.

Participants repeatedly invoked a need for trustworthy connection with others on wisdom-seeking white antiracist journeys.

Many participants spoke about their need for journey and thought partners in response to pervasive experiences of isolation around embodiment in or racialization as white—even among those activated in resistance to white supremacy, explicitly focused on the problem of whiteness, and committed to the multiracial work of racial justice. Isolation in this population is high and powerful. We need to learn from one another, and we must have a diversity of experiences of whiteness in these learning spaces to combat emerging "antiracist orthodoxies" that flatten whiteness. Participants repeatedly invoked a need for trustworthy connection with others on wisdom-seeking white antiracist journeys.

Directly connected to this yearning was clear need for spaces where we can show up in our messiness as we create new models for repair, reparations, and accountability and work to get white people to divest from or share resources. We need communities of trust that are both locally rooted and accountable as well as nationally supported and broadly networked.

A few additional learnings:

National groups are still necessary. Localized work is essential but can be incredibly difficult and alienating. National groups can diminish isolation and offer constructive models for local antiracist organizers working through stuck spaces.

White folks entering this work from divergent and marginalized identities (such as trans, working-class, poor, queer, Jewish, or disabled) have different perspectives on whiteness. In this time of great historical, cultural, economic and ecological transition the question of belonging is paramount. Who are we inside of our identities as members of racialized groups? How do we belong within those groups, and how do the complexities of class, gender, ability, and more impact that sense of belonging? How do we navigate and negotiate the hurt and harm we cause one another, and how do insights that we glean from such intra-communal musings inform our capacity to imagine and build a more just world?

This project engages intensive conversations with Black, Latinx and White leaders of faith and moral courage around these themes and more.

Even for the most seasoned organizer, activist, or trainer, doing antiracist work as a white co-conspirator can be complicated and isolating. When we create conditions in which people don't feel the need to perform their antiracism, we see humility, vulnerability, and deep appreciation for each other emerge. The feeling of isolation and loneliness has been a strong feature for white folks doing antiracist work, even when it is possible to meet in person. While we did not talk extensively about the further isolating effects of COVID-19 in our group, it clearly compounds and intensifies such feelings of isolation. It is hard to build movements from that place of vulnerability—whether in-person or virtually—but that is what's being called for right now.

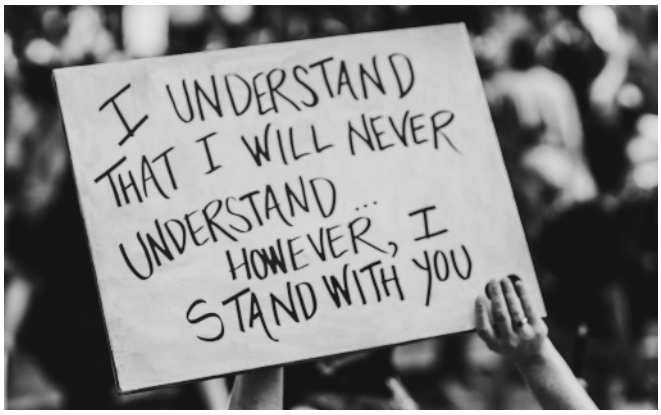
Even for the most seasoned organizer, activist, or trainer, doing antiracist work as a white co-conspirator can be complicated and isolating.

Our project reaffirmed the necessity of national and regional work, not as a substitute for work on the ground but as an auxiliary to it. Most people would see the local context as the core building block for resilient racial justice work. Yet those spaces can at times become too intimate, so people will need larger spaces for support, inspiration, healing, and resilience. In addition, many white folks engaged in this work in deep, long-term ways, especially those in non-rural contexts, have few interlocutors physically near them or their region.

When discussing white antiracism work, much attention goes to moving those on the radical right while abandoning those who are the most committed to transforming the system we have. White folks who have devoted their lives to dismantling antiracism are a small, but mighty, group worthy of our time, energy, and resources.

CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

We were not surprised to learn that people are cultivating powerful, wise, and nuanced activist work for long-term, transformative social change all over the country, in diverse contexts and with distinct foci. Nor were we surprised to learn that white leaders are part of that.



However, the connections we created in five hours of focused attention on our deepest questions and yearnings in response—specifically on what we as white activists have learned in recent years—did surprise us. These connections were intense and hold rich promise for the future. Our presentation material for our gathering can be found on page 34. It provides a sense for the contours of our conversations before and during our time together. The time flew by because the points of dialogue and questions were new, necessary, and alive and the people gathered were ready.

Many participants reflected on how rejuvenating this gathering was. We learned that we can know the conundrums white supremacy creates for people embodied as white in the work of justice; together we can generate, envision, and manifest responses to it as we expand the community committed to that work.

We learned that to facilitate a gathering of white people doing antiracism work, it is critical to invest in relationship-building at the start and to be transparent about how that relationship-building informs the agenda. Our approach was to create a poem out of things participants said in our one-on-one conversations (page 33). This created a context for trust-building. People settled into the time together quickly and deeply.

APPENDIX: This poem, *A Tapestry of Wisdom*, was taken directly from the words of the white participants in the white group. It was compiled by Julia Metzger-Traber, Rebecca Mintz, Shifra Bronznick, Jennifer Harvey, and Sharon Groves.

COLLECTIVE POEM

A Tapestry of Wisdom

March 9, 2021

How do we hold the urgency of the moment, while also knowing that there's 1,000 other rooms of people that are figuring shit out right now too, and they're doing an awesome job of it.

I love that there is so much experimentation in the field these days... Experimentation leads to the innovation that will get us to liberation, but I wonder how we can organize as we experiment

I am really trying to hold the question: what does it look like for white folks to be whole human beings?

There are people, you know, in spaces where folks have been raced as white, there are people who want to be human

What do religious and spiritual communities offer in the kind of unconditional belonging... that reconnection and re-embodiment. ...practicing the empathy muscle?

It just has to be a weekly thing ...it has to be a part of the liturgy. It has to be obvious and inherent in everything you're doing or it gets placed on the calendar-- like summers when we're gonna do racism."

How do we have an honest conversation about people who have been alienated by propaganda by both the right and the left . . . ? How can we show we are lowering the barriers to participation?

I talk about this work in terms of who do I love enough to go down in flames, because that's ultimately I think at some point going to happen and I think that's a big part of this work that I don't know, and the truth is, I just don't know how we do that. I just know it's imperative that we do.

" .... the doing of the collective organizing work is spiritual AND on the other side of that coin is the necessity of tending to our internal lives. They feed each other. . . .

I think the power is in the connection to an ancient tradition. It is just a very different sense of time. Spiritually rooted people are connected to something that is very, very old, whether it's a book, or a tree, or a ritual they are tapping into ancient wisdom. I think the ability to step out of time and treat time differently comes out of a spiritual depth. Time gets ritualized. It expands.

Who am I accountable to? What does that look like? What does it mean to stand in embodied accountability.

as the inheritors of whiteness: do we feel comfortable giving ourselves grace to have accountability be a gift and an opportunity?

How do we make our movement and

particularly the surge of that work, an irresistible, not only political home, but spiritual home for folks of all kinds of traditions, but also for disaffected white Christians, who, you know, don't feel safe in their churches anymore but they still want to love Jesus?

How does blaming everything on white evangelicals actually harm our movement?

The intersections of antisemitism and whiteness, and . . . how they intersect, and how they don't. . . The specificity of this history can teach something in particular. (DK)...the way whiteness changes and shifts to keep power in place. Without those stories we don't have that way to talk about whiteness as well.

I realize that our nervous systems may not be able to handle the generational stuff but what's the spiritual practice that helps us move into a much more embodied, grounded connected space?

Chaos is a surprise for white people. They're like, "Who knew the world was chaotic" and I'm thinking --in my entire work as a pastor my job has been to convince people that chaos was the norm, not the exception.

I will take somebody on the street, who uses whatever slurs, but whose heart is in the work and who is going to stick to it, over somebody who's got the right language any day of the week and twice on Sunday. Because if you're born in it, you're transformed through stories, if you have lived experience, from poverty or other forms of oppression and your heart is in it, you're going to stay in the fight longer.

I don't know where to actually ask the question that I'm curious about. I . . . don't know where the next language, . . . I'm wanting to engage in what will be.

There's nothing in whiteness that taught me how to do deep relationships. I just had to make it up, because I fell deeply in love. And, I have yet to see the movement articulate the work in a way that really talks about the ways of heartbreak. . .

The reckoning that we need to risk and to give something up.

That reconnection and re-embodiment... practicing the empathy muscle

I...don't know where the next language...will be.

Can we give ourselves grace to have accountability be a gift and an opportunity?

Who do I love enough to go down in flames

How . . . do we address that slow soul work ...?

The specificity of this history

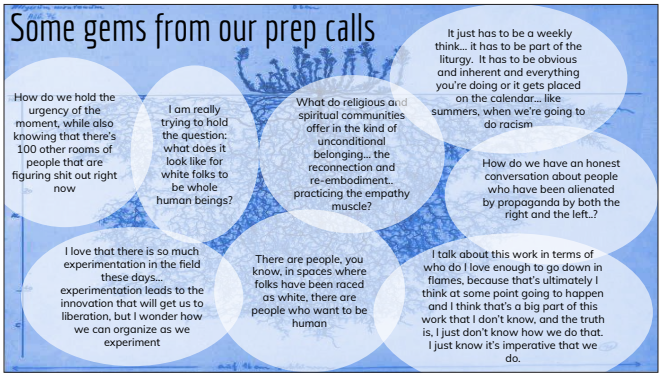
The ways of heartbreak

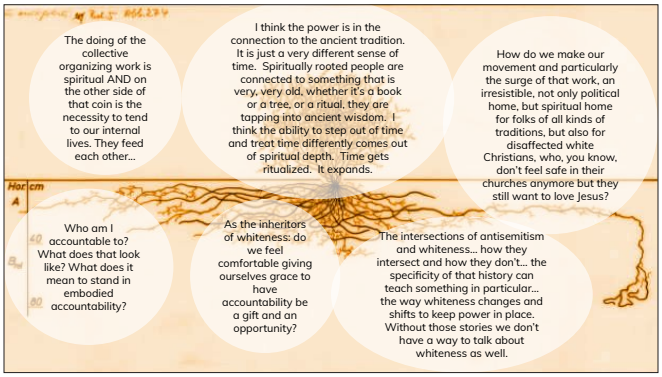
Time expands

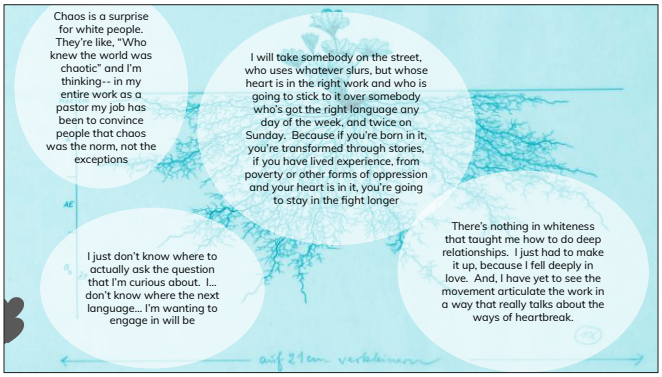
Because if you're born in it, you're transformed through stories,

I just had to make it up, because I fell deeply in love.

APPENDIX: This powerpoint was designed and used by the facilitators of the white group, Julia Metzger-Traber and Rebecca Mintz.







The purpose of this gathering is to...

- Cultivate and nurture community from across the country around "this work"
- Share from our own experiences to
  - bear witness
  - to a growing base of collective knowledge
  - about how we are doing "this work" well,
  - and how we can continue to develop it.

In service of what?
Of racial justice, collective liberation, the other world that is possible if we listen closely.

Our humble hopes

At the end of these sessions, we will have spent our time well if we:

- Feel more connected to each other in a genuine, heart-centered way
- Have an experience of deep, honest sharing in a spirit-centered space
- Know that there are people all over doing this work and doing it well
- Have some new ideas for things we want to try as we do our work

Intros: My people are...

In 8 mins, write a poem about the communities you live your life in and with.

When you do "this work," who are you doing it with? Who are you doing it for?

Sharing with the whole group:

- Names,
- Pronouns,
- Location and land acknowledgement, and
- Poem

Trio time: Who ARE our people?

~ 4 mins for each person to share

- What shape is this landscape taking for you and "your people" these days?
- What are you grappling with in working with "white people" around "whiteness?"
- What are you learning about how we can do "this work" with white folks in a way that honors all of our intersecting identities?

1 min for listeners to share "resonances"

- "I heard you say…"
- "I resonated with…"
- "When you said ___, I felt ____."
- No advice :)

At the the end of individual shares, you'll have another 5 mins for open reflection in trios.

Whole group time: What are we learning?

- Flattening whiteness doesn't give us the necessary tools to
- There's so much potential about integrating identities
- A visceral pain among white southerners coming to awareness about racism
- How doe shame show up differntly regionally?
- I'm also super interested in the embodiment practices that help white folx interrupt white supremacy's demand of cutting off empathy in white bodies.... we talked about how to help people move into their grief around white supremacy and our legacies of destruction that are ours...and that this re-embodiment holds so much promise for healing...
- Thie importance of this frame of "mutuality"-- how that functions in SURJ
- .for the sake of what? -- how do we move toward organizing people. The ways the system harms us materially and spiritually. Engage that mutual interest
- The ways anti-blackness harms poor whtie people
- Every institution was built to harm black people-- "we" need to dismantle white supremacy for our own liberation
- Name the ways that I myself have been harmed within this systme

Whole group time: What are we learning?

- To Evelyn's point— totally agree- I spend a lot of time asking organizing which white people, how, why, and in order to do what together?
- What is it about Christianity that upholds white supremacy?
- Individualization of change vs challenging the systems and institutions
- Whiplash in different spaces-- constant negotiation between different groups of white people
  - Translation between how people get to their interests eventually
- Why are we tryign to move white people? FOr the sake of what?
- How has change happened in this country? Who is necessary for that change and who is definitely not necessary for that change
  - Not leave everyone behind? The movement will leave people behind when the movement wins
  - Are we trying to work with people who are already aligned to move the work? Or are we trying to get a larger and larger percentage of white people to agree and move in a certain way
  - Depending on whcih way we think change happens impacts a lot which white people we need ot organize and why?
  - Who do we need to focus on? Who do we not?

Whole group time: What are we learning?

- The idea of "cadre formation" in organizing-- you train up the special people-- people from elite families,
  - This doesn't work. This can't be how it works
  - We're not able to look about the way philanthropy replicates that
  - At what scale -- are we replicating Harvard. The test is rigged, the game is rigged. Millions of people, most of whom who
  - Wide and shallow organizing
  - What has shaped even the way we think about anti-racist organizing
  - How did the rules get shaped?
- I think intentional groups are so good- and how to hold ourselves to the tools that brings us with the many and not the few....I would love to know what people here know about that
- I'm also wondering about an eco-system approach that can accommodate the different ways we all do this work...where we dont all have to do the same work in the same way but collectively we're supporting the whole...

Whole group time: What are we learning?

- The idea of "cadre formation" in organizing-- you train up the special people-- people from elite families,
  - This doesn't work. This can't be how it works
  - We're not able to look about the way philanthropy replicates that
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  - How did the rules get shaped?
- I think intentional groups are so good- and how to hold ourselves to the tools that brings us with the many and not the few....I would love to know what people here know about that
- I'm also wondering about an eco-system approach that can accommodate the different ways we all do this work...where we dont all have to do the same work in the same way but collectively we're supporting the whole...

Day 2
Welcome back

Humble Hopes for today:

1. What's most enlivening in the work for each of us? What transformation and shifts are you witnessing and feeling?

2. What are you grappling with? What's on the edge for you right now? What do you really not know about this work?

Practices for today

- Goals
  - Create more access all of us in the room
  - Slow down
  - Deepen presence

- Practices
  - Use chat function mindfully: *"Is what I am about to say/do carrying us as a whole forward / towards one another?"*
  - Show resonance with our bodies
  - Raise physical or emoji hands to signal that you want to share

Trio time: What's working?

Storytelling and open conversation (25 min)	**Some process offerings**
• What's most enlivening in the work for you? What work have you been doing that you are feeling deeply called toward, inspired by? • "I KNOW transformation and shift is witnessed, embodied and sustaining us" What impacts are you seeing and feeling from the work so far, if any? (Thanks Macky) • What are you ready to for real let go of, if anything? (Thanks Kaeley)	• Slow down, listen with your whole heart, allow space for discovery • Take good care of each other • Notice the margins in this group • Intentionally uplift voices in our margins

Having heard these stories next to each other,
what are you discovering
and/or what's becoming illuminated about:

Your work?
"This work"?
This ecosystem?

What are you
grappling with?
What's on your edge?

"Choose your own adventure" time

We will open 5 rooms at the same time, each one about a different topic posed by you all last night.

Choose a group that calls to you, knowing that there might be many that overlap.

Wherever folks end up is great.

Groups to choose from

1. **What is 'this work' for?**
   a. What do we mean by collective liberation?
   b. How can faith be rooted in change, so it holds a theory of change that is individual, not systemic, but can impact the systemic?
   c. How do we find the scale/ecosystem we're imagining, and what form that fits that?
2. **What's the 10 to 20 year plan?**
   a. Who needs to be organized and for what?
   b. Who are we accountable to and how when we do "this work?"
3. **What are folks doing with this work among white folks in the south, especially rural, poor, and working class folks?**
   a. How do we weave together race and class through a faith/healing lens?
4. **How do we create inviting spaces that can work for as many people as possible?**
   a. How do we create irresistible spaces and movements of healing and joy?
5. **How are we working with our racialized trauma (individually and collectively)?**
   a. What's the role of embodiment in this work?

Some questions, if you please

Let this be a space where you talk about the things you don't usually get to talk about. Maybe you don't know if you're allowed to.

Dreams? Doubts and fears?

Why does this question matter to you, in your heart and spirit?
Is there a deeper question underneath? What's really at play here?
Where are you in struggle or the unknown about this question?
What glimmers or visions do you have from time to time?
What spiritual tools/ strategies help nurture that organizing?
What are you dreaming about?

1. **(Julia) What is 'the work' for?**
2. **(mintz) What's the 10 to 20 year plan?**
3. **(Shifra) What are folks doing with "this work" among white folks in the south?**
4. **(Sharon) How do we create spaces that can work for as many people as possible?**
5. **(Jen) How are we working with our racialized trauma (individually and collectively)?**

Closing go-round:

A takeaway, a gem, a vision,
a question, a desire...

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

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We also give thanks to all who contributed so richly from their insights and vast wells of experience, modeling the very spaciousness, vulnerability, and care for community that our world so desperately needs to become a resilient multiracial, multifaith public.

You are and will remain our inspirations as we press these findings forward in the service of our shared vision of collective thriving.