

How to Collaborate With Your Local College or University
NACCC Racial Justice Task Team ~ February 2021
Pilgrim Congregational Church, Green Bay, WI and St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI

Hi friends,

In June of 2020, I attended an online panel discussion about Racism and police reform in Green Bay. The dialogue was put on by our local Catholic college, St. Norbert College.

On the panel was a young professor of theology, racial, and gender studies, Craig A. Ford Jr., Ph.D. I was blown away by his intelligent and thoughtful contributions to the conversation. I decided to be brave and send him a friend request on Facebook. He accepted my request, and I have since been blessed to call him my friend in “real” life.

We have spoken together several times on video calls and by email not only to discuss anti-racist work in our own lives, but to figure out ways we can work together in our city on this issue—especially to bridge the gap between our Catholic and Protestant “divide”.

One exciting development is that Professor Craig, along with his partners at St. Norbert have come up with an Anti-Racist Lent Journey, and he has asked me to partner with him to get the word out. Even though this Lent Journey will come from a Catholic lens, and will partially focus on our area of Wisconsin, this team has graciously offered to welcome people of all faith journeys and from any area of the country to come alongside them in this endeavor. So, my husband and I, along with whoever else will join us, are looking forward to all the ways we will learn and grow in this season!

Since Professor Craig is a friend of mine, I have been reading and listening to his work as often as possible. One of the most profound things I have learned from him is that,

“If you plan to have racial justice, you might be disappointed. But if you plan to have dinner, you never know...”

He is so right. What a beautiful truth.

You can set out to do intentional racial justice work with someone different from you, and you may get somewhere. You may not. BUT if you have dinner—become friends—with that person, that’s where the real, transformative work takes place.

I have found a surprising friend in Professor Craig, and I have been invited to step into an opportunity to do some important, wonderfully meaningful work.

Two points I'd like to make before I end my letter:

1. Your local college or university is most-likely doing some amazing anti-racist work. We don't need to feel the pressure to reinvent the wheel. All we need to do is get involved. Attend a lecture. Send an email. Ask the question. No need to over complicate the process. And if you're feeling brave, reach out and become friends. One thing I now know for sure: the colleges and universities actually WANT us to reach out! Community involvement thrills them!

2. If you would like to hear more about St. Norbert's Lent Journey on Anti-Racism, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at krisseyking@hotmail.com . We'd love to have you join us!

Blessings,
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