

Report to WACAN members written by Peter Caulfield describing Day Two of Summit III

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Sometimes I hate reading the WPC booklet because there are so many great options that it's hard to choose. I couldn't even list them all here.

Today however, I was off to the final day of the Summit3 which ran from 11am 'til 5(ish).

The first day of the Summit3 (Wednesday) was designed around networking and community building. It was a "popular education workshop with a focus on structured storytelling and different racial justice organizing strategies based on: 1) regions of the U.S.; 2) intergenerational differences; and 3) sector-organizing (e.g. faith-based, electoral, direct action, etc.)".

Saturday however forged ahead by focusing on what it will take to build a fortified anti-racist movement amongst white folks.

Whereas Lisa, Jeff, Lila, and Bonnie had facilitated the majority of Day 1, the folks from AWARE and Y-Step along with Lou from the Episcopal Church took care of day 2. And this time around, our last day together, things got heated. We really, really struggled together. As if we wanted that definitive answer by 5 o'clock.

Day 2 of this year's Summit contained three primary sections.

- 1) To determine what it would take to build an Anti-Racist movement among white folks
- 2) To Identify Principles and Best Practices for working in Accountable Alliances with People of Color

and

3) To define an Initial vision for what role a national network infrastructure could play in building local capacity and the ability to speak with a collective national voice.

Our first task as a whole was to Identify Challenges and concerns but also opportunities for Building a White Anti-Racist Movement together. AWARE's Cameron and Hillary along with Y-Step's Chelsea did the majority of facilitating for the first exercise with a good, sizable group. After the group's responses were scribed on Butcher paper (with an incredible amount of constructive input from some of the folks of color in the house like Lila, Ron and CrossRoads' Pakou), they were taped up on the long wall before us all. Each participant was given five different colored "garage sale stickers" and asked to place them in a color-coded order of importance on the challenges and opportunities we felt most drawn to. The results will be given in WACAN's posting of AWARE's synthesis of notes from the event.

Among our collective fears: Will white folks be too afraid to give up the comfort of our privileges? How will we work in solidarity and alliance with the existing justice movement and communities lead by POC? Might we wind up reproducing the other 'isms as we have done historically? What about our competitiveness toward one another and other forms of the internalized superiority dynamic?

As for examples of the opportunities the group foresaw:

- Being able to enact positive change
- Being able to work in positive alliance and solidarity with folks of color
- Healing
- Spiritual Awakening...

The energy was really moving.

The facilitators then had us count off and break into groups. I got #2 and as I watched the #s being counted off around the large circles, I was so excited to see the minds that I would be sitting with.

We were to discuss our concerns and questions on Movement Building.

We would find that our questions and concerns were plentiful. What, ultimately is the appropriate role for white folks in the racial justice movement? What about training for effective organizing for social change? What about the "untraining" we must go through?...

After a heavy first session we finally broke for lunch. I know that Kevin D'Amato and I from AWARE carried on the conversation so long that when we finally made it out to the lobby, there were no lunches left. So we carried it on upstairs to where the second part would be held.

This portion focused on the Barriers and Challenges to Capacity Building. We would discuss our concerns regarding what we feel is needed in the process. We also talked about new avenues that could be created as a result. This time the whole split into groups by public sector:

-University/College/Academy

-Non-for-Profit

-Faith-Based

and Grassroots.

Some really good stuff came out of these ones. Some really complicated sh*t as well. I'm still dealing with it. I felt really hopeful after the next part though.

The final exercise involved developing a Working set of Principles for Effective Anti-Racist Alliance Building. Again, we broke off into groups...

I was in Group C, with WACAN's own Gillian. We kinda struggled together and had a nice exchange. Gillian from Washington state with the pretty hair. Hey again! Hope you got my post.

When we were revealing our results, I remember that Ingrid suggested we all do "the wave" together to blow off some steam 'cause she was feeling "loopy" as she said. We all obliged emphatically. That was fun. During the wrap-up, some folks had to take off early to catch flights. They parted with beautiful words and the group held them up. The final parting had us talking about what we were all taking away from the experience and our hopes for the year leading up to WPC9. It reminded me of how, last year, Thomas Harris vowed he would bring more people the following year and showed up with, literally, busloads of folks this year. It really might be, as Eddie put it, "The Best Conference Ever".