

Haden Institute

## Racial Healing Requires Authenticity

We are excited that Dr. Catherine Meeks will be joining us this intensive as we explore how we can contribute to the work of racial healing in our society. Catherine is Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing and is a sought-after teacher and workshop leader with four decades of experience behind her efforts to transform the work of dismantling racism. The core of her work has been with people who have been marginalized because of economic status, race, gender or physical ability as they pursue liberation, justice and access to resources that can help lead them to health, wellness and a more abundant life. This work grows out of her understanding of her call to the vocation of teacher as well as her realization that all of humanity is one family which God desires to unite.

In order for us to bring a voice of authenticity to this work of racial healing, we must first do our inner work to identify, unmask, and heal the racial bias we carry from our enculturation in the white supremacist western world. “Racial bias is largely unconscious, and herein lies the deepest challenge – the defensiveness that ensues upon any suggestion of racial bias,” writes Robin Diangelo in her book *White Fragility*. In order to soothe our need, conscious or not, to be seen as an open-minded “good person,” this defensiveness, again conscious or not, causes us to engage in ways differently from how we interact with someone of our same color.

In order to do our inner work, we must first admit that we carry this bias while knowing that we are still a good person. Then we gain the clarity to see where this bias originates, how it got attached to our internalized beliefs and social patterns, and how it shows up in our behaviors. This work may bring forth shame, disgust, and even anger that are all needed as catalysts for the transformation that sheds what’s gotten falsely constructed in our personal and collective psyches. In this shedding, we can return to honor God’s design of diversity and to love what God loves; it’s clear that God loves diversity as it is the universal pattern in all things.

We invite you to release your agenda of proving that you “don’t see color” and instead embrace the presence and value of diversity that color brings. Simply being present with each other in celebration of our common humanity is all that’s needed to form authentic relationship. From this relationship, both inner and outer, comes the voice of authenticity needed in racial healing as we work to deconstruct the systemic oppression and injustice that our society has brought to God’s world.

In order to go deeper with your inner work, we offer you several resources:

*White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, also her talk at [Deconstructing White Privilege](#)

*How to Be An Antiracist* by Ibram Kendi, also interview at [How to Be an Antiracist](#)

[Sounds True: Healing Racism](#) (3 part online interview with Dr. Tiffany Jana)

[A Mindful Approach to Race and Social Justice](#) interview of Rhonda Magee and Jon Kabat-Zinn by Anderson Cooper