

2023 Mission Focus: Racial Justice

When ABWM's national board selected the 2023 mission theme of Racial Justice to follow the 2022 Mission Theme of Real Acceptance, they decidedly kept us on a path of alignment. This inspiring theme can be a catalyst for deepening our unity, examining our inner being, and urging us to actualize our mission, vision, purpose, and core values in our programming. This theme informs both our individual and collective well-being because racial justice is a matter of the soul for every believer. Many of the questions raised in our What's Up with ABWM? discussions linger as we move from the 2022 mission theme of Real Acceptance to the 2023 mission theme of Racial Justice. Here are some of the questions that were raised with Real Acceptance and may certainly provide a backdrop of inquiry for the 2023 mission theme, Racial Justice.

- How did Real Acceptance impact our hearts and our souls?
- On the most practical level, how did it impact the TV shows we watch, the movies we see, the books we read, and the conversations we have with our family, friends, and colleagues?
- How did it impact the region and state budgets, programming, events, and our sister circles? How did it impact you? How did it impact us?
- Have we included all the voices in the room?
- Have we invited all women in our church and community to join us in planning, organizing, and leading?
- Who have we invited to join us?
- How are we reaching out to women, young adult women, and girls?
- How are we using the core values of ABWM to spread real acceptance and expand our sisterhood?
- How is our programming helping us to engage women and to be an intentionally inclusive sisterhood?
- Do our financial resources, time, and talent incorporate real acceptance as both a standard and goal?

The 2023 mission theme, Racial Justice, acknowledges the existence and pernicious influences of racial injustice. To strive for racial justice provides opportunities for new awareness and actions. We can accept the reality that some lives are valued more highly than others and we have denied the inclusion of all gifts in our ministries. We may even be able to confess that at times our narrow image of Christians and humanity has blocked our vision to see and believe each of us is created in the image of God. When this theme was selected in 2020, ABWM's national board could not predict the condition of our country, where pockets of kindness are still pushing against systemic racism and a spirit of meanness, with the backdrop of homogeneity feeling superior to heterogeneous spaces of spiritual growth. In this theme, ABWM seeks to be part of the movement of God, embracing advocacy, leadership development, and a commitment to holy collaboration inherent in building relationships that honor God. This ministry follows the theme of Real Acceptance, which planted seeds in the fertile ground of our sisterhood wherein we know that real acceptance is not possible without Racial Justice.

As we lean into our new mission theme, our sisterhood raises additional questions:

- On the most practical level, how did it impact the TV shows we watch, the movies we see, the books we read, the conversations we have with our family, friends, and colleagues?
- How did Real Acceptance impact our hearts and our souls?
- How did it impact the region and state budgets, programming, events, and our sister circles? How did it impact you? How did it impact us?
- Are we willing to ask for forgiveness so that we may seek racial justice?
- Are we willing to demonstrate racial justice in our programming, budget, and governance?
- Do we treat all people fairly in our association, and churches?

- Do we use language that is welcoming?
- Do we have different paths of accessibility to resources, leadership, and care within ABWM locally, regionally, and nationally?
- Are we willing to acknowledge that geography does not limit our ability to participate in racial justice in our family, church, town, region, and state?

Scriptures

Micah 6:8

Philippians 2:4, NIV, The Message

Galatians 3:28

Psalm 56:8

Acts 17:26

Luke 6:37

Revelation 7:9

Romans 10:12

John 4:19-21

Proverbs 31:9

Zechariah 7:9