



Taking America (USA) Beyond the Legacy of Enslavement

COMING TO THE TABLE

Statement on Police Violence

By Jodie Geddes, Megan Hester, and
the Coming to the Table Reparations Working Group

Coming to the Table grieves the heartbreaking loss of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Oluwatoyin ‘Toyin’ Salau, Rayshard Brooks, Dominique “Rem'mie” Fells, Riah Milton, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, David McAtee, Sean Reed and all of the countless people murdered by police in recent months, and throughout the history of this country.



We grieve that these deaths are not deviations, but integral to a system of policing and white supremacy that has its roots in 17th century enslavement of African-Americans. Southern policing began with slave patrols in 1704, whose purpose was to intimidate, chase and brutalize African-Americans. In the North, policing systems designed to control immigrants and the poor were empowered by the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850 to pursue and arrest African-Americans and sell them into bondage. Countless Black people lost their lives to these systems of policing - a cost that was often reimbursed to the enslaver.

We grieve that the inequities in the systems of policing, healthcare, education, housing and employment that are the source of the current uprisings, are the inevitable product and intentional legacy of 400 years of white supremacy in the United States.

Some of us in Coming to the Table are descendants of enslavers, whose ancestors were perpetrators of racist systems of policing. Some of us are descendants of enslaved people, who were targets of racist policing. Every American life has been shaped by this persistent tradition of state-sponsored racial violence. Ending the immeasurable harm caused by this violence, and preventing further harm, will require reparations.

Coming to the Table (CTTT) defines reparations as the taking of affirmative steps to repair the historic injustices and generational harm done to African Americans during slavery, Jim Crow and ongoing today. Those responsible for instituting, carrying out or benefitting from the injustices -- the United States government, businesses, institutions and white Americans -- should be the ones engaged in the reparative actions, which can take many forms including monetary payments, apology and others.

Liberation, Justice, and Healing require acknowledgment and active engagement to change racist and oppressive structures and behaviors. The [CTTT Reparations Guide](#) outlines four essential steps that European Americans can take to make reparations:

1. Uncovering history
2. Making connections
3. Healing wounds
4. Taking action

This moment is a call to action. Reparations are a personal and systemic responsibility, and as organizations, individuals, and families we must commit to taking action every single day that gets us closer to a more just and truthful society. Reparations also require dismantling and transforming the systems that uphold white supremacy such as the criminal justice system, housing, healthcare, and education.

Here are a few ways you can get involved, support, and connect:

Repair

Reparations are a personal and systemic responsibility. Repair is not transactional and requires action beyond compensation to black people and indigenous folx for stolen land, bodies, and histories. Reparations also include challenging systems that maintain social, political, and economic hierarchies. These systems include but are not limited to the prison industrial complex and policing. It is not about equal rights. Equality says that we all need to be treated the same. This thinking doesn't acknowledge the systems at play or the history of violence embedded into the fabric of the country.

Join or start a local Coming to the Table group

[Local Coming to the Table groups](#) provide a community of support and connection. Community members gather to explore issues of race, privilege, and bias through the Restorative Justice Circle Process. One of the most important roles of a local group is doing the transformative work of undoing racism in the community where you live.

Educate Yourself

Being an antiracist is a journey and requires constant self-reflection. Educating yourself is a good first step in the process. [Here](#) is a list of reading and video resources compiled by Coming To The Table (CTTT).

Divestment

Stop buying from and investing your money in businesses that lack diverse leadership at the top levels or uphold racism with their business practices. Instead, support local black business in your community. Where we put our money shows what and who we value. Make this a daily and intentional practice.

Support Organizations Fighting for Reparations

Use your voice, your platform and your money to support the [Movement for Black Lives platform on reparations](#) and the [National African-American Reparations Commission's 10-point plan](#).

Some other possibilities from the CTTT Reparations Guide:

- Conduct personal historical research that connects you to US slavery by collecting family genealogical data, family stories, and other information, etc., using [Our Black Ancestry](#), [Ancestry.com](#), and other websites and historical societies, libraries, and local, state and national archives.
- Support and participate in events, such as the [Slave Dwelling Project](#), that preserve and publicize different aspects of the realities of the life of the enslaved.
- Support and participate in organizations promoting racial justice such as [Black Lives Matter](#) Coming to the Table, [FOR Truth and Reparations Campaign](#), [SURJ \(Showing up for Racial Justice\)](#), and others.

We remain committed to learning and taking action towards a society where liberation is a reality for everyone. We will continue to provide spaces for reflection, connection, training, and education. We welcome your thoughts and feedback.

Knowledge is like a garden: If it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested. - African Proverb