



# CoInspire: Liberating Imagination, Eviscerating Racism

October 7-10, 2019

[www.montreat.org/coinspire](http://www.montreat.org/coinspire)

In the beginning, God breathed on humankind to animate our existence.

Our breath is our life-force, but the air we breathe can restore our life or kill us. We are living in a world where the sins of racism infect the very air we breathe; killing many, sickening us all. What happens when we pay attention to how much breath we give to scarcity, competition, and fear? What happens when we choose to focus our breath on giving oxygen to liberate our imaginations for a world where the air is full of abundance, hope, and equity?

## Background

In October of 2019, Montreat Conference Center will host CoInspire, the second in a series of conferences addressing systemic racism in the church. Our first conference, DisGrace, lived in lament for the ways in which the sins of racism thwart individual people and institutions, infecting congregations and denominations with death-dealing dehumanization.

CoInspire will examine ways that we, as members of Christ's body, might co-inspire one another to liberate imagination for new ways of being, and examine ways we can conspire to eviscerate the racism within our church.

## Purpose Statement

In the Kingdom of God, our liberation is bound together with all others. We cannot live as one body in Christ as long as the sin of racism is commonplace in our communities, our institutions, and our lives. It's not enough for us to live in isolation in our churches, waiting for the storm to pass. To "conspire" is to "breathe with" another; as the church conspires to eviscerate racism, we must think about what it means to truly breathe with one another, even as we acknowledge that people of different races experience racism differently and have different roles to play in this work. We must "breathe together" as one community, lifting up our many differences and strengths while supporting each other through our trials and shortcomings. Taking in the breath of hope, resilience, love, and knowledge gives us the courage and strength for the uncomfortable work of destroying racism.

What do we need to do to transform our collective imaginations? We must not only discover and dismantle the racist ideologies that hold our imaginations captive, but indeed, eviscerate racism in our bodies, souls, the ground we share, and the air we breathe. We choose to work at the level of evisceration because we acknowledge how deeply racism is lodged in the very visceral nervous systems of ourselves and communities.

## **What We Seek to Do**

In response to the racism and violence in our world, this event seeks to bring together people of faith in order to disarm prejudices that divide us and equip each other for practicing resurrection as new creations in Christ. We will delve into the questions around the toxicities we are currently breathing into our bodies and exhaling into the shared air. Additionally, we will seek to identify those things we want to breathe in to precipitate a pathway to eviscerating the racism in our country and our world.

In our time together we will compel one another to see the system of racism in our own institutions and lives, to recognize the damage it does to each of us, and all of us together, and to take on the work of imagining together a different future. We will challenge and inspire, create and develop to truly prepare ourselves to stand on the precipice of humanity's future and boldly go into a space of empowering accountability. We will work together to journey through a climate of suffocating fear to a practice of collective breathing that inspires others to move towards liberation.

Through workshops, structured caucusing, music, imaginative worship, and panels, we will be changed, renewed, restored, and revived for the difficult work of justice for all. Like DisGrace, Conspire will seek to meet people where they are, forming communities for our particular journeys, converging to breathe with.

## **Call to Action**

Pastors, lay leaders, church members, community leaders, and organizers, and people of all races and identities are invited to come and learn with each other. Enter into the conversation. Have your struggles and pain heard by a church that is learning to listen between binaries.

Come to this conference as you are, whether you are someone who still holds the suspicion that liberation for everyone is still too far off or someone who is seeking an awakening to the privilege that you hold.

God desires to use us, but we must be willing to show up and do the work alongside our siblings in Christ. We need you to be present in the dismantling of racism in the church, in YOUR church, and in our shared world. You have a part to play in the eviscerating of racism from the body of Christ.

Come to this conference as a co-conspirator of liberation, willing to start by taking a deeper look at your own complicity and responsibility as one who claims to be a follower of Christ.

It's not too late and you can come as you are.

With God's help, we liberate our imagination to expansively conspire with our Creator for a church and world where racism is extinguished, where all of us can live in the abundance we were created to inhabit.