

Drawn from *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, Churchwide Antiracism Policy*, as approved by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the PCUSA (2016)

The Bible insistently reveals that God loves diversity and justice. This is seen in the wide variety of creation in which God delights. It is heard in the words of the prophets, who reject oppression and commend justice as true worship. It is embodied in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who resists the power of empire and values all persons, regardless of status, as children of God. Jesus gathered a community of people around him that crossed over every social and cultural boundary. Those who had been set apart were brought together: poor and rich, male and female, gentile and Jew, centurion and tax collector, Canaanite, Galilean, and Syrophenician. Jesus called this community together in anticipation of, and participation in, the coming of the new creation.

Presbyterian theologian Letty Russell says that in Jesus we see what God intends for all humanity. The compassion, hospitality, justice, and love of others that we see in Jesus indicate what God wills for us. Russell says that Jesus is “a memory of the future” (Russell, 1979, 157). While redemption and salvation are the work of God, we are invited to participate in moving toward this eschatological vision of a new creation. As our Brief Statement of Faith proclaims, “In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’” (*Book of Confessions*, 10.4, Lines 72–76). We are blessed to be drawn into the very movement of God. Therefore, discipleship requires our efforts to act in accordance with God’s love of justice and diversity.

Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is a form of idolatry that elevates human-made hierarchies of value over divinely-given free grace. Through colonization and slavery, the United States of America helped to create and embrace a system of valuing and devaluing people based on skin color and ethnic identity. The name for this system is white supremacy. This system deliberately subjugated groups of people for the purpose of material, political, and social advantage. Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation.

Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.