

DENOUNCING RACISM

A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles



nccj

The National Conference
for Community and Justice

NCCJ ENCOURAGES YOU TO DUPLICATE AND DISSEMINATE THIS BOOKLET

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Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles was compiled and written by Geneva Vanderhorst, NCCJ's Public Policy Fellow, and edited by Danielle Glosser, NCCJ's Director of Public Policy.

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FOREWORD

January 2002

The hearts of all people in our nation and many others around the world are heavy as a result of the human tragedy and loss of life visited upon the United States on September 11, 2001. In the wake of these terrorist attacks against U.S. symbols of Democracy and the related toll on civilian lives, the level of hate directed toward people of different faiths is alarming and palpable. Alarming because it gives bigotry a righteousness it does not deserve. Palpable because public backlash against the actions of extremists threatens to rock the foundation of people of goodwill to build diverse communities and a society based upon understanding and respect.

The physical manifestations of the attack will be remedied. The World Trade Center Towers will be rebuilt and the Pentagon will be restored. It is the impact of these images on the next generation of leaders that places the nation's blueprint for neighbor helping neighbor at risk. In the past we have always pulled together to embrace our collective strengths. The current crisis provides an opportunity to tap this power instead of those that threaten to tear us apart. That means we must come to terms with personal bias, bigotry and racism.

Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles addresses how the concept of being actively anti-racist is documented in most faiths' spiritual practices and policies. This unprecedented compilation of faith- and spiritually-based principles lifts up the moral responsibility of each person of faith to denounce racism. Coupled with the policy statements of many denominations, this guide provides the foundation as to why we all must work together in combating the divisiveness of racism.

This resource guide may be used:

- As a quick reference tool to explore what different traditions' scriptures, policies and practices say about racism
- As the moral foundation for creating opportunities and providing access by breaking down barriers that divide
- As a resource to identify formal and informal practices that create inclusion
- To examine our own biases, stereotypes, and prejudices by reviewing our own faith tradition's teachings and practices

These ideas, complemented by the fact that most denominations advocate that if one is not actively anti-racist then one is precluded from the ultimate realization of his or her faith tradition, provide the answer to why people of faith should be more compelled to eliminate the pervasive and often invisible advantages of a racist system. Such sentiment is critical to convey and practice across our country, according to a recent survey on intergroup relations. The National Conference for Community and Justice's *Taking America's Pulse II* (TAP II) reported that 79% of the respondents believe that "racial, religious, or ethnic tension" is a very serious or somewhat serious problem. According to TAP II, many people are unfamiliar with various social groups that exist in our society, and the majority do not feel close to most of these groups. More people say that they are (1) far away from, rather than close to, atheists and Muslims, (2) neutral or far away from Asians, Jews, immigrants, Hispanics, American Indians, and Fundamentalist Christians, and (3) close to, rather than neutral or far away from, Blacks and Whites. Further, more than one third of the respondents (36%) don't know enough about Muslims to form an opinion on this issue about them. Muslims are also among the more isolated groups in the country—only 24% of Americans surveyed have interpersonal contact with people of the Muslim faith, compared to 51% of the Jewish population and 48% of Fundamentalist Christians.

Although these numbers reflect a positive change in intergroup relations over the course of the past few years, continuing to promote understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution, and education remains the mission of The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). Founded in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, NCCJ is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism in America. NCCJ's programmatic strategies are designed to transform communities to provide fuller opportunities that are more inclusive and just through institutional change by empowering leaders. NCCJ seeks to achieve its mission by focusing its programmatic strategies with faith, economic opportunity, education, government, media and advertising, and youth and emerging leaders.

As the diversity of our nation increases, so will the meaning of faith and race in daily life. Hartford Seminary recently released the results of a two-year study providing an unprecedented profile of congregational makeup and behavior. This interfaith survey reported that 64% of Latino congregations and half of Black congregations responded that churches are a primary means of preserving their cultural heritage. Fewer than one-third of the white congregations emphasized their religious history in the same manner. *Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles* will provide more people with an opportunity to understand such data, the connection to one's faith, and the basic tenets and practices of various faith traditions, which will make them more familiar with various groups in our society.

The National Conference for Community and Justice remains vigilant in its commitment to fighting all forms of bias, bigotry and racism. Today, more than ever, we also urge all people to recommit themselves to promoting understanding and respect for every person within the diverse communities where we live, work, pray and play together. According to a recent Gallup poll, more than 90 percent of Americans profess a religious or spiritual belief. Thus, one of our most unifying characteristics is our spiritual nature. However, we must also be vigilant in ensuring that these spiritual ties connect us rather than divide us. We must remember these concepts that name racism as a sin, a problem of the heart, and an evil that must be addressed, and not allow stereotyping or a lack of awareness of others' faith traditions and beliefs to pull us down into the cycle of hate or distrust.

Our nation's people and leaders must participate in the ongoing work of our faith and spiritual communities to challenge and eliminate racism. Only through the expression of urgency will the matter of race be addressed more intentionally. The first step is being a visible advocate for inclusion by taking the responsibility for learning about "others." *Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles* provides just that opportunity.

Sanford Cloud, Jr.
President and CEO

INTRODUCTION

January 2002

In 1998, NCCJ was asked by former President Clinton to continue his Initiative on Race within the faith community of the United States. A Planning Committee was identified after a summit with 38 diverse faith leaders at The White House Conference Center, who gathered to design and implement a set of bold initiatives to engage America's faith community and their leadership in eliminating bias, bigotry, and racism. On March 9, 2000, more than 150 senior faith leaders from across the country attended an historic meeting with former President Clinton at The White House to translate their ideas for racial unity into concrete commitments. Many faith leaders renewed their enthusiasm and dedication to create a more inclusive and just nation. In cooperation with the Planning Committee, NCCJ created a list of 12 commitments toward racial unity, one of which is *Denouncing Racism: A Resource Guide of Faith-Based Principles* (see Appendix A for additional deliverables).

This resource guide presents a collective voice and commitment among faith communities to denounce racism. Within its contents are theological underpinnings, scriptural concepts and policy statements from denominations and faith-based organizations, which invite people to dialogue and to take action on race-related issues, both within and transcending their faith traditions. Furthermore, it recognizes that the need to eradicate racism and to advance racial justice through faith and interfaith communities is shared by most faith traditions. Most significantly, it is an acknowledgment that faith and community leaders across the nation have unique opportunities to transform and empower individuals to boldly advance racial unity and social justice.

The information compiled in this resource guide was gathered from the following sources: publications, resolutions, and policies provided to NCCJ from individual faith communities; statements submitted to NCCJ from community leaders; the Internet; and a Task Force comprised of individuals from NCCJ's Faith Leaders Initiative Planning Committee (see Appendix B for Planning Committee members). In addition, NCCJ reached out to numerous denominations and faith-based organizations that have been involved with our Faith Leaders Initiative, including individuals from the following faith traditions: Bahá'í, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Native American traditions, Shintoism, Sikhism, Taoism, Unitarian Universalism, and Zoroastrianism. These faith communities were contacted to advise NCCJ of any scriptural texts and faith policies within their traditions that denounce racism. The information included in this resource guide is limited by the responses made available. The length of each entry does not denote the weight of any group versus another; rather, it reflects what was provided. Please contact me at (202) 682-2322 ext. 24 or via e-mail at dglosser@nccj.org if you have additional information regarding the scriptural texts and faith policies that denounce racism within those traditions not represented.

Danielle Glosser
Director of Public Policy

NCCJ'S JOINT STATEMENT ON RACISM AND LIST OF ENDORSERS

Racism contradicts and offends the most fundamental beliefs and values of our faith traditions. Though we define and address holiness from different perceptions, we are one in our recognition that prejudice and discrimination should have no place among people of faith. Diversity is a blessing. Racism is a problem of the heart and an evil that must be eradicated from the institutional structures that shape our daily lives, including our houses of worship.

Racism is learned behavior that is rooted in ignorance and fear, fomenting conflict and violence socially. Commitment to the core values of our faith traditions provides the means for eradicating racism through education and spiritual transformation on a personal and institutional level.

The uniqueness, dignity and worth of every person derives from creation. Each individual is equally precious, illuminating life. To diminish that flame by denigrating, disrespecting, or oppressing people based on the color of their skin or their ethnicity or their culture is to dishonor the sacred in the world, in one's self, and in others.

People of faith must not allow racism to persist. Given the pervasive negative consequences of a racist society, a failure to be actively anti-racist prevents the ultimate realization of faith. We will condemn racism with the spirit and substance of our words, challenge racism through our influence and actions, and collaborate to lead America's faith communities into a transformed society where individual, cultural and institutional racism is not permitted.

As faith leaders guided by our holy scriptures and oral traditions...

- We pledge to examine our own biases and positions of privilege through self-reflection and earnestly work to resolve them.
- We pledge to model the repentance that turns us away from racism and leads us to work toward reconciliation that paves the path to cooperation.
- We pledge to live by compassion and be consciously inclusive of all individuals.
- We pledge to affirm the value of diversity and instill respect for dignity.
- We pledge to promote understanding, inclusion and mutual respect and thus build community across the divides of race, ethnicity and culture.
- We pledge to transform our institutions into authentically anti-racist and anti-oppressive communities of action.
- We pledge to advocate for justice, demand equal opportunity for all, and create a beloved community for everyone to share.

JOINT STATEMENT ENDORSERS LIST

(ORIGINAL ENDORSERS IN BOLD>)

I. FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND DENOMINATIONS

American Muslim Council
Bread for the World
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Church of the Brethren
Church Women United
Congress of National Black Churches
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New Jersey Synod
Greek Orthodox Church Archdiocese of America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Mohawk Nation
National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on African-American Catholics
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
Onondaga Nation
Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office
Rabbinical Council of America
The American Jewish Committee
The Hindu-Jain Temples Association
The Interfaith Alliance
The Interfaith Center of New York
The Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis
The Islamic Society of North America

The National Conference for Community and Justice
The Riverside Church
The Seventh-day Adventist Church
The United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference
The United Methodist Church—The General Board of Church & Society
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Union Theological Seminary
United Nations' Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders
United Religions Initiative
United States Catholic Conference
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
Washington National Cathedral

II. FAITH LEADERS

Imam Fajri Ansari, Masjid Nu-man of Buffalo
Rev. C.B. Baker, Dean, St. Mary's Cathedral of Memphis (Episcopal)
Dr. Rosa Banks—Director of Human Relations, The Seventh-day Adventist Church

Dean Nathan D. Baxter—Washington National Cathedral
Dr. Nabil Bayakly, Director, Masjid Alnoor of Memphis
The Reverend Stan Bratton, Co-Director, The Network of Religious Communities of Buffalo
Rev. Dr. John Buehrens—former President, Unitarian Universalist Association
Rev. Timothy L. Carson, President, Interfaith Partnership—St. Louis
The Reverend Jeff Carter, Jr., Administrator of District I, Church Of God in Christ of Buffalo
Mr. Sanford Cloud, Jr.—President and CEO, The National Conference for Community and Justice
Ms. Sarrae Crane—United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Bishop Dimitrios Couchell—Greek Orthodox Church Archdiocese of America
Rabbi Harry K. Danziger, Temple Israel of Memphis
The Reverend James Doukas, Hellenic Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of Buffalo
Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar—General Secretary, National Council of Churches

Rabbi Laurence Edwards—American Jewish Committee
Rev. A. Gayle Engel, Conference Minister, Missouri Mid-South Conference, United Church of Christ
The Reverend David Felton, Regional Minister, United Church of Christ of Buffalo
Rabbi Michael Feshbach, President, Buffalo Board of Rabbis
Mr. Richard Foltin—Legislative Director and Counsel, The American Jewish Committee
Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr.—Senior Minister, The Riverside Church
Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy—Executive Director, The Interfaith Alliance
Rev. Sanford Garner—United Religions Initiative
Bishop Michael Garrison, Episcopal Diocese of Western New York
Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory—Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office
The Reverend Dr. Robert L. Graham, Sr., St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Buffalo
Mr. F. William Gray, Moderator of Presbytery of Western New York

Chief Leo Henry, Tuscarora Nation, Haudenosaunee/Longhouse

Rev. Denise E. Hill, Associate Conference Minister, St. Louis Association, United Church of Christ

Rev. Earl K. Holt, Minister, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis

Rev. Dr. Melvin A. Hoover—Director of Faith in Action, Unitarian Universalist Association

Bishop Thomas Hoyt, Jr.—Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Dr. Kathleen Hurty—former Executive Director, Church Women United

Bishop Dotcy I. Isom, Jr., Presiding Prelate, The Episcopal District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Rabbi Marc Israel—Director of Congregational Relations, Religious Action Center

Mr. Bawa Jain—United Nations' Millennium World Peace Summit

The Reverend Wayne Johnson, Agape African Methodist Episcopal Church of Buffalo

Rev. Al Kirk, Holy Spirit Catholic Church of Memphis

Ms. Rahda R. Kumar, India Cultural Center and Temple of Memphis (Hindu)

Dr. Richard Land—Southern Baptist Convention

Rev. Greg Laszakovits—Church of the Brethren

The Reverend James Lewis, J.W., Loguen Memorial AME Zion Church of Buffalo

The Reverend Paul Litwin, Vice Chancellor, Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo

Chief Orrin Lyons—Onondaga Nation

His Eminence Cardinal Roger Mahony—Archbishop of L.A., Chairman of the Domestic Policy Committee for the United States Catholic Conference

The Reverend Frances Manly, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

Bishop Henry Mansell, Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo

Mr. Edward R. Martin, Jr., Director, Human Rights Office—Archdiocese of St. Louis

Bishop Felton E. May—The United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference

Ms. Billie Mayo, Bahá'í Office of St. Louis

The Reverend Dr. David McKee, General Presbyterian of Western New York

Rabbi Paul Menitoff—Executive Vice President, Central Conference of American Rabbis

The Reverend Cameron Miller, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church of Buffalo

The Reverend Joel Miller, Pastor, Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

Ms. Sammie Moshenberg—National Council of Jewish Women

Elder H. Kent Munson, Stake President, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—St. Louis

Rabbi Elazar Muskin—Rabbinical Council of America

Mr. Ed Peace, Bahá'í of Buffalo

Mr. James J. Poole, Chairman, Board of Deacons, New Hope Baptist Church of Buffalo

Rev. R. Scott Pricer, Decatur Trinity Christian Church of Memphis (Disciples of Christ)

Rev. Dr. Martin Rafanan, Executive Director, NCCJ, St. Louis Region

Imam Mujahid Ramadan—American Muslim Council

Ms. Priya Rao, India Cultural Center and Temple of Memphis (Hindu)

The Reverend Herbert Reid, Black Leadership Forum of Buffalo

Most Reverend Justin Rigali, Archbishop of St. Louis, Roman Catholic Church

Bishop E. Roy Riley—Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New Jersey Synod

Ms. Sullivan Robinson—Executive Director, Congress of National Black Churches

Rev. L. Joseph Rosas III, Union Avenue Baptist Church of Memphis

Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld, Temple Beth Zion of Buffalo

Ms. Hannah Rosenthal—Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Rev. Dr. Samuel J. Roth, Ecumenical Representative, Central States Synod, ELCA—St. Louis

Bishop Robert L. Sanders, Greater Refuge Temple of Christ of Buffalo

Rabbi David Saperstein—Director, Religious Action Center

Bishop Ann B. Sherer, President, Missouri Area United Methodist Church—St. Louis

Elder Don Schneider—The Seventh-day Adventist Church

Mr. W. Riley Seay, Christian Science Committee on Publication for Missouri

Imam Rashad Sharif, President, Masjid Al-Mu'minum of Memphis

Rev. Paul H. Sherry—Past President, United Church of Christ

Rev. Donald W. Shriver, Jr.—Union Theological Seminary

Rev. David Simpson—The United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington Conference

Rev. Bennett W. Smith, Past President, Progressive National Baptist Convention, St. John's Baptist Church—Buffalo

Rev. J. Terry Steib—National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on African-American Catholics

The Reverend Susan Strouse, Dean of the Niagara Frontier Conference of the Upstate Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church

Dr. K.N. Siva Subramanian—The Hindu-Jain Temples Association

Chief Jake Swamp—Mohawk Nation

Dr. Sayyid Syeed—The Islamic Society of North America

Ms. Judy Toth, Ethical Society—St. Louis

Rev. W. Douglas Tanner—Executive Director, Faith & Politics Institute

Bishop J.W.C. Walker, African Methodist Episcopal Zion of Buffalo

Father Clarence Williams—Director of the Office of Black Ministries, Archdiocese of Detroit

Rev. Don Williams—Bread for the World

Rev. Robert C. Williams—Decatur Trinity Christian Church of Memphis (Disciples of Christ)

Mr. James Winkler—General Secretary, The General Board of Church & Society of The United Methodist Church

Rev. Anthony Witherspoon, Pastor, Washington AME Zion Church of St. Louis

Rev. Thomas H. Yorty, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Buffalo

FAITH COMMUNITIES' TEXTS AND POLICY STATEMENTS

BAHÁ'Í

From around the world, the Bahá'í Faith has represented millions from various ethnic, racial and tribal groups.¹ “For more than a century, Bahá'í communities around the globe have been working together to break down barriers of prejudice between peoples and have collaborated with other like-minded groups to promote the model of a global society.”² The central theme of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), “is that humanity is one single race and that the day has come for its unification in one global society. God, Bahá'u'lláh said, has set in motion historical forces that are breaking down traditional barriers of race, class, creed, and nation and that will, in time, give birth to a universal civilization.”³ Among the vital principles promoted by the Bahá'í Faith is “the abandonment of all forms of prejudice.”⁴

Among the many teachings of the Bahá'í Faith are these sacred texts and policy statements regarding racism:

O CHILDREN OF MEN! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.⁵

If you desire with all your heart, friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will spread; it will become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the minds of all men.⁶

As to racial prejudice, the corrosion of which, for well-nigh a century, has bitten into the giver, and attacked the whole social structure of American society, it should be

regarded as constituting the most vital and challenging issue...The ceaseless exertions which this issue of paramount importance calls for, the sacrifices it must impose, the care and vigilance it demands, the moral courage and fortitude it requires, the tact and sympathy it necessitates, invest this problem...with an urgency and importance that cannot be overestimated.⁷

The responsibility for the achievement of racial peace and unity in the United States rests upon both Black and White Americans. To build a society in which the rights of all its members are respected and guaranteed, both races must be animated with the spirit of optimism and faith in the eventual realization of their highest aspirations. Neither Black nor White Americans should assume that the responsibility for the elimination of prejudice and of its effects belongs exclusively to the other. Both must recognize that unity is essential for their common survival. Both must recognize that there is only one human species. Both must recognize that a harmoniously functioning society that permits the full expression of the potential of all persons can resolve the social and economic problems now confounding a society wracked with disunity.⁸

CHRISTIANITY

BAPTIST

More than ninety years ago, Baptists—generally, a highly autonomous people—organized The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) as the official global fellowship of Baptists to unite Baptist conventions and unions worldwide. BWA's six regional fellowships are the North American Baptist Fellowship, Asian Baptist Federation, All Africa Baptist Fellowship, Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, Union of Baptists in Latin America, and Europe Baptist Fellowship. BWA has a long history of denouncing racism. In 1999, as delegates to the Baptists Against Racism Summit in the United States, BWA established

the “Atlanta Covenant” as “a call to Baptist Churches to oppose racism and ethnic conflict and to actively work to establish a united witness for Christ and His Kingdom.”⁹ There, BWA affirmed the provisions of its Harare Declaration that states, in part:

We acknowledge that:

5.1 Racism is rooted in the sinfulness of humankind and is evident where a group or groups of people:

- a) Assert(s) that by heredity and by nature they are superior to the rest of humanity.
- b) Oppress(es) others through economic and political means to find security and self-acceptance, privilege and power.
- c) Project(s) into another group or groups their own anger, hostility, hatred and failures in order to rationalize feelings of superiority.¹⁰

BWA covenanted “with God’s help, through a ministry of reconciliation to promote social justice through efforts to eradicate racism and confront ethnic conflict.”¹¹ Part of the international summit, according to BWA, was “to make a positive statement to the Baptist world, the wider Christian community and the secular world that *Baptists are totally committed to oppose racism and ethnic conflict in the name of Christ.*”¹²

BWA asserts that there is a Biblical basis for reconciliation between nations and races:

1. **The God we worship is a God of liberation and freedom:** “To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those who are bound...” (Isaiah 61:2, Luke 4:18). “For Freedom Christ has set us free...” (Galatians 5:1). “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (II Cor. 3:17).

Therefore, as Baptist followers of Jesus Christ, who has come to liberate all humanity, it is incumbent upon us to proclaim this freedom to all people. The Gospel call to freedom is above nation and race and gender...

2. **Humanity is in the bondage of sin and alienation:** “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Because of humanity’s sin, humankind is alienated

from God and from one another. The form of this alienation is common to all nations and races...Ethnocentrism and racism are a sign of this sin and alienation. The power of sin expresses itself in many ways. When one nation or race thinks it is better than the other, it is living in sin. *Indeed racism is sin.*¹³

3. **Racism and ethnic conflict are contrary to God’s word:** Jesus Christ is the Power of God that enables Racial and Ethnic Peace! “Do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land. Treat them as you would an Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33, 34). “I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Those who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all” (Acts 10:34-36). “So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised” (Gal. 3:26-29).

The call of Christ is a call to all humanity. It is a call to all nations and races, to all peoples and tribes. Racism and ethnic conflict are a denial of the Gospel and a hindrance to mission and evangelism. It denigrates the individual created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and denies the universality of the Gospel. Those men and women who practice racism or harbor racist thoughts not only deny the Gospel of Christ, but put their own fellowships in danger for they neglect the Christ of the gospels and deny the unity for which Christ died.¹⁴

BWA calls Baptists to act against racism and ethnocentrism.

1. **The call of the gospel requires Christ’s followers to be agents of reconciliation.** “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself...and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:19).
2. **A call for a renewal of worship and cleansing.** “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn

to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.' (Isaiah 1:15-17). Segregated and homogenous unit worship engenders separation and often prevents racial and ethnic reconciliation."¹⁵

3. A call for commitment to holistic and interracial mission and evangelism. "That they may all be one...so that the world may believe that thou hast seen me' (John 17:21)...The reconciling Gospel unites Christians in worship and is a prophetic judgment over against secular prejudice and racism!"¹⁶

4. A call to work for the elimination of unfair trade and for a just world economy. "The world economy tends to be divided between the rich North and the poor South. The poor South predominately includes people of color and different ethnic units...'for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me...' (Matt. 25:35-36)...Love must express itself in the administration of just and equal laws for all. Baptist churches are encouraged to unite together to combat government systems that enhance and perpetuate racial and ethnocentric prejudice."¹⁷

5. A call for the protection of the rights of aboriginal and tribal peoples. "Racial and ethnic prejudice prevents them from being fully integrated into the larger society...We must not allow our silence to be interpreted as affirmation of the status quo."¹⁸

6. A call for the study and affirmation of the relationship between the gospel and culture. "The Biblical view in Revelation of all nations and peoples coming to Christ is not a call for the denial of culture, but rather an affirmation of the awesome spectrum of God's grace expressed in so many different languages, ethnic groups, and nations...We must affirm that positive and historic reflection of God's glory among the cultures of all peoples."¹⁹

7. A call to repentance. "Racism and ethnic conflict is not limited to one race, culture, or ethnic unit. However, it is a blot on the so-called Christian nations of the North, that often being white, they have fostered and engendered racism in their treatment of nationals... Where there is division and hatred, we call upon our churches to work for reconciliation and peace."²⁰

BWA resolved its commitment "to racial justice as an integral part of proclaiming Good News in Jesus Christ...[O]ur proclamation of the Gospel has not always included the need for repentance from sin, especially the sin of racism...promotion of racial justice must be intentional, sincere and undertaken with integrity. [B]ecause all humankind is made in the image and likeness of God...every person is important and has the potential to be a new person in Christ we must work for reconciliation and justice for all."²¹

In addition, BWA made several recommendations to its members, including, in part:²²

- To declare the notion that church life based on racial homogeneity reduces the ability of people to understand each other's worth.
- To promote economic development as a means toward racial justice.
- To recognize that the almost exclusive use of white images of Jesus has limited our understanding of and witnessing to the incarnation.
- To encourage all ministers and church leaders to undertake training in racial justice, reconciliation and redistribution of resources.
- To design ways to collect and communicate the stories of individuals and peoples who have experienced racism and ethnic conflict in order to recapture the imaginations and hearts and support of Baptists everywhere.

In the Atlanta Covenant, BWA called "Baptist unions and conventions to A DECADE TO PROMOTE RACIAL JUSTICE by efforts to eradicate racism wherever it emerges and engaging in the struggle against ethnic conflict."²³

The Atlanta Covenant is demonstrative of other statements from BWA that denounce racism. Others, in part, include:

The Seoul Covenant²⁴

"Believing that personal faith in Jesus Christ involves commitment to His body, the Church, we aim to build communities that will be effective signs of God's Kingdom in the world...We confess that inherent within the Gospel is the need for God's people to work for a world where peace and justice are pursued, and whose

environment is preserved...As members of the Baptist family, we pledge ourselves to sacrificial giving for this purpose, and to provide resources to enable all to share the good news of salvation in their own cultures and languages.”

Derbyshire Declaration²⁵

“We give thanks to God that...countless new congregations are being established in urban, suburban and rural areas, among various ethnic and effective means to fulfill the Great Commission, is the establishing of new congregations...We encourage new churches both to disciple and nurture new converts...being witnessing communities that oppose injustice and work for peace.”

Hope for a Needy World—Reaching out to Unvangelized People Guidelines for Action²⁶

“Baptists of the world need to work with each other, and others, to seek to ensure that every person has the opportunity to respond to God’s offer of love in Jesus Christ in a meaningful and authentic way...The Biblical mandate to preach the Gospel to all people, and its picture of representatives from all tribes and languages before God’s throne in the last days, adds a sense of urgency to reach every person with the Gospel in the name of Jesus Christ...Affirm the importance of learning from and respecting people of other religions while remaining totally committed to the truth that Jesus Christ is unique and the only way to find salvation and peace with God.”

Harare Declaration²⁷

2. We resolve therefore, that as members of the body of Christ:

2.1 We will seek to stand as a prophetic witness that exposes and challenges the sin of racism.

2.2 We will endeavor to serve as Christ’s presence, healing that which is broken through a ministry of reconciliation, uniting us with God, neighbors and ourselves.

3. We affirm that:

3.1 In the beginning, God made humankind in harmony with the Creator, with neighbors, with nature and with self, a harmony shattered by the demonic rise of human self-centeredness.

6. We resolve therefore to:

6.1 Respond to God’s intention of wholeness for

all, seeking to bring people together, as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, whatever may be their ethnic identity.

7. We affirm that:

7.1 All people are made in the image of God and have the potential to live in the way God intends people to live.

8. We resolve therefore that:

8.2 We will address the vital issue of congregational attitudes in a variety of creative ways being challenged by God’s Word, which says, “be not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.”

For Example:

- a) Through EVANGELISM, which proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be the power that brings radical change to human attitudes and behavior.
- b) Through WORSHIP events, which celebrate the richness and wholeness of the body of Christ as it is experienced in its ethnic fullness and beauty.
- c) Through EDUCATION programs that develop curricula with biblical and ethical values that make people sensitive to the evil of racism.
- d) Through FELLOWSHIP experiences and initiatives that bring different people together and help validate and affirm persons of various ethnic backgrounds.
- e) Through PROPHETIC ACTION that addresses matters of justice, peace and other major issues, which can produce understanding and combat racial attitudes among people.

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (Christian Church)

*Now, by the grace of Jesus Christ and trusting in the transformation power of God our Creator, we invite the church to confront the sins of racism, individually, and collectively.*²⁸

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a scriptural-based faith community that denounces racism as conflicting with foundational beliefs: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28-29).²⁹ The Disciples are clear that “[r]acial and cultural prejudice are prevalent forms of sin within our church and our communities.”³⁰ “Racial prejudice is

sin because it serves to divide the body of Christ and dehumanize children of God.”³¹ The Disciples recognize racism as a systemic evil and, to counter it, have passed several resolutions and initiatives to address the sins of racism, including:³²

- Reconciliation Mission to work toward racial reconciliation and anti-racist projects.
- The General Nominating Committee’s use of 20% racial/ethnic minority provision for all boards and committees established after the 1969 General Assembly.
- The Short-Term Employment Experiences in Ministry Program to prepare African-American and Hispanic persons for ministry.
- Establishing The Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and North American Pacific and Asian Ministries.
- Establishing offices of education and ministry for the African-American established churches.

On an individual basis, the Disciples assert “[r]acially motivated bigotry manifests itself as a separation of persons, stereotyping, devaluation, fear, scapegoating, and overgeneralization based on race.”³³ “*We reject racism. We reject the black racism of the Manifesto. Equally we reject the white racism which pervades American society and in which all of us have shared—sometimes deliberately, most of the time unconsciously, sometimes against our will.*”³⁴

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Church) was founded by Joseph Smith, who is considered a prophet by the Church and an advocate for racial justice.³⁵ While slavery was practiced in America, Joseph Smith made several declarations condemning racism and advocating racial justice:

“They [Negroes] came into the world slaves, mentally and physically. Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them. They have souls and are subject to salvation.”³⁶

“The Declaration of Independence ‘holds these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal: that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,’ but, at the same time, some two or three million people are held as slaves for life, because the spirit in them is covered with a darker skin than ours...The Constitution of the United States of America meant just what it said without reference to color or condition, ad infinitum!”³⁷

As the Church grew, its advocacy for racial justice grew. Many leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints continued their denouncement of racism:

“Negroes should be treated like human beings...For their abuses of that race, the whites shall be cursed, unless they repent.”³⁸

“What a different world this would be if men would accumulate wealth, for example, not as an end but as a means of blessing human beings and improving human relations. A Christian conception of the right and value of a human soul, even though his skin be dark, would have prevented the slaughter that at this moment is being perpetuated in Ethiopia.”³⁹

“America has the great opportunity to lead the world from political intrigue and cheap demagoguery, from national selfishness, from unrighteous usurpation of power, and from unholy aggrandizement. She must prove to the people of the world that she has no selfish ends to serve, no desire for conquest, nor of national or race superiority. When these ideals are established, America can blaze the trail and lead the world to peace.”⁴⁰

“The Mormon Church does not believe, nor does it teach, that the Negro is an inferior being. Mentally, and physically, the Negro is capable of great achievement, as great or in some cases greater than the potentiality of the white race.”⁴¹

“Certainly the Negroes as children of God are entitled to equality before the law and to be treated with all the dignity and respect of any member of the human race.”⁴²

“Racial prejudice is of the devil. Racial prejudice is of ignorance. There is not a place for it in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁴³

“We repudiate efforts to deny any person his or her inalienable dignity and rights on the abhorrent and tragic theory of the superiority of one race over another.”⁴⁴

“We do not believe that any nation, race, or culture is a lesser breed or inferior in God’s eyes.”⁴⁵

Following the example of their founder, the Church continues to make declarations that denounce racism. Below are scriptural (from The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ) and other official statements on the equality of all humankind:⁴⁶

I.⁴⁷...he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.

II.⁴⁸ Based upon ancient and modern revelation, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints gladly teaches and declares the Christian doctrine that all men and women are brothers and sisters, not only by blood relationship from common mortal progenitors, but also as literal spirit children of an Eternal Father.

Our message therefore is one of special love and concern for the eternal welfare of all men and women, regardless of religious belief, race, or nationality, knowing that we are truly brothers and sisters because we are the sons and daughters of the same Eternal Father.

III.⁴⁹ We reaffirm the longstanding concern of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for the well-being and intrinsic worth of all people. Latter-Day Saints believe that “God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

All men and women are children of God. It is morally wrong for any person or group to deny anyone his or her inalienable dignity on the tragic and abhorrent theory of racial or cultural superiority.

We call upon all people everywhere to recommit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and

compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences.

EPISCOPAL

*Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, Repent and return to the Lord? I will, with God’s help.*⁵⁰

In 1991, the Episcopal Church adopted a resolution, entitled “Church Without Racism,” to address institutional racism in Church and society.⁵¹ The resolution noted that in 1986, the Presiding Bishop delivered an address from the Chair to the Executive Council in which he stated, “No greater challenge faces the Church than that of racism” and promised to implement previously adopted resolutions pertaining to racism.⁵² The resolution denounces racism as “a sin that contradicts God’s creation and designation of the human race as the image of God.”⁵³ The Church committed, through that resolution, to end racism in the world and to strive for more inclusiveness. The goals to combat racism included:⁵⁴

- Prayer and Worship—encourage the establishment of prayer groups and support groups around the theme of combating racism.
- Planning and Funding—ensure that planning and funding structures affirm racial equity in appointments to and funding of all diocesan staffs, committees and commissions.
- Deployment—support and actively work to assure that parishes that have never considered minority clergy for vacancies do so.
- Recruitment—actively recruit and support minority candidates in their progress from postulant ordination.
- Education—prepare educational material to provide parishes with an educational series on the nature of racism that will acknowledge racism as a sin and will work toward eliminating its existence in the Church.
- Racial Survey—conduct a racial survey to determine where minority persons are in the Dioceses’ structures and parishes to determine if they are present on all Diocesan committees in proportion to their presence in the Church.

In March 1994, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church published a pastoral letter entitled “The Sin of Racism.” The pastoral letter declared that at the heart of racism is fear. “We fear those who are different from ourselves, and that fear translates into violence, which in turn creates more fear. Institutionalized preference, primarily for white persons, is deeply ingrained in the American way of life in areas such as employment, the availability of insurance and credit ratings, in education, law enforcement, courts of law and the military.”⁵⁵

Racism, according to the pastoral letter, “perpetuates a basic untruth which claims the superiority of one group of people over others because of the color of their skin, their cultural history, their tribal affiliation, or their ethnic identity. This lie distorts the biblical understanding of God’s action in creation, wherein all human beings are made ‘in the image of God.’”⁵⁶ “It blasphemes the ministry of Christ who died for all people, ‘so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.’”⁵⁷

The pastoral letter asserts that “God’s response to human sin is to establish a covenant in Christ Jesus that overcomes division and isolation by binding human beings to God and each other in a new way. For Episcopalians, the implications of this new community in Christ are spelled out in the baptismal covenant. Our ability to live into that covenant, personally and in our life together in the church, witnesses to the power of Jesus Christ, with whom we have died to sin through baptism and risen to a new life of joyful obedience.”⁵⁸

Accordingly, the “House of Bishops and the General Convention as a whole have long rejected the evil of racism and have supported full civil rights for people of color among all races.”⁵⁹ Asserting a commitment to combat racism in the Church and society, the Bishops entered into a new covenant, in pertinent part, as follows:⁶⁰

- To make an inventory of racist attitudes in their feelings, habits and actions toward others.
- To commit themselves to be better listeners.
- To teach and preach the gospel in ways that sustain a vision of justice and peace among all people.
- To proclaim the vision of God’s new creation in which the dignity of every human being is honored.
- To place a high priority on the development of strategies for the recruitment, deployment and support of persons of color.

- To encourage the development of liturgical expressions that reflect the church’s racial and ethnic composition and to articulate clearly the good news that in Jesus Christ every barrier that separates God’s people is broken down.
- To establish a standing committee of the House of Bishops to implement and monitor the fulfillment of this covenant.

*Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? I will, with God’s help.*⁶¹

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) is a scriptural-based faith that actively seeks to become more inclusive-minded. The ELCA demonstrated its commitment to denouncing racism in its official statement on the topic. “The church confesses Christ, who has broken down the dividing wall (Ephesians 2:14). Christ, our peace, has put an end to the hostility of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic class. The church proclaims Christ, confident this good news gets at liberty those captive behind ways of hostility” (Luke 4:18).⁶²

The ELCA defines racism as “a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice—in sin, a violation of God’s intention for humanity...Racism fractures and fragments both church and society.”⁶³

For the ELCA, racism is not simply a personal attitude, but a mind-set that is so complex “we underestimate it.”⁶⁴ The ELCA recognizes that racism “infects and affects everyone” and has attempted to address its predominant white membership about the negative effects of racism. “What has been the case is still the case: skin color makes a difference and white people benefit from a Privilege Position.”⁶⁵

The ELCA recognizes that racism not only affects the victim, but the perpetrator as well. It undermines community, encourages prejudice and unhealthy competition, and deforms relationships. “It robs white people of the possibility of authentic relationship with people of color, and people of color of the possibility of authentic relationships with white people.”⁶⁶ Racism can lead to “the rejection of self” that “hinders us from becoming who God calls us to be.”⁶⁷

The ELCA asserts that racism leaves both the perpetrator and victim in a precarious situation. It

destroys the confidence and dreams of numerous non-white people in America. In addition, it leaves many whites feeling guilty and unable to forge authentic relationships with non-white people, thereby robbing themselves of happiness that comes from meaningful relationships.

The ELCA asserts that we all benefit when we “confront racism and move toward fairness and justice in society.”⁶⁸ “We are one in Christ.”⁶⁹ Particularly in its leadership, ELCA calls for action in the struggle against racism. “We expect our leadership to name the sin of racism and lead us in our repentance of it...intentional measures are necessary for vision to become reality.”⁷⁰

The ELCA has committed its leadership to “doing justice.” It has suggested that all church leaders explore the following questions when contemplating the effects of racism in our society:

- How should we confront racism in a diverse society?
- What is the relationship between race, political policy, and crime?
- How do economic forces work against people of color in housing, medical care, and employment?⁷¹

The ELCA will continue to build a strong “advocacy for justice”⁷² and confront “racial and ethnic discrimination. We will listen to our advocates as we examine our own institutional life...Our advocacy will take place in partnership ecumenically, among corporations and local, state, and national governments...Our efforts on behalf of local and international community and in opposition to racism will recognize the multicultural nature of the world. We will promote international respect for human rights, and support the international movement to eliminate discrimination.”⁷³

The ELCA asserts the “Church exists to proclaim Jesus the Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection mean freedom for the world...[s]o, the Church must cry out for justice...insist on justice...pursue justice.”⁷⁴ The ELCA has begun the process of having its leadership and members become more conscious of the effects of racism in our society, and the power it has to destroy our country if no action is taken.

GREEK ORTHODOX

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) includes leaders of nine Orthodox Church jurisdictions and represents approximately six million Orthodox Christians in the

United States.⁷⁵ In 1964, SCOBA adopted a statement that denounced racism as “the greatest sin that the free soul of man can bear.”⁷⁶ That statement also upheld “the rights of free men and women to act as the People of God in expressing their right to the God-given principles which no person can be denied because of color or creed.”⁷⁷ SCOBA also asserted that “[a]s children of God, made in His image, we urge that all people of all races exercise disciplined restraint in declaring their God-given beliefs and rights so that these blessings may be freely gained in a society which constitutionally and spiritually guarantees these rights.”⁷⁸

MENNONITE CHURCH AND THE MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Mennonite Church, a scriptural-based faith community, recognizes that racism can hinder the Church in “becoming more like the church for which our Lord prayed” (John 17:11-12, 20-23; Ephesians 1:1-22).⁷⁹ “We recognize with sorrow that we are part of a society established by invading the lands and the rights of earlier residents and by importing and enslaving other human beings...[W]e intend to become one church of many peoples. We recognize that our response to God’s will in this matter will call for repentance from sinful attitudes in our own hearts.”⁸⁰

The Church recognizes that racism “is a particular social reality of evil our Lord asks us to confront in becoming God’s people.”⁸¹ It is committed to “witness and work for social justice in our communities.”⁸²

For the Church, “[t]he foundation for our concerns is that we have become one in the blood of the crucified Christ (Eph. 2:14), and our membership is to be drawn from every race and tribe and language and nation (Rev. 5:9-10). Our public witness to this fact is an essential part of our evangelism.”⁸³

The Church encourages its congregations to “identify and speak out against all forms of racism in our communities.”⁸⁴ It recognizes that Christ has broken down the wall that separated and caused division. “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Ephesians 2:14).

Through *The Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process*, an Anabaptist Training and Skill Development Program, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Brethren in Christ are committed to “provide anti-racism training

for long-term institutional change” (Acts 9:1-31). MCC is committed to exposing what is behind nourishing and sustaining racism.

MCC knows that racism is sometimes hidden, confusing, disguised, and ignored. It educates and encourages leadership and members to act on their faith against racism in several ways:⁸⁵

- Support organizations led by people of color working for self-determination and community improvement.
- Challenge the policies, practices and foundations of your church and workplace in order to remove otherwise hidden racism.
- Resist racist assumptions in the media.
- Write letters expressing opposition to confusion “code language” that describes people of color as the sole recipients of welfare.
- Read about the history of racism and how color blindness, regardless of intent, does not end racism.
- Find out how people with white skin are given power and privilege in America today.
- Challenge comments and assumptions that undergird racist practice.
- Pray that eyes might be opened to the wounds of racism.

The Mennonite faith community is a community of action and encourages its well-meaning members to not ignore racism in the hope it will go away. “For this, people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them” (Matthew 13:14).⁸⁶

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)⁸⁷

The Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) defines racism as an unholy triad that involves prejudice, individual racism and institutional racism. The Church, of all institutions, must actively struggle to eliminate this evil. Since this evil has divided [the] nation, the PCUSA is actively promoting diversity and inclusiveness within its membership. They believe they are called to “witness

the uniqueness of the Christian faith.”⁸⁸

In the magazine produced by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, entitled *Breaking Down The Walls*, the Church challenges its members not to use scripture to justify racism. The authors of this article point out that scripture does not condone or support racist views (See Isaiah 58: 1-12; Acts 10: 1-36; Acts 2:1-11, 43-47; and Revelation 7: 9-12).

The Church recognizes racism as a “cultural norm” in American society. Its roots are deeply embedded in the history of this country. Hence, the Church is committed to confronting both institutional and individual racism. The Church has proposed the following to eradicate racism.

Confronting Institutional Racism⁸⁹

1. Work with a racial [or] ethnic congregation in doing a common mission project.
2. Ask people from a racial [or] ethnic group in your community to teach you about their history and culture.
3. Investigate hiring practices of companies in your community you suspect of hiring an inadequate number of racial [or] ethnic people.
4. Volunteer to work with the Human Relations Committee of your community in investigating discrimination in housing, banking, or employment.
5. Support legislation that assures that everyone is protected against discrimination in housing and employment.
6. Support organizations that are working for a good education for all children, not just your own.
7. Ask the session to either appoint a new committee or ask an existing one to help the whole congregation deal with both personal and institutional racism.
8. Find ways to deal with hate groups.
9. Hold a candidates’ night in your church where they are asked to address the important moral issues before the electorate. Be sure that issues of institutional racism are included on the agenda.
10. Trade with businesses owned by racial [or] ethnic individuals or groups and seek help from racial [or] ethnic professionals—doctors, dentists, and lawyers.

Dealing with Individual Racism⁹⁰

1. Be aware of your own racist feelings and thoughts...If possible, ask yourself why you have these feelings.
2. Don't let feelings and thoughts turn into behavior. Don't say the thoughts out loud or allow the feelings to turn into racist behavior.
3. Instead of explaining that a person's behavior (which you don't like) results from his/her race, think of other reasons for the behavior.
4. Commit yourself to discourage and to disagree openly with racist comments, jokes, or actions among those around you. Research indicates that when those around you in authority actively discourage racist behavior or words, such incidents decline.
5. Learn about the nature of the differences in customs and traditions between your racial [or] ethnic group and another racial [or] ethnic group. Learning that there are differences in customs and traditions and understanding those differences can reduce racism.
6. Commit yourself to working on institutional racism. (See the list above).
7. Be aware of the privileges that you have as a white person.
8. Remember that God is redeeming the world and bringing an end to racism. Pray that God may empower you to be a part of God's work.

These recommendations are further supported by the following excerpt from *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community*, which was adopted by the 211th General Assembly in 1999:

The PCUSA covenants to embrace racial and cultural diversity as God-given assets of the human family. The PCUSA covenants to become an antiracism community, resisting oppression and working to overcome racism within its own life and the life of the society by blending social analysis, institutional reconstruction, and individual healing with discernment, prayer, and worship-based action.

The PCUSA affirms that racism violates God's purpose for humanity and is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the PCUSA recognizes

that racism is a sin. The PCUSA is committed to spiritually confronting the idolatry and ideology of White supremacy and White privilege. The PCUSA confesses its complicity in the creation and maintenance of racist structures and systems in all parts of our nation's life, including the church itself.

The PCUSA rejoices in its witness of resistance to racism provided by past and current PCUSA leaders and individuals and echoed by congregations and governing bodies. The PCUSA recognizes that it has not spoken boldly enough, nor acted courageously or creatively enough, in response to racism.

God created human beings, a diverse family, to live together and to love one another as God loves us. We violate God's intention for the human family by creating false categories of value and identity, based on identifiable characteristics such as culture, place of origin, and skin color. We use these categories to create a race-based system, which benefits some while oppressing others. Racism is fundamentally a spiritual problem because it denies our true identity as children of God.

In Jesus Christ, God frees us to love and teaches us, through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, how to live as a family. We are led by the Holy Spirit to participate in transforming personal lives, dismantling institutional racism, healing racial prejudice and hatred, and building "The Beloved Community" for all of God's children.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The Catholic Church declares racism is a sin "that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same father."⁹¹

The Church recognizes that racism has a direct relationship with numerous variables, such as economics and poverty. "Discriminatory practices in our labor markets, in educational systems, and in electoral politics create major obstacles for Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other racial minorities in their struggle to improve their economic status; such discrimination is evidence of the continuing presence of racism in our midst."⁹²

Catholic Bishops, in particular, have labeled racism a

divisive sin that threatens the Body of Christ. The Bishops recognize that the sin of racism and economic oppression are so intertwined, the “movement towards authentic justice demands a simultaneous attack on both evils.”

“Racism is a sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of race...It mocks the words of Jesus: Treat others the way you would have them treat you...Racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the incarnation.”⁹³

The Church asserts that racism can only be overcome by looking to Jesus. Those who live by the words of Christ, must recognize that in Him, “there is neither Jew, nor Greek, male nor female; for all are one” (Galatians 3:28).⁹⁴

The Church recognizes that racism is a systemic societal construct that invades all sectors of our society. “The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority; and members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are.”⁹⁵

Many people, according to the Church, believe that racism is a product of the past because our national laws no longer advocate segregation. Yet, the Bishops point out that the “continuing existence of racism becomes apparent however, when we look beneath the surface of our national life as, for example, in the case of unemployment figures.”⁹⁶

Racism is apparent when we observe that the population in our prisons “consists disproportionately of minorities; that violent crime is the daily companion of a life of poverty and deprivation; and that the victims of such crimes are also disproportionately non-white and poor. Racism is also apparent in the attitudes and behavior of some law-enforcement officials and the unequal availability of legal assistance.”⁹⁷

The Catholic community in the United States does not intend to sit idle while racism destroys those made in the image of God. “The church is truly universal, embracing all races, for it is the visible sacrament of this saving unity” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 9).

The Church has proclaimed that human beings are created in the image of God. As the Holy Father Pope John Paul II has written: “on account of the mystery of the redemption (every human being) is entrusted to the solicitude of the church.” The human being is “the primary and fundamental way for the church” (Remptor Hominis, 13, 14).⁹⁸

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH⁹⁹

“And opening his mouth, Peter said: ‘I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.’”¹⁰⁰

The Seventh-day Adventists assert that one of the odious evils of our day is racism, the belief or practice that views or treats certain racial groups as inferior and therefore justifiably the object of domination, discrimination, and segregation.

While the sin of racism is an age-old phenomenon based on ignorance, fear, estrangement, and false pride, some of its ugliest manifestations have taken place in our time. Racism and irrational prejudices operate in a vicious circle. Racism is among the worst of ingrained prejudices that characterize sinful human beings. Its consequences are generally more devastating because racism easily becomes permanently institutionalized and legalized and in its extreme manifestations can lead to systematic persecution and even genocide.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church deplors all forms of racism.

Seventh-day Adventists want to be faithful to the reconciling ministry assigned to the Christian church. As a worldwide community of faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to witness to and exhibit in her own ranks the unity and love that transcend racial differences and overcome past alienation between races.

Scripture plainly teaches that every person was created in the image of God, who “made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”¹⁰¹ Racial discrimination is an offense against our fellow human beings, who were created in God’s image. In Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek.”¹⁰² Therefore, racism is really a heresy and in essence a form of idolatry, for it limits the fatherhood of God by denying the brotherhood of all mankind and by exalting the superiority of one’s own race.

The standard for Seventh-day Adventist Christians is acknowledged in the Church’s Bible-based Fundamental Belief No. 13, “Unity in the Body of Christ.” Here it is pointed out: “In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation.”¹⁰³

Any other approach destroys the heart of the Christian gospel.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM¹⁰⁴

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is a religious body comprised of two traditions: The Universalists who organized in 1793, and the Unitarians who formed in 1825. The groups merged into the UUA in 1961. Both groups trace their origin to England, Poland, and Transylvania. The UUA is a religious organization that advocates Jewish and Christian principles.

According to UUA, liberal religion can be defined as “the impulse to respect dogma in favor of free inquiry to bring to bear the forces of reason in making religious judgments, while not necessarily denying the reality of supernatural forces; to be suspicious of religious authority that conflicts with individual reason; to replace a preoccupation with the metaphysical aspects of theology with an orientation toward living rightly and doing good in this world, and to exhibit an optimistic stance toward the possibilities of transforming the world into a saner and more humane place through the development of human potential by education, self-cultivation, and a beneficent social environment.”¹⁰⁵

More than 500 leaders in the UUA have participated in an extensive anti-racism training program. Sixteen congregations have participated in a pilot project that includes timelines and goals for training all UUA members to move toward an anti-racist, anti-oppressive posture.

The UUA’s Racial and Cultural Diversity Task Force of 1996 has the following as their vision statement: “An authentically anti-oppressive, anti-racist and multicultural Unitarian Universalist faith will be an equitable, pro-active sure-transforming, prophetic force for justice within our congregation and our communities. This faith will be effective and accountable, both to itself and to our communities, through transformative spirituality, justice, justice seeking, witness, and action.”

The UUA recognizes that racism practiced in the United States is an “equation of systemic power and white privilege.” It calls its leadership and members to actively engage those forces that promote racism.¹⁰⁶

Since racism is intertwined within systems of culture and national philosophy, the UUA encourages its membership to become active participants in the struggle to dismantle racism. It is important that each member

identify “the importance of understanding the use of power in creating and sustaining racism. And, we realize that in a racist society, non-racism or colorblindness is passive racism and that only anti-racism can move us toward authentic multiculturalism. We came to understand that racism in the United States is an equation of systemic power and white privilege. To be anti-racist is to work toward dismantling racism—that is, toward dismantling white privilege and power.”¹⁰⁷

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The United Methodist Church (UMC), a scriptural-based faith community, is committed to opposing racism. The Church confesses that “all persons are created in God’s image” (Genesis 1:26-31) and “to favor some persons over others is to deny God” (Acts 10.15).¹⁰⁸

UMC recognizes “both personal and institutional racism” through expressions, attitudes, and social patterns.¹⁰⁹ “Racism plagues and cripples our growth in Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons.”¹¹⁰

For UMC, “God does not recognize personal differences. External differences are of no importance” (Galatians 2:6).¹¹¹ The Church not only denounces racism, but asserts that society is obligated to “redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic people.”¹¹² It encourages “the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. As the family of God we should strive to emulate God’s kindness, tolerance, and patience to one another” (Romans 2:4). “In Christ, we are all one. There are no barriers of nation, race, or gender in the eyes of Christ” (Galatians 3:28-29).¹¹³

UMC works to eradicate racism within the Church as well. “The church that is lukewarm on the racism issue is not a faithful church and will be judged.”¹¹⁴ To address inequalities and discriminatory practices, UMC supports “equal opportunities in employment and promotion; education and training to the highest quality; nondiscrimination in voting, in access to public accommodations, and in housing purchase or rental; and positions of leadership and power in all elements of our life together.”¹¹⁵

“With the heart concentrated through yoga, with the eye of evenness for all beings, he beholds the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.”

Bhagavad Gita, VI.29

“One who sees Me (the Lord) everywhere and sees everything in Me, never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from Him.”

Bhagavad Gita, VI.30

“One who, established in unity, worships Me (the Lord) dwelling in all beings, whatever his mode of life, that Yogi abides in Me.”

Bhagavad Gita, VI.31

The Hindu faith has a long and varied history and goes back several centuries BCE, before even the name “Hinduism” was known. Various theories exist regarding the beginnings of the Hindu faith. According to one prominent theory, Hinduism represents a blend of an indigenous tradition of mystical or yogic practices and a tradition of nature worship and ritualistic sacrifice brought into India by some nomadic people from the Caucasus region known as Aryans. A corollary of this belief is that the caste system, which developed in India, was based on a distinction between the lighter-skinned Aryans and the darker-skinned indigenous peoples. This may also be the reason why the early term for caste, *varna*, also means color. According to this theory, the higher caste peoples were from the Aryan side and of a fairer complexion, while the lower caste, the workers, were from the indigenous side and darker in complexion.

Whether or not this theory is valid, it is nevertheless true that no discussion of race is found per se in the early scriptures and writings, but much about caste, and far more about the equality of all beings from a general point of view, regardless of race or social position. It therefore seems legitimate to assume that the attitudes of the Hindus regarding race and racism can be understood by looking at their writings and attitudes regarding caste and society in general. Their belief is that there is a oneness of spirit that functions as the ground of all beings: The same Lord, or Self, dwells equally within all living beings, regardless of race, caste or social status. The verses that follow thus do not specifically condemn racism, but rather espouse the equality of all beings from a spiritual point of view. In that sense, they may be taken as a

definitive condemnation of racism as well as all other forms of prejudice, elitism and privilege.

The following verses are from the *Bhagavad Gita*, the most popular and influential scripture of Hinduism:

“The knowers of the Self look with an equal eye on a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah.” V.18

“One who judges of pleasure or pain everywhere by the same standard he applies to himself, that Yogi is regarded as the highest.” VI.32

“One truly sees who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling equally in all beings, deathless in the dying.” XIII.27

“Seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he does not injure the Self by the self.” XIII.28

“Having realized one’s divine nature and being tranquil-minded, he neither grieves nor desires. The same to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me (the Lord).” XVIII.54

One of the greatest exponents of modern Hinduism was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). Vivekananda was a prolific letter writer and dynamic public speaker. His recorded lectures, writings and letters comprise nine volumes. One of the main themes of his message was social justice. He was a great advocate of education for all, poverty relief, and a variety of social programs, including affirmative action, well before the idea ever gained popularity in the West. The following quotations are taken from his *Complete Works*:

“But the idea of privilege is the bane of human life. Two forces, as it were, are constantly at work, one making caste and the other breaking caste; in other words, the one making for privilege, the other breaking down privilege. And whenever privilege is broken down, more and more light and progress come to a race. This struggle we see all around us. Of course there is first the brutal idea of privilege, that of the strong over the weak. There is the privilege of wealth. If a man has more money than another, he wants a little privilege over those who have less. There is the still subtler and more powerful privilege of intellect; because one man knows more than others, he claims more privilege. And last of all, and the worst, because the most

tyrannical, is the privilege of spirituality. If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else. They say, 'Come down and worship us, ye common herds; we are the messengers of God, and you have to worship us.' None can be Vedantists [Hindus], and at the same time admit of privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege?"¹¹⁷

"This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Shiva [God] in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples."¹¹⁸

"What good is it if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as brother?"¹¹⁹

"Each is responsible for the evil anywhere in the world...All that unites with the universal is virtue. All that separates is sin. You are a part of the Infinite. This is your nature. Hence you are your brother's keeper...Not one can attain liberty until every being (ant or dog) has liberty. Not one can be happy until all are happy. When you hurt anyone you hurt yourself, for you and your brother are one."¹²⁰

"If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong."¹²¹

"May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship."¹²²

ISLAM¹²³

*"Never let hatred of others lead you to deviate from Justice. Be just for this is closest to Righteousness. Remember God is well aware of all that you do."*¹²⁴

Islamic scriptures proclaim the equality of all people, male or female, rich or poor, of any race, class, caste or national origin. The monotheistic belief that there is only one God to all humanity and that all human beings originated from a single pair, namely Adam and Eve, is clearly taught in the Quran.

O, Humans! We created you from a single soul, male and female, (Adam & Eve) and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another (not to despise each other). Truly, the most honored of you in God's sight is the one who is most righteous.¹²⁵

A specific instance where Prophet Mohammed spoke about race-related problems originating from birth that was rampant in Arabia or pre-Islamic days is as follows:

All humankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, and a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab. A white person has no superiority over a black person, and a black person has no superiority over a white person, except by piety and righteous deeds.¹²⁶

In Islam, it is important to understand the attributes of One and only One God: All-Knowing, All Aware, The Merciful, The Forgiver, The Truth, etc. With regard to racism, God is All Responsive—the Provider for all humanity—showing no discrimination of race, religion, caste, creed or national origin.

I waste not the labor of any that labors amongst you, be they male or female—each one of you are equal to me.¹²⁷

Quran also compares the diversity within the human race.

To each among you (various groups/races) we have prescribed the Law or an Open Way. If God had willed all humanity would have been of one single community; this is not a part of God's plan. God's plan is to test you in what each one has received (in form of Holy Scriptures or Conscience). So strive, as

in a race, in all virtues. The goal of all the people is to God. It is God who will tell you the Truth in matters of which you have been disputing.¹²⁸

According to UMAIA, not only does the Quran denounce racism, but advocates the eradication of racism:

Stand out firmly for Justice as witnesses in front of God, even against yourselves, your children and against your parents, against people who are rich or poor. Do not follow your inclinations or your desires, lest you should deviate from Justice. Remember God is the best of all Protectors and well acquainted with all that you do.¹²⁹

[It is righteousness] to spend your income to help your poor relatives, the needy, the orphans, the traveler, to liberate the slaves (by paying their price) and those who ask you for help. [It is righteousness] to give regular charity, to pray steadfastly, to fulfill the contracts that you have made (to believer or atheist). [It is righteousness] to be firm and patient in pain and sufferings and during all periods of turmoil and panic. Such are the people of Truth the God conscientious.¹³⁰

UMAIA firmly asserts that to wipe out racism from our lands, we have to be able to enforce the laws of equality. This requires an ideal judge, ideal witnesses and an ideal jury. The above revelations of the Quran address the character of such people. If we have such people dispensing justice in the courts of law, racism will not only be wiped out of America—but also from the whole world.

JUDAISM

JUDAISM (REFORM)

In 1963, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) adopted a Resolution on Commitment to Racial Justice.¹³¹ This resolution recognized the first national conference in which “ranking representatives of the country’s major religious bodies...met to confront the issue of race and to bring to bear upon it the religious principles of their denomination.”¹³² UAHC recognized “that our congregations have not dedicated themselves to the utmost of their influence, capacity and energy in order to help resolve the racial crisis.”¹³³

The resolution recommended an action plan to achieve racial justice in:¹³⁴

- Administrative policies
- Educational, cultural and worship programs
- Cooperative relationships with other institutions
- Individual lives

In 1999, the 65th General Assembly of the UAHC adopted a resolution entitled “Race and the U.S. Criminal Justice System.”¹³⁵ This resolution recognized that “[n]otwithstanding the ideals of our criminal justice system, there is growing evidence that race and poverty play a role in determining who gets arrested, who gets a fair trial, and how those convicted are sentenced. There is an increasing perception that we have two criminal justice systems, separate and unequal: one for affluent Whites and one for racial minorities and the poor. Foremost among the complainants are disparate application of the death penalty, police brutality, racial profiling, sentencing disparity, and disparate treatment of minorities by the juvenile justice system.”¹³⁶

Through this resolution, UAHC acted to denounce racism throughout the criminal justice system. They followed the leadership of the UAHC and the former Synagogue Council of America (uniting Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Rabbis) to oppose the death penalty, police brutality, discriminatory profiling, sentencing disparity, and juvenile justice.

Specifically, the resolution noted:

African-American men are disproportionately represented among those on death row and those who have been executed in the last twenty years. Although people of color are the victims in more than half of all homicides, a White victim case is over four times more likely to result in a death sentence than a comparable Black victim case. Some contend that these and other statistics showing disparities can be explained by nondiscriminatory factors, but there is strong evidence that race is a determining factor.¹³⁷

A major factor contributing to racial disparity in prosecution and punishment is the discriminatory profiling of minorities—based on race, ethnicity, and sexual preference—as criminal suspects and, especially, as drug traffickers.¹³⁸

While African-Americans constitute about 12% of the U.S. population and 13% of drug users, they make up 38% of persons arrested for drug offenses, 59% of those convicted of drug offenses, and 63% of those convicted of drug trafficking...The disparity in the treatment of users of crack and powder cocaine contributes to the disproportionate incarceration of minorities.¹³⁹

In addition to denouncing racism, the UAHC called on the federal and state governments to take actions to eliminate racial disparities, to speak out against police brutality, and to support legislation that prohibits discriminatory profiling and sentencing disparity. Until these matters were addressed, the UAHC called for a moratorium on the death penalty.

JUDAISM (CONSERVATIVE)

From its very beginning, Judaism affirmed the equality of all humanity. In the creation story, one human is the ancestor of all races. The Talmud, in commenting, observes, *How can one claim my blood redder than yours, when all have the same parentage?* In the story of Noah, this is reaffirmed. Noah has three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, representing all racial strains of humanity. Among Jewish leadership through the ages, race was a matter of no consequence. It has always been a matter of how you lived and what you did, rather than your origin, that counted. The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism affirms this ancient approach and seeks to implement it in all of its programs and affiliates and advocates its full appreciation in American society.¹⁴⁰

JUDAISM (ORTHODOX)

The Rabbinical Council of America's answer to prejudice arising from a minority group having a different skin color is based on Jewish sources. The Rabbinical Council of America notes that "in Judaism there exists no concept of discrimination by race. Jewish sources indicate that Jews whose skin color is black have been part of the Jewish community since time immemorial, and not, as some might think, a recent phenomenon arising from the immigration of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. It is clear that prejudice is contrary to Judaism and one may never discriminate against any individual, Jewish or non-Jewish."¹⁴¹

According to the Rabbinical Council of America, "within Jewish society, the non-Jew is the stranger, the one

who is most different. The commandment most often repeated in the Torah is not the commandment to keep the Sabbath, or any ritual law. The commandment repeated thirty-six times (and according to some, forty-six times) is the commandment to love the stranger and to treat him or her properly. The Torah is replete with references to this effect."¹⁴²

The Rabbinical Council of America also points out that "the emphasis in the Torah against mistreating the stranger, that is, discriminating against him because he is different, cannot be explained on the assumption that non-Jews were very prevalent in ancient Jewish society, when, in fact, we know just the opposite to be true. In ancient Israel relatively few 'strangers' lived among the Jewish population. Therefore, the purpose of these commandments is to teach that it is pure evil to oppress the helpless or defenseless. Since the stranger is the most defenseless, how he is treated becomes a moral barometer of society in general. In addition, the Torah repeatedly links the commandment not to oppress the stranger with the comment that you, the Jews, were strangers in Egypt. Consequently, since you know how it feels to be discriminated against because you were different (in language, dress, and customs), how it feels to be oppressed by the majority and made into slaves, you, in turn, may not discriminate or oppress anyone who is different. You must never be prejudiced against the stranger."¹⁴³

MOHAWK NATION¹⁴⁴

Native American communities are small in size, but large in the reach of their extended families. Those connections transcend political, territorial and temporal barriers. We are connected not only to our immediate relatives, but to all those generations before us. We also have a special responsibility to the future generations to come. In the way of the Haudenosaunee—the people of the longhouse—we believe that we are also connected to all of the Native Americans through clan and common experiences. It is difficult to generalize Native American beliefs and experiences. Each community has its unique identity, way of being and history. However, we do have shared memories that connect us.

For the Haudenosaunee, both past and present, these shared memories link us to our ancestors. In one sense, we can still see their footprints on this earth. They laid out a path for us to follow. It is not an actual trail, but is the shared memory of why we are walking on the same path of life that they did. We call this path the Original

Instructions. Those Instructions have become our shared memories about how humans are to conduct themselves on this land we call North America. These Instructions provide a frame of reference for looking at our relationship to the sacred universe—our first extended family. The celestial beings are our relatives. They are alive with spirit, just as we are. We are connected to a great web of life. In that life there is no racism, no prejudice, no discrimination. There is only the common human duty to do good in the world.

The Original Instructions also discuss our relationship to the earth, our original mother, who continues to support us as we walk about. Our long-term health and well-being are dependent upon the health and well-being of the earth. Our Instructions also explain our relationship to the plants, animals, fish, birds and other creatures with whom we share this great place of life. Our shared memories of the past explain very clearly the relationship of people to one another. This web of life includes all living creatures, all peoples of the world.

In many ways, relationships between people, communities, cultures and nations are predicated upon three simple values:

1. We are to love each other as if we are members of one large, extended family. However, our concept of family is not to have a father in charge of the wife and children. Instead, the whole family is interconnected, dependent upon each member to fulfill their responsibilities to the well-being of the entire family. Men and women are meant to be equal partners in this life. Elders represent the collective wisdom and experience of how to live on the land. Children are the best hope that the wisdom of the elders will continue. When humans realize that we are all related, we can come to one mind on matters, building healthy relationships and living a healthy life. By loving one another, we can assure that the future generations will be born into a world where reason replaces violence.
2. We are meant to share with one another. We look to the land as a huge bowl that provides life—giving foods and medicines so that human life can continue. We share one spoon to eat from that bowl. Each will take what they need, not wasting what is left. Food and medicine do not belong to any one person. They were provided for the well-being of all. We should not be charging money for the gifts of nature, nor should we hoard the resources for our own. We need to respect the fact that food and medicine are sacred gifts of life, meant to be shared. By sharing we teach cooperation,

respect and love. By sharing, we all survive and human life can continue.

3. Humans have been asked to respect the life's breath that enters our bodies and allows us to exist. Life is a precious gift of time and we need to continually be thankful for what has been provided for us. All that is required for a happy and healthy life is already in front of us. We need to show respect toward each other's individuality. We need to show respect for the sacred landscape in which we live. We need to respect ourselves and live in a peaceful and contributing way. Humans have a critical role in the well-being of the universe, and if we carry the thoughts of love, sharing and respect, we can give the future generations not only hope, but a way to fulfill that hope.

With that as a background, I find it difficult to express the full nature of the changes that have been brought to our land and people in the last five centuries. Nearly all that we believe about life has been exterminated, threatened, or suffered from lack of attention. It is a sad and troubling story to recall.

I will try to share some of my personal thoughts about our shared memories of the contact between our peoples. Some of the memories are great moments of love, sharing and respect. Others are not so good. Too often the memory of the darker times can create a prison for our emotions, as we have inherited much historical grief.

Thinking of those values we have for human survival, imagine what it must have been like the first time the Mohawk people heard the French guns blast their hot metal in 1609. French settlers Samuel De Champlain, along with some allied Native Americans, attacked the Mohawks and after the smoke cleared, several lay dead, including three chiefs. The killing of the "men of peace" had a profound impact on the Haudenosaunee.

It is not that killing did not exist before. In fact, the Haudenosaunee has one of the greatest traditions of peace, not because everyone was full of love, sharing, and respect. Just the opposite. Our people were caught in a seemingly endless cycle of hatred, violence, and war. Our Great Law of Peace brought that strife to an end when people remembered the values of the Original Instructions. By keeping the peace in mind, and treating everyone with respect and making sure that justice prevails, we can have what we call the Good Mind. Perhaps it is human nature to forget such things, especially when times are good. It takes hard work to keep the peace. It takes a strong mind to overcome heartache and tragedy.

My ancestors should have known better, but the lure of the fur trade and the desire for political and economic gain lead them to take up arms against other Native American nations. The French, Dutch and English were master manipulators. With their steel tomahawks and flint lock guns, the Haudenosaunee dominated native world in the northeast. We forgot much of the Original Instructions and began to hack at the sacred web of life. We settled for bright beads, shiny silver and powerful weapons.

However, it was a short-lived “victory.” Once the fur trade moved further west and the Europeans were no longer in such fierce competition, the Americans began to systematically remove the land from under the feet of my ancestors. We have all become aware of the dispossession of the Native Americans from their homelands. But think for a minute of what that dispossession must have done to the spirit of the people. Blood stained the ground where sacred ceremonies were once held. Great villages were turned into heaps of ash. Thousands of people were forced to flee into the uncertainty of the woods. Families became separated and lost. There was a disconnection to the places where the ancestors had practiced the Original Instructions. Their footprints were lost under wagon trails, train tracks and sidewalks. The grandchildren became confused about where to go and what to do.

The same story could be told of the hundreds of native nations of this land. As the zeal of manifest destiny swept from the East to the West, the Native Americans became the sacrificial lamb in the quest for spiritual unity in American culture. The irony of that fact is part of our collective memory. It still stings us to know that the romantic horizon of America’s past is littered with the bones of our ancestors. The basic denial of our unalienable rights seems hard to fathom when we hear of religious freedom and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

About seven generations ago, the U.S. Army tracked down a small band of Lakota people who were heading to the Stronghold in South Dakota to seek peace and renewal during turbulent times. Because of the unfounded fears of an Indian uprising, these folks were declared to be “hostiles” and the army was sent to return them to their reservation. It was just after Christmas in 1890 that the soldiers found the followers of Big Foot along Wounded Knee Creek. Big Foot agreed to surrender and the people settled in for the night. However, another officer arrived during the night and broke out some liquor for his troops. It was a deadly cocktail.

The next morning, as the soldiers attempted to round up all the Lakota, a struggle ensued. No one knows for

sure what happened. However, no one can dispute the results. The soldiers opened fire with their Hotchkiss guns and almost two hundred Lakota men, women and children were cut to shreds. Those who did not die in the first minutes were hunted down and killed. Unarmed women and children were shot at point blank range. Some suffered multiple wounds but were able to escape the carnage. It is a sad moment in American history.

It is made even more horrific when you realize that the American soldiers were given 24 U.S. medals of honor for the massacre. Imagine, a medal of honor for killing babies! No soldier was ever charged with murder. Despite congressional hearings and review of the Medal of Honor recipients, the massacre is still honored as a glorious battle in military history. To this very day, when the U.S. government brings out its full color guard, the American flag is decorated with colorful battle streamers to commemorate that massacre by the U.S. Army. A blizzard hit the killing ground the next day and images of the frozen bodies of Big Foot and his people have become seared in our collective memory. While we are not all Lakota, every Native American Nation has a similar story. The bloodstains are hard to remove from the earth. They are even harder to remove from our hearts and minds.

It is no wonder that some of our ancestors turned that oppression inward. A sad legacy was created as many a generation suffered from self-hatred as a result of almost being nearly exterminated, displaced and sent off to schools that denied the validity of the ways of the ancestors. Our great grandparents were taught to hate themselves because of their way of life. Even those who did not go to the boarding schools have inherited the dysfunction from a generation that did not see any family love, did not experience any community sharing, and had no models of respect. As tragic as the massacres were against Indian people, perhaps the more serious damage was done to the survivors. The culture, beliefs and values that had sustained their communities for centuries were now replaced with a plow, school bell and bible.

For several generations the Native American survivors lived in virtual poverty, being considered wards of the federal government. Our grandparents were not even considered capable of taking care of themselves. The sacred relationships of the past were severed. Reservations and Indian agencies were operated more like prisons. It is amazing that any of our traditions survived at all. Children were taken away from their families, many to be adopted by non-Indians. Despite it, the stories of the past were shared in the quiet moments, away from the eyes and ears of the jailers. Teachers would wash out the mouths of our parents if they spoke their native languages. The

people found a way to pass on their sacred memories about the old days, but added the fresher memories of how their world had been turned upside down.

People my age grew up in a very different world from that experienced by those elders. Many of us were in denial about who we were and what we wanted out of life. We sought out a living from a family farm, making baskets or getting a job in town. Our people still suffered from racism, bias, and oppression. There was not much hope in the communities. Our political and human rights were still being denied by the federal and state governments. Our lands were still under attack. We were reliving the experience of our ancestors, but it was the twentieth century. Things did not change very much.

The time has come to break the cycle of ignorance, shame and oppression. Many Native American communities have begun to heal themselves. Many good people are working hard to reclaim the values of love, sharing and respect. The spirit of the people is re-emerging. Everywhere I go, I can see a renewal taking place. You can hear more Native American words of healing, comfort and unity. You can hear more songs floating in the wind. People are dancing and celebrating life.

I try to do all I can to keep the values, beliefs and way of life of my ancestors alive and thriving. I have traveled the world to spread the message of peace that we have inherited. I think it is profoundly important to continue the good dialogue started by our people many centuries ago when we would meet and polish the covenant chain of peace. We were really making relatives of each other. Some may call it treaty making, but it was really to make sure that we saw each other as relatives, just as the Original Instructions had told us.

Yet, there is an important step yet to be taken. We have focused much attention on ourselves. We need to expand the circle of healing and begin a dialogue with other races, cultures and belief systems. We have to find ways to overcome our hurt feelings and anger at the “white man.” We have racial and cultural prejudices that we need to overcome to be the kind of human being envisioned at the time of creation.

SIKHISM¹⁴⁵

The Sikh faith strongly opposes discriminatory practices such as racism wherever they might be found. Anti-racist sentiment can be found in Sikh sacred texts, and it is also an important aspect of Sikh daily life. Nanak founded Sikhism in Northern India some 500 years ago, on reformist and egalitarian principles. In his propagation of

this new faith, Nanak spread messages of equality and peace, as well as opposition to all sorts of discriminatory practices in the material world in his teaching. These teachings, along with the writings of later Gurus, or teachers, are recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred text of the Sikh faith.

Regarding discrimination based on appearance, the Guru Granth Sahib says:

Everyone says that there are four castes, four social classes. They all emanate from the drop of God’s Seed. The entire universe is made of the same clay. The Potter has shaped it into all sorts of vessels. The five elements join together, to make up the form of the human body. Who can say which is less, and which is more.¹⁴⁶

First, Allah created the Light; then, by His Creative Power, He made all mortal beings. From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So who is good, and who is bad? O people, O Siblings of Destiny, do not wander deluded by doubt. The Creation is in the Creator, and the Creator is in the Creation, totally pervading and permeating all places. The Clay is the same, but the Fashioner has fashioned it in various ways. There is nothing wrong with the pot of clay. There is nothing wrong with the Potter. The One True Lord abides in all; by his making everything is made. Whoever follows His Message knows the One Lord. He alone is said to be the Lord.¹⁴⁷

These passages specifically condemn discrimination based on social caste, but there is also a general criticism of discrimination based on superficial characteristics in the language of “clay.” Sikhs believe we are all made of the same clay, fashioned by God. What else is racism but a superficial kind of discrimination based on trivial distinctions in human form?

Sikhism opposes discrimination of all sorts, on the grounds that it is not for us very fallible human beings to judge one another. Rather, we are fashioned in the image of the Creator. Therefore, all life is sacred. Fareed, the Creator is in the Creation and the Creation abides in God. Whom can we call bad? There is none without Him.¹⁴⁸

Opposition to discrimination is deeply ingrained in the Sikh way of life outside of the Guru Granth Sahib as well. Profound egalitarianism drives many of the social practices, such as the wearing of the Dastar, or turban. This was a practice specifically established by the tenth and final living Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, as part of his

ongoing battle to reform and eradicate the plague of caste from the Indian subcontinent.

ZOROASTRIANISM¹⁴⁹

*To think a good thought, to speak a good word, to do a good deed, is the best. Everlasting happiness to those who follow the path of Asha.*¹⁵⁰

The ancient history of the Zoroastrians began with the advent of the Prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster, in Greek literature); recently, scholars dated this faith to originate around 1800 B.C.¹⁵¹ “Zoroastrian ideas have played a vital role in the development of western religious thought... The interchange of Zoroastrian thought with the Judaeo-Christian ideology first took place when Cyrus the Great defeated the Assyrians and released the Jews from Babylonian captivity...the commemoration of December 25th as the birthday of Christ has its origins in early Mithraic observances.”¹⁵²

Zarathustra, according to Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America (FZANA), “preached the monotheistic religion of the One Supreme God, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord). His message is a positive, life-affirming, active-principled one, which demands not so much belief, as reason and action on the part of every individual. His was not a prescriptive ethic based on obedience, fear or love, but rather, an ethic of personal responsibility. A Zoroastrian is taught to lead an industrious, honest and, above all, charitable life.”¹⁵³

Zarathustra presents a view of the world in which *Ahura Mazda* originally creates an ideal existence in accordance with the *Law of Asha*...*Ahura Mazda* gives man not only the *freedom* to choose between Good and

Evil, but also the *responsibility* to actively promote Good, vanquish Evil, and move not only himself, but the whole world towards *frashokereti*, the final resurrection, when all will be in a state of perfection and everlasting bliss. This commitment to a life of bringing about a happy, harmonious, morally perfect social order, is what the Prophet offered.

Zoroastrians, according to FZANA, denounce racism as an evil from which one is not only to remove him or herself from, but also act towards eradicating it from the world.

The scriptures of Zarathustra are contained in the ancient texts, *The Avesta*, written in the Avestan language. Of these, the divine hymns, *The Gathas*, are the words of Prophet Zarathustra himself:

Zarəušta, who (is) thy friend, the-follower-of-Truth?
For the Great Brotherhood who wills, indeed, to-achieve-renown?
That-person, indeed, at-(this)-ushering-in is-known (to be) Kavša Vištaspā; (those) whom thou hast-established in-thine-(blest)-abode, O Mazda Ahura, them shall-I-address with-the-Message of Vohu Mano.
UŠTAVAITI 4.14.

Let the Helper born to-deliver (mankind) listen to-the-Teachings;
Never should the Truth-speaker think of-association with-the-follower-of-Untruth; so-that (their) Higher-Selves may combine in-the-supreme reward (each) united-to-Aša at-the-ushering-in (of the new age), O Wise Jamaspa.

SPĀENTA MAINYU 3.9

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS’ POLICY STATEMENTS

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was established in 1913 by Sigmund Livingston in Chicago, Illinois with the assistance of the Independent Order of B’nai B’rith.¹⁵⁴ The mission of the ADL was “to stop, by appeals to reason and conscience, and if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people...to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike...put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens.”¹⁵⁵

According to the ADL, there are Jewish values related to confronting bias:¹⁵⁶

TIKKUN OLAM (Repairing/perfecting the world). We must realize that an act of bias represents something wrong in the world. As Jews, we have a responsibility to act and do something that will help “solve” the problem or situation and make the world a better place.¹⁵⁷

LO ALECHA HAMLACHA LIGMORE, V’LO ATAH BEN HORIN L’HIBATEL MEMENA (You are not required to complete the task, nor are you free to desist from it). It may appear an awesome task to combat all of the evils that exist in the world. That should not overwhelm us. We should merely try to do whatever we can, while we help others to do the same.¹⁵⁸

V’YIVRAH ELOKIM ET HA’ADAM B’TZALMO (People were created in God’s image). No one has the right to harm or harass any of God’s creatures.¹⁵⁹

NITZOR L’SHONHA MERA (Be careful not to speak badly of others). It is always wrong to speak against others, whether in gossip or slander.¹⁶⁰

AL TISTAKEL B’KANKAN, ELAH B’MAH SHE’YESH BOH (Don’t judge a book by its cover). Stereotyping is judging a book by its cover because

all of the individual people in a particular ethnic or cultural group are different.¹⁶¹

VE’AHAVTA LE’RAYACHA KAMOCHA (Love your neighbor as yourself). We must try to love all people because we are all alike as human beings.¹⁶²

MAH DE’SANAH LACH, AL TA’ASEH LE CHAVERCHA (Do not do to your friend or neighbor anything you would not like them to do to you). We must remember that what hurts us, hurts others as well and that their feelings are just as important as our own. Before you call someone a hurtful name, think if you would like it if they called you a hurtful name.¹⁶³

IM AYN ANI LI, MI LI (If I am not for myself, who is for me?) This well-known saying reminds us that we must look out to protect ourselves, but he also reminds us that we should not only look out for ourselves. “If I am only for myself, what am I?”¹⁶⁴

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

“Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

“Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Church Women United (CWU) has a long and consistent history of denouncing and fighting against racism. Before most mainstream feminists confronted the bias among the white middle class, Church Women United (CWU) acted “to foster interracial cooperation.”¹⁶⁵ In fact, CWU “may be the first and largest autonomous, middle-class, interracial, intercultural, and interdenominational lay evangelical venture in gender-distinct ecumenism.”¹⁶⁶ During the historical period of legal segregation, CWU established its “Committee on Race Relations” in 1942 and approved policies in 1943 that forbade holding meetings in hotels that discriminated against “non-white” members.¹⁶⁷

In 1945, the (then) United Council of Church Women agreed to only recognize councils that were open to all races. “Assignment Race” (1962) and “Reassignment Race” (1980) were major projects, each involving thousands of women at the local level for several years in programs that helped them explore racism in general, exclusivity in their own relationships, and the ways in which structural racism is perpetuated in U.S. society.¹⁶⁸

Continuing its tradition for racial justice, Church Women United (CWU) adopted “Common Goals” in 1989 that included, in part, expanding awareness of the forms and causes of injustice, individual and systemic, including racism, sexism, classism, and ageism; encouraging healing encounters in areas of tension due to racial and economic injustice; becoming advocates on behalf of those who suffer injustice; working for a more just, economic, and political order; recognizing our own involvement in social justice and holding ourselves accountable for social justice within our movement.¹⁶⁹

The foundation of CWU is rooted in biblical scripture and ecumenical worship. Using ecumenical worship services, called “celebrations,” CWU established a bridge to unite members from diverse backgrounds.¹⁷⁰ CWU encourages its members to live out their faith convictions to bring about social transformation in local communities, in the country, and throughout the world.

In 1998, CWU established a relationship with Native Americans and adopted a policy statement: “Early Christian efforts among native peoples had both positive and negative consequences. The history of exploitation and eradication of traditional Indian practices cannot be undone, yet as Christians we are called to acknowledge that all human beings reflect the image of creator God (Genesis 1:17) and are worthy of dignity and respect. The creator acknowledges the diversity of the whole creation as good (Genesis 1:31). Native peoples are among those for whom the tear of the Lord’s favor is proclaimed (Isaiah 61) and fulfilled (Luke 4:16; 21). The Apostle Peter was challenged by God to embrace a vision of inclusiveness, because nothing in God’s creation is to be considered unclean” (Acts 10: 1-11, 18).

The CWU adopted a policy statement on violence in 2000, which classified racism as a form of violence. “In the United States, race has been the social construction that sets strangers and ‘foreigners’ apart from white European immigrants. Racial and ethnic inferiority were used as justification for such violent acts as the genocide of Native Americans and confiscation of their lands, the enslavement of Africans, the interment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the ongoing discrimination against Latinos/as and other persons of

color in employment, housing, and other settings.”¹⁷¹

As an activist organization, CWU supports and has committed itself to the following:

- Affirmative Action
- The enactment of stranger hate crime legislation
- Increased funding for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
- Increased minimum wage
- Increased funding for Social Service
- Recognition and enforcement of Native American Sovereignty
- Restoration of full benefits to legal immigrants
- Decreased corporate welfare
- Decreased military spending
- Analysis of all public policy in light of its effects on marginalized populations
- The establishment of an Interagency Council on Race

CWU also instituted its official policy statement on race:¹⁷²

We intend to work for a just, peaceful, and caring society...by combating social injustice through:

- Expanding awareness of the forms and causes of injustice, individual and systemic, including racism, sexism, classism, and ageism
- Encouraging healing encounters in areas of tension due to racial and economic justice
- Becoming advocates on behalf of those who suffer injustice
- Working for a more just social, economic and political order
- Recognizing our own involvement in social justice and holding ourselves accountable for social justice within our movement

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) publicly abhors “the insidious sin of racism.”¹⁷³ It proclaims that the gospel of Christ “transcends barriers of race and social class” (I Corinthians 12:13), and racial discrimination “constitutes a rejection of God’s will and brings scandal to the very gospel we profess to proclaim” (II Corinthians 5:18-20).¹⁷⁴

Throughout its history, the NAE has insisted on improving race relations in both the church and society.¹⁷⁵ NAE denounced “racial discrimination as a

violation of the teachings of Christ and has consistently supported the struggle for civil rights of racial minorities” through a 1956 resolution.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, NAE encouraged its member churches to desegregate “both in spirit and practice and the opening of the doors of all sanctuaries of worship to every person, regardless of race or national origin.”¹⁷⁷

The NAE, along with the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA), represents Protestant denominations and thousands of independent churches that work “together to break down racial barriers between African-American and White churches.” Together this joint task force works to “condemn the bigotry and violence” that results from racism.

The NAE intends to share practical expressions of their commitment against racism, setting an example to their member churches, with the NBEA through:¹⁷⁸

- Prayer
- Encouraging local churches to reject de facto segregation

- Working aggressively to remove barriers to Christian fellowship and communion
- Affirming biblical norms in race relations in churches and communities
- Challenging schools, colleges, universities and seminaries to provide caring and loving environments for students of various races or economic classes

The NAE also challenges ministers to preach “the whole counsel of God”—particularly as it relates to the sin of racism. “Congregations need to be confronted without the reality that salvation is not based on social condition, class, race or national origin, but solely on the grace of God. If Christians take seriously the doctrine of salvation by grace, they must demonstrate that fundamental principle in dealings with others.”

PROMISING PRACTICE FOR DENOUNCING RACISM:

A Pastoral Letter on Racism by Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago

(This letter was reprinted as submitted with minor formatting adjustments.)

1. INTRODUCTION: DWELLING TOGETHER

If you dwell in me, and my words dwell in you, ask whatever you want and you shall have it. This is how my Father is glorified; you are to bear fruit in plenty and so be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love. If you heed my commands, you will dwell in my love, as I have heeded my Father's commands and dwell in his love (John 15:7-10).

In this first year of the third millennium, we are called again by Pope John Paul II to open wide the doors to Christ and to the people of God in our midst. Acknowledging our sins, we continue the journey of conversion and reconciliation, which prepared the great Jubilee of the year 2000. As the Church, we are filled with the sanctifying love of the Holy Spirit; but, at the same time, we are a community, which "clasps sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification." This pastoral letter will address one of the many sins which affect our relationships among ourselves and infect, as well, institutions within the Archdiocese of Chicago and in our society: the sin of racism.

To address something, to speak to it, we have to recognize it. Growing up in Chicago, I first began to think about racism when, as a young boy, I left Chicago for a summer in Memphis and in Nashville, Tennessee. My parents permitted me to spend time with a Franciscan priest stationed in Tennessee, a priest who was not African American but who served black Catholics as their pastor.

The children with whom I played that summer were good companions and we became friends. Within the parish complex and the immediate neighborhood of my new friends' homes, only the priests and the sisters and I were white. The difference that skin color makes struck me forcibly, however, only when my friends took me to downtown Memphis. In Chicago, when I took the bus with my friends, we always rushed to sit in the very last

seat, the long seat that permitted us to look through the back window of the bus as we moved forward. Although we would not have been able to explain it, we created our own space and had the feeling of surveying the bus and the street from a privileged vantage point. We struggled and jostled to sit in that last seat.

Sitting in the back of the bus had a very different connotation in a southern state governed by "Jim Crow" laws. When my friends and I got on the bus in Memphis, I rushed to the back of the bus, only to be told by the conductor that I could not sit there. What was worse, however, was that I could not sit with my friends anywhere on that bus. Thoroughly embarrassed, I did not much enjoy that afternoon in downtown Memphis and never afterwards got on a bus there. That evening, the Franciscan priest, who was so kind to me and such a good pastor to my friends, explained the "social customs" in Tennessee. For me, it was not so much an experience of inequality as of forced separation. For my friends, it was "the way things are."

When I got off the train in Union Station, arriving home from my summer in Tennessee, my parents asked me many questions about my weeks away from Chicago. When I talked about my experience on the Memphis bus, they explained that "Jim Crow" laws were wrong. They treated other people as inferior, and God made us all equally valuable. When I asked why we did not have any "Negro" friends, the answer pretty much was the equivalent of "that's the way things are." Both my father and my mother had African American acquaintances from work and other circumstances. They spoke well of them, but we never visited each other's homes nor went to one another's family celebrations or wakes. Nor was it any more thinkable in Chicago than in Tennessee that we would live in the same neighborhood. The teaching in my home and in my parish was good; the experience just didn't match the teaching. That gap is called "sin," sometimes personal and social, sometimes institutional

and structural, sometimes all of these.

Before continuing with this letter, I would encourage each reader to ask when he or she first became aware of racial difference and of how they reacted to it. A Chicago businesswoman told me once, as a simple matter of fact, that she never wakes up in the morning without realizing immediately that she is a black woman. How should the rest of us react to that fact of her consciousness? Why does our faith tell us that we are to “dwell together?”

GOD, THE CREATOR

The book of Genesis reveals God as the Creator of a vast universe teeming with a rich diversity of plants and animals, surrounded by the sea and sky. The rising and setting of the sun and moon marks off the rhythm of creation's life. A God whose own being and goodness generated more being and goodness called creation into being separate from himself and yet intrinsically dependent upon him. United in the dynamics and mutual self-giving of their life as God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit create out of infinite love the universe and all that fills it. According to the book of Genesis, the culmination and high point of God's creative energy is the creation of the human race on the sixth day:

The 1979 U.S. Bishops' pastoral on racism teaches that “racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father.”

God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...and God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good...(Genesis 1:27; 31).

Though God intended that all creation live in the harmony and love that unites it as one, human beings, exercising their free will, defied the will of God and replaced the divinely planned harmony with division, the divinely willed unity with conflict, the divinely intended community with fragmentation. One form of human division, conflict and fragmentation is racism: personal, social, institutional and structural. Racism mars our identity as a people, as the human race made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27).

JESUS, THE LORD

Jesus, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, entered human history two millennia ago. When Jesus came into

the world, his people, God's people, the Jewish people, were a conquered people, often despised by their foreign rulers. Jesus gave us the means to find our way back to his Father, whom he taught us to call our Father. Jesus, the new Adam, went to his death on the sixth day to recreate us by redeeming us from sin and Satan. We are again to walk in unity, as one people enjoying the variety of plants, animals and human cultures, which constitute the world redeemed by Christ. Through his preaching and healing, through the pattern of discipleship he called people to follow, through his bodily resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus literally embodies for us a new way of life, which conforms to the will and reign of God. Jesus transcends, challenges and transforms everything that divides the human community (Gal. 3:28). He calls us back to a communion with one another, a unity, which reflects the communion of God's own Trinitarian life.

May they all be one as you, Father are in me and I in you. So also may they be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. The glory which you gave me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and you in me, may they be perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me, and that you loved them as you loved me (John 17:20-22).

Racism, whether personal, social, institutional or structural, contradicts the purpose of the incarnation of the Word of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Racism contradicts God's will for our salvation. We cannot claim to love God without loving our neighbor (Mat.22: 34 ff.). Since racism is a failure to love our neighbor, only freedom from racism will enable us to be one with God and one another.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The vision of a community dwelling in God's unconditional and universal love may sound like an impossible dream, but in God all things are possible (Mark 10:27). The radical conversion needed to overcome the sin of racism is made possible by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the risen Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and in our midst to empower us to live truly as God's people. By the power of the Holy Spirit acting in us, we can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20). Jesus assured his disciples that the abiding presence of the Spirit would empower them to be faithful:

When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will bear witness to me. And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning (John 15:26-27).

2. EXAMINING OUR PRESENT SITUATION: HOW DO WE DWELL TOGETHER?

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit instills within us the desire to continue the mission of Jesus as his disciples. The Spirit calls us to reflect about how we embody God's salvation and his universal love in parishes and schools, in the Pastoral Center and in other Catholic institutions. The Spirit moves us to reflect on how to make that love visible in our neighborhoods and places of business, in our work and recreation.

I invite all Catholics of the Archdiocese to examine with me how our local Church reflects that unity in diversity, which mirrors the nature of the Blessed Trinity. We cannot be leavens of love and justice in a society fighting racism if we are captured by the sin of racism in the Church.

Each of us needs to examine how we in the Archdiocese respond to Jesus' prayer that we be one. How does the Archdiocese manifest the unifying presence of the Spirit in the midst of the racial and cultural, the gender and class, the religious, theological and ideological diversity that characterizes our society?

For Chicago Catholics of a certain age, and for some who are not Catholic too, seeking the answer to these questions brings us back to patterns of life, which protected and nurtured even as they also divided. "Where are you from?" could not be answered simply with Hyde Park or Humboldt Park, the West Side, the South Side, the Southeast Side, the Northwest Side or Evanston. The answer that counted was St. Clement, St. James, St. Thomas the Apostle, Holy Angels, Holy Cross, St. Anselm, St. Elizabeth, St. Stanislaus, Visitation, St. Sabina, St. Mel and Holy Ghost, St. Malachy, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Matthew, Precious Blood, St. Agatha, St. Boniface, St. Thomas More, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Margaret of Scotland, or St. Nicholas. The parish—the place where Catholics attend Mass, confess their sins, send children to school, watch children get married and bury their dead—mattered as much as official city designations.

The Baltimore Catechism, once memorized by generations of Catholics, asked, "Where is God?" The answer was "everywhere" and in Chicago, Catholic parishes seemed to be everywhere. The fact that these parishes inspired loyalty to a place and devotion to God is perhaps Chicago Catholicism's great achievement. Catholic institutions have helped shape this area's story.

If strong parish communities remain today the glory of Catholic life in Chicago and throughout Cook and Lake

counties, the way in which parish communities can become parish fortresses was sometimes and can be still today a source of tragedy. For too many Catholics during the decades just passed, "Where are you from?" became an interrogation, not a gesture of welcome. Some groups embraced ethnocentric patterns of exclusivity and notions of racial superiority without considering the moral implications or the psychological and emotional wounds inflicted upon others. In some cases, the vision of faith was narrowed; the community of faith became a private club.

Resistance to racial integration and culturally mixed communities is as old as the first Christian communities, where Jewish Christians and Greek Christians found themselves at odds. For Chicago Catholics, cultural differences were especially important in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, with the great migration of European Catholics to this city. Chicago's "race" problem a century and more ago was one of Germans versus Irish, Poles versus Germans, Christians versus Jews, Protestants versus Catholics. My predecessors as Archbishop sometimes addressed these disputes, spoke to Catholics on their common membership in the Mystical Body of Christ and preached intermittently against the sin of anti-Semitism. While ethnic and cultural barriers somewhat diminished after the First World War and the cut-off of mass immigration from Europe, the ethnic identity of parishes remained strong.

Another mass migration, this one internal to the country, presented more imposing challenges. Between the 1910's and the 1960's hundreds of thousands of African Americans moved to Chicago from the South. Forced to live on the near south and west side of the city in often substandard housing owned by landlords living elsewhere, many African American families that could afford better housing could not move into nearby neighborhoods because of the color of their skin. Catholics, loyal to their parishes, often made up the bulk of the white population in neighborhoods near the expanding African American sections of the city. Sometimes these same Catholics mixed parish loyalty with racial prejudice in a desperate, always unsuccessful, effort to "save" particular neighborhoods by preventing the entrance of black people. Another question became part of the conversation: "Where are they now?" And everybody knew who "they" were and knew, as well, which blocks were changing, sometimes almost overnight, from white to black.

Many have heard the stories of priests, nuns and lay people unwilling to welcome even Catholic African Americans into parishes and schools. There are stories of

Catholic politicians working to sustain racial segregation in neighborhoods and in the workplace and tales of fear that a school would be “ruined” because Father or Sister allowed African American Catholics to enroll their children. When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. marched in Chicago during the summer of 1966, he described the racism and hatred he encountered as more “hostile” and “hateful” than anything he had witnessed in the South. Some of the neighborhoods he entered were home to Catholic parishioners.

In order to examine our present situation completely, it seems important also to note that factors other than racial prejudice enter into the history of resistance to integrated neighborhoods. Most working class and middle class people, of any race or religion, cherish their home as their biggest investment. Their house is their legacy to their children. The destruction of the economic value of their house is a threat to all that they have accomplished. Unfortunately, white people have too often equated the racial integration of a neighborhood with decreased property values. Sometimes their fears were encouraged by real estate agents eager to buy homes at prices far below their real value. Fear of economic loss is not evidence of prejudice. Fear of losing one’s life savings is not the same as fear of a different race, but the two fears can reinforce each other.

There is another fear that complicates this history: the fear of violence. The desire to live without fear for one’s own safety and that of one’s family is not evidence of racism. Everyone shares the fear of violence. Prejudice is evident, however, if it is simply assumed that people of another race must be violent because they are who they are. White people might find themselves afraid in a black neighborhood, but blacks have even more reason to be afraid in many white neighborhoods. The original impetus for this pastoral letter was the terrible beating of Lenard Clark in 1997 and the Archdiocesan Task Force on Racism that responded to it.

Unfortunately, the fears of economic loss and of personal violence can blind people to what their Catholic faith calls them to do—dwell together in love. These fears have to be honestly addressed if we are to live in a genuinely multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

That some Catholic priests, nuns and lay people, both black and white, marched with Dr. King suggests another dimension to our history. Long before the civil rights marches of the sixties, the Catholic Church in Chicago was blessed with faith-filled people eager to see the Catholic community welcome all cultures and races. They were willing to sacrifice much in order to live in a genuinely multi-racial society. Catholics of all races

worked to integrate Catholic and public institutions in the 1940’s, 1950’s and 1960’s. Chicago’s African American Catholic community courageously insisted that racism must have no place in the Church founded by Christ.

Some African Americans participated with great hope in these local efforts; others contributed to the foundation and development of the national black Catholic organizations. These groups serve today as places where African American Catholics work to develop leadership and institutions that nurture and sustain the Catholic faith in a manner sensitive to black culture. They are often places for prophetic voices within the church, speaking against racism and cultural domination within Church and society. Sadly for all of us, some African Americans have left our Catholic community to join other Christian faith communities, independent “Catholic” churches or even Islam, in part because they found it difficult to reconcile their own identity with manifestations of racism within the Catholic Church.

The story in the almost forty years since the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. marched through Chicago neighborhoods is at once familiar and new. Racism is still found in varying degrees in our churches and schools, just as it haunts our city and suburbs. The combined influences of racial discrimination and social isolation, at a moment when a wealthy society should confront these problems directly, continue to make the plight of many African Americans and other people of color Chicago’s greatest shame. Today, however, the careful way in which some Catholic parishes in neighborhoods undergoing racial and cultural transformation have begun to confront these changes directly is a source of pride to me as Archbishop of Chicago.

While African Americans and other groups have made much progress in education and employment, especially in the last generation, race relations in the Chicago metropolitan area have become more complicated as neighborhoods receive immigrants from India, China, Africa, Vietnam, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. They add new hues to Chicago’s one largely black and white picture. Contemporary racism has a multicultural face.

Catholics in the Archdiocese of Chicago now celebrate Mass in more than twenty languages, making the Church of Chicago more representative of the Church universal. One-third of the city’s residents are now either Spanish-speaking immigrants or their descendants, from countries as diverse as Colombia, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Mexico. The dramatic increase in the population of Hispanic Catholics in the entire metropolitan area has not prevented them from experiencing the effects of racism.

“While Hispanic Americans have not endured slavery, they too have been a conquered people and systematically excluded from the mainstream American society because of prejudice, racism, and segregation.”

For Catholics, however, the stability of our parish institutions, the fact that Catholic parishes typically serve the people within a given territory and not a self-chosen congregation, offers unusual opportunities. Despite economic problems, the Archdiocese has tried to maintain a Catholic presence in urban neighborhoods populated by African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and people with roots in various European countries. Through the Parish Sharing Program, some Catholic parishes in affluent areas have formed partnerships with parishes serving poor neighborhoods. This sharing springs from the conviction born of faith that we are many parts of the one Body of Christ, which is the Church.

As the answer to the question, “Where are you from?” becomes more complicated, we should realize that the future of race relations in Chicago and its surrounding communities is tied to how willing we are as Catholics to live and worship in parishes that are diverse communities of faith, anchoring neighborhoods where all people can live together as members of the one human family.

FOUR TYPES OF RACISM: SPATIAL, INSTITUTIONAL, INTERNALIZED AND INDIVIDUAL

The face of racism looks different today than it did thirty years ago. Overt racism is easily condemned, but the sin is often with us in more subtle forms. In examining patterns of racism today, four forms of racism merit particular attention: spatial racism, institutional racism, internalized racism and individual racism.

SPATIAL RACISM

Spatial racism refers to patterns of metropolitan development in which some affluent whites create racially and economically segregated suburbs or gentrified areas of cities, leaving the poor—mainly African Americans, Hispanics and some newly arrived immigrants—isolated in deteriorating areas of the cities and older suburbs.

Myron Orfield, the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities, and other experts have documented the devastating impact of massive economic disparities between communities and of isolating people geographically according to race, religion and class. These disparities undermine the regional economy and the moral basis of the metropolitan area. Spatial racism creates a visible chasm between the rich and the poor, and between white people and people of color. It marks a

society that contradicts both the teachings of the Church and our declared national value of equality of opportunity. Orfield and William Julius Wilson have noted the economic inequities that result from this form of racism: lack of decent affordable housing; withdrawal of home mortgage funds; public schools with inadequate staff, faculty, physical quarters and supplies; decaying infrastructure; lack of capital investment for business and commerce; little or no opportunities for jobs near home and insufficient public transit to jobs in the suburbs.

The spatial racism of our society creates a similar pattern in the Church. Geographically based parishes reflect the racial and cultural segregation patterns of neighborhoods and towns.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racism also finds institutional form. Patterns of social and racial superiority continue as long as no one asks why they should be taken for granted. People who assume, consciously or unconsciously, that white people are superior create and sustain institutions that privilege people like themselves and habitually ignore the contributions of other peoples and cultures. This “white privilege” often goes undetected because it has become internalized and integrated as part of one’s outlook on the world by custom, habit and tradition. It can be seen in most of our institutions: judicial and political systems, social clubs, associations, hospitals, universities, labor unions, small and large businesses, major corporations, the professions, sports teams and in the arts. In the Church as well, “...all too often in the very places where blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians are numerous, the Church’s officials and representatives, both clerical and laity, are predominantly white.”

Sometimes, with a genuine desire to be more inclusive, one or two black, Hispanic, Asian or Native Americans are asked to fill leadership positions in order to change the internal culture of an institution. But the racist disposition of the institution can remain largely unaltered when the non-whites do not acquire full participatory rights. Without rising to levels of influence that can change the entrenched attitudes, approaches and goals of the institution, they live with and even have to preside over policies, procedures and regulations that leave the institution in a basically racist mode. Often, when these select few people of color exhibit qualities of morality, intelligence and skills, which contradict the low expectations of the racial stereotypes applied to their cultural groups, they are viewed as “exceptional anomalies.”

Indifference to rates of violence against the lives of

blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native peoples is another sign of institutional racism. "Abortion rates are much higher among the poor and people of color than among the middle class. As a result of abortion, the United States is a far less diverse place." Racism is also visible in imprisonment and in the administration of the death penalty. There are a disproportionate number of blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans and low-income persons from all ethnic and racial groups on death row. "[Such] defendants are more likely to be sentenced to death than white defendants, for the same crimes." Other areas where institutional racism finds a home are in health care, education and housing.

INTERNALIZED RACISM

Many blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans are socialized and educated in institutions that devalue the presence and contributions of people of color and celebrate only the contributions of whites. Because of their socialization within the dominant racial and cultural system, people of color can come to see themselves and their communities primarily through the eyes of that dominant culture. They receive little or no information about their own history and culture and perceive themselves and their communities as "culturally deprived." Seeing few men and women from their own culture or class in leadership roles, they begin to apply to themselves the negative stereotypes about their group that the dominant culture chooses to believe.

INDIVIDUAL RACISM

Unlike spatial and institutionalized racism, which are more public in nature, individual racism perpetuates itself quietly when people grow up with a sense of white racial superiority, whether conscious or unconscious. Racist attitudes find expression in racial slurs, in crimes born of racial hatred and in many other subtle and not so subtle ways. People who are horrified by the Ku Klux Klan might quite readily subscribe to racial stereotypes about people of color.

Poor, middle class and upper class people of all cultural groups often demonstrate feelings of prejudice toward people of a different national, cultural or economic background. Some adopt a "skin-color, racial hierarchy" both within and outside their own cultural group. When individuals automatically award superior status to their own cultural group and inferior status to all those outside it, they are acting as racists.

3. ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE: HOW MIGHT WE DWELL TOGETHER?

The Gospel compels us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to abandon patterns of seeing those who are racially or culturally different from ourselves as strangers and to recognize them as our brothers and sisters. Even those who have suffered at the hands of others, individually or collectively, must pray to overcome hostility, forgiving those who have offended them and asking forgiveness from those whom they have offended. We must embrace one another as formerly estranged neighbors now seeking reconciliation.

You have heard that they were told, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But what I tell you is this: love your enemies and pray for your persecutors; only so can you be children of your heavenly Father, who causes the sun to rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the innocent and the wicked...There must be no limit to your goodness, as your heavenly Father's goodness knows no bounds (Matthew 5:43-45; 48 and Luke 6:27-31; 35-36).

Again, when the learned Pharisee asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment of the law, he replied:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with your entire mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two great commandments (Matthew 22:34-40 and Luke 10:25-27).

Maintaining current patterns of ethnic, cultural, racial and economic isolation and hostility tarnishes our call as Church to be a universal sacrament of salvation. Consciously changing these patterns returns us to our fundamental identity as a community called to universal communion with God and with one another.

A. DWELLING WITH GOD IN ORDINARY LIFE

We meet God in the created, visible, tangible surroundings of the home, the neighborhood and the workplace. We encounter God in and through our spouse, children, brothers and sisters, the family next door, the shopkeeper on the corner, our teachers, the stranger on the street. In short, we meet God in and through people of every color, ethnic background, religion, class and gender. God is active in and through

the people, places and circumstances that constitute our ordinary daily life.

This belief places upon us the mission to transform all relationships into instances of love and justice. Our love of God, expressed in prayer, pilgrimages and other acts of devotion, must be made visible in our practice of the love of neighbor, expressed by establishing patterns of right relationships in our daily lives, in our work and everyday encounters. Loving and just relationships are the manifestation of our communion with God.

Ethnic, cultural, and racial diversities are gifts from God to the human race. In Jesus, we are called to a radical love—to love of the stranger as our neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). Others may be different from us in every respect except one: each man, woman, or child we encounter is also a child of God, a brother or sister in the Lord, whom we should welcome as our neighbor. The stranger whom we encounter is really our neighbor in Christ. Through communion with our neighbors who are racially and culturally distinct from ourselves, we begin to live as a community the unity in diversity that is the life of the Triune God. We can learn to live, work and pray in solidarity with the stranger now recognized as our neighbor.

Inclusive Communities: Living with Our Neighbor

Our neighborhood is the first place we encounter those with whom we are to dwell in love. A just neighborhood must be open to all people—black and white, Hispanic and Asian, young and old, wealthy and poor, Christians and people of all faiths. Access to housing in particular needs to be fair and open. In a society that is still structurally racist, open housing cannot be taken for granted; it must be achieved.

We confront racist patterns in housing sales and rental markets through programs that help establish and maintain diversity throughout a community. To be successful, such programs require collaboration among neighboring communities, towns and villages throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. The goals are clear. Neighborhoods must be safe and free of discrimination and hate crimes; schools must provide a good education for all students; transportation must be accessible. The means to reach the goals involve cooperating across racial and cultural divisions.

Economic Justice: Working with Our Neighbor

Although the phenomenon of racism can exist independent of economic factors, it is bound up with entrenched poverty, which persists despite our national affluence. Most poor people are still white; but blacks,

Hispanics and Native Americans are disproportionately poor. “Despite measurable progress during the last 20 years, people of color still must negotiate subtle obstacles and overcome covert barriers in their pursuit of employment and/or advancement.”

“Church teaching on economic justice insists that economic decisions and institutions be judged on whether they protect or undermine the dignity of the human person. We support policies that create jobs with adequate pay and decent working conditions, increase the minimum wage so it becomes a living wage, and overcome barriers to equal pay and employment for women and minorities.”

Supporting Culturally Diverse Social Institutions

Social institutions in a culturally diverse nation benefit from the sharing of the values and skills honed in the various communities of peoples who populate it. In the global context in which we live today, the ability to live and work in a culturally diverse environment equips us to work toward universal peace and justice. Our efforts to encourage judicial and political systems, social and professional organizations, health care facilities, educational institutions, labor unions, small and large businesses, major corporations, the professions, sports teams and the arts to be welcoming will be more credible when the Church truly becomes a model of what she advocates.

Our desire as disciples of Jesus is to support people of every race and ethnic group in enjoying their human rights and freedom. We are called to promote love, justice and what Pope John Paul II has called a “culture of life.” Until all are free to live anywhere in the Chicago metropolitan area without fear of reprisal or violence, none of us is completely free. The administration of justice and the institutions of our civic life must be marked by respect for all. These desires shape the goals of the Church as she works for social and economic justice and promotes life.

B. DWELLING WITH GOD IN HIS CHURCH

By baptism in Christ, we have been graced and called into the community, which is his Body. The members of the early Church gathered in the name of Jesus to worship his Father and to continue the mission Jesus left them. Today, as that same Church, we too gather in the name of Jesus and commit ourselves to his mission. Through the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation), we are given the grace to live in union with God and our neighbor as we follow the way and mission of Jesus.

The Second Vatican Council acknowledged and supported cultural diversity in the Church when it encouraged the “fostering of the qualities and talents of the various races and nations” and the “careful and prudent” admission into the Church’s life of “elements from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples.” The use of vernacular languages and cultural symbols and adapted rituals within the Church’s liturgy is a sign of Catholic unity and serves to bring all peoples and cultures into the worship of God, who rejoices in the beauty of everything he has made.

The Second Vatican Council also called the local Churches to bring into their life “the particular social and cultural circumstances” of the local people. This requires that priests, religious women and men and lay ecclesial ministers are called forth from among all the various cultural and racial groups that constitute the Church. To speak of oneself as Irish Catholic, German Catholic, Polish Catholic, Hispanic Catholic, African American Catholic, Lithuanian Catholic is not divisive, provided each of these differences is lived and offered as a gift to others rather than designed as an obstacle to keep others out. Catholic universality is marked by the contributions of all cultures. Each cultural group has enriched our Catholic community with its unique gifts. This sharing of differences within the community of one faith is the path to salvation willed by the Triune God, whose love is universal.

Loving only people who are just like ourselves, loving only those who are members of our biological family or who share our own ethnic or cultural background, our own political views or our own class assumptions, does not fulfill the challenge of the Gospel.

If you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect, even the tax collectors do as much as that. If you greet only your brothers, what is there extraordinary about that? Even the heathen do as much. There must be no limit to your goodness, as your heavenly Father’s goodness knows no bounds (Matthew 5:46-48 and Luke 6:32-34; 36).

Striving to be a witness for Jesus Christ as a good neighbor to all is difficult. “It seems easier to sit in our divisions and our hatreds. It seems easier to ignore the gap between rich and poor; to forget the unborn and unwanted; to block out those who are not free...because they are in prisons; to live tied up in the bonds of personal and institutional racism. But we cannot.” We cannot, because we are called to dwell together in God’s love.

To embrace the vision proclaimed in Jesus’ preaching of the reign of God, we need to see new patterns and possibilities. Too often, when decisions about the future of

the Archdiocese are being made, the persons around the table do not adequately reflect the rich cultural diversity that shapes our Church, city, nation and world. As we continue to struggle against racism within the Archdiocese, we see a time when all of God’s children will be contributing to the governance of this local Church. Constructing socially just patterns of relationships within our ecclesiastical institutions presents the same difficulties met in being a good neighbor anywhere; but, as Christians seeking to be true disciples, we can never abandon our efforts to embody the love and justice given us by Christ. Most of all, we can count on his grace to bring power to the vision faith gives us.

The Eucharist as the Sacrament and Means of Communion

We are most ourselves in the celebration of the Eucharist. Our sacramental worship unites us and makes us a community of believers. The Mass calls us to communion with one another in Christ Jesus. The proclamation of God’s holy word and reflection on it within the celebration of the Eucharist, which is Christ’s life poured out for us, cannot help but deepen our spiritual unity and make our social solidarity possible. Too often, however, the pattern of culturally and racially homogenous parishes, sometimes established in the wake of “white flight,” contributes to Catholic parishes being instances of racial and cultural exclusion. Sunday, it has often been noted, is the most segregated day of the week in metropolitan Chicago, as it is elsewhere. “We have preached the Gospel while closing our eyes to the racism it condemns.” Our failure to live the Gospel of God’s unconditional and universal love in culturally and racially inclusive parishes and communities contributes to our society’s failure to confront the sin of racism.

The magnificent cultural diversity we witnessed around the Eucharistic table during our Archdiocesan millennium celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi in Soldier Field was just a small glimpse of the possibilities for our future. As a local Church, we gathered as the Body of Christ. We gathered with longing for a time when, wherever we gather, we will do so enriched by our active welcoming of all those whom God loves. Our gathering for Mass is always a gathering in the name of the Father of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the Eucharistic assembly we share all the cultural, racial economic and spiritual gifts given us by the Spirit in order to enrich and transform both Church and society.

The Empowering Gifts of the Spirit

From diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, we accept and embrace in faith the love of God that compels us to

dwell together in love. After reflecting on the historical, social and economic dimensions of our complicity with the sin of racism, we ask as Catholics for the grace of conversion from the sin of racism, which has separated us from our neighbor and from God.

The Church was born with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin Mary and the apostles and on the nations gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Since that moment two thousand years ago, the indwelling of the Spirit in the Church and in each of her members pulls us toward dwelling together in love. The gifts the Spirit brings transform all our relationships.

The Church in any society is to be a leaven. The Church is always more than any particular place or society. She finds her identity as Catholic, all embracing. If she is faithful to her Lord, the Savior of the world, the Church will not only proclaim who she is but will herself act to become the womb, the matrix, in which a new world can gestate and be born. Listening and welcoming, the Church is a place of encounter, of racial dialogue and intercultural collaboration. In a context of universal mutual respect born of love, the Church offers the gifts that transform the world and bring salvation in this life and the next.

4. CONCLUSION: AN AGENDA FOR ADDRESSING RACIAL AND SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE

Holy Scripture and Catholic social teachings proclaim the dignity of the human person and enjoin us to reform the structures of our society that ignore and undermine this fundamental truth. We are called not only to a radical conversion of heart but to a transformation of socially sinful structures as well.

Following are some suggestions for taking the necessary steps to dwell in God's love and to address racial and systemic injustice:

ARCHDIOCESE

- Provide sessions on the importance of ethnic and racial diversity for Archdiocesan and parish staffs, pastors, principals and teachers.
- Evaluate administrative hiring patterns so that persons in managerial and decision-making positions in the Archdiocese reflect the ethnic and racial composition of our diverse Catholic community.
- Identify and nurture vocations among African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native peoples to serve as priests, deacons, religious women and men, and lay ecclesial ministers.

- Educate for ministry in a racially, ethnically and culturally diverse Archdiocese.
- Implement the Archdiocesan purchasing policies, which commit us to doing business with minority vendors.
- Join support groups working for racial justice in the workplace, i.e., Project Equality.
- Avoid investing in companies that tolerate racism.
- Advocate for improved public transportation, allowing people in inner city and neighboring suburban communities to take jobs in outlying suburban areas.
- Support church-based community organizations that work for economic justice.

PARISHES

- Participate in Archdiocesan programs, such as the Workshops on Racism and Ethnic Sensitivity, designed to bring about better race relations in the parishes and neighborhoods.
- Foster hospitality in general but especially to those that are culturally different from the dominant culture of the parish.
- Participate in programs to identify and nurture vocations among African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native peoples as priests, deacons, religious women and men, and lay ecclesial ministers.
- Identify demographic trends in the parish, specify the particular issues of racial and ethnic diversity facing the parish and establish strategies to address these challenges from a vision of faith. Network with other parishes working for racial justice in their communities. Watch always for the destruction of neighborhoods by covert redlining.
- Participate in civic and ecumenical/interfaith organizations that work to promote racial justice.
- Begin the "Welcoming Our Neighbor" process in the parish by sponsoring a couple of families to transition out of public housing into the parish neighborhood.
- Participate in the Archdiocesan Sharing Parish program and develop the sharing relationships across racial and cultural lines.
- Take part in church-based community organizations that work for economic justice.

LITURGY

Liturgy is the worship of God. It should not be manipulated into directly serving any other purpose, even with good intentions and for a good cause. Nonetheless, the liturgy should make visible the unity that incorporates the diversity of Christ's people. It makes intercession, through Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, including the sin of racism, and gives us the means to become a holy people.

- Develop liturgical resources to celebrate unity in diversity and express the sinful nature of racism.
- When appropriate, celebrate liturgies where the expression of our faith is reflected in the religious symbols, music and history of the many different peoples that make up the Archdiocese.
- Sponsor an annual Lenten service focused on racial reconciliation.
- Plan a Sunday as an anti-racism Sabbath.
- Include prayers for racial reconciliation and an end to racism in the intercessory prayers at the weekend liturgies.
- Preach on racism and racial justice.
- Celebrate through liturgies and festivals the racial and ethnic heritage of parishioners.
- Develop homilies for Pentecost, Corpus Christi and Trinity Sunday that interpret the assigned scriptures from the perspective of the call to human and ecclesial unity of all peoples in Christ.
- Pray for guidance and an end to racism, asking the intercession of saints such as St. Martin De Porres, St. Katharine Drexel, St. Josephine Bakhita, St. Peter Claver, Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha, Bl. Juan Diego, and others who have especially promoted racial harmony and social justice.

CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Support the efforts of the Office of Catholic Schools' Racial Justice Committee, the Principals' Anti-Racism Committee and Catholic Schools Opposing Racism (COR).
- Diversify faculties and search for administrators and teachers that will be role models, especially for students of color.
- Use multicultural learning materials.
- Offer educational events that deal with racial justice, not only with the principles of our faith but with the history of our country. The enslavement of African Americans, the wars against the Native peoples, and the struggle for equality before the law should be taught and analyzed in the light of faith.
- Integrate in art, music, literature, history, science and religion courses the contributions of Hispanic, Asian, Native and African American peoples.
- Continue to work for justice in funding Catholic schools in order to give all students the education necessary to experience personal success and contribute to the common good.
- Publish materials on racism in the public media and on the Archdiocesan web site.

- Offer adults the opportunity to enter into a tutor-mentor relationship with underprivileged and at-risk students.
- Engage schools, especially schools in the parish-sharing program, to do student cultural and academic exchanges.

COMMUNITY ACTION

- Continue to support the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the anti-poverty program of the United States Catholic Conference, which aims to help poor people address the root causes of poverty.
- Watch real estate, housing and land use policies, especially in the communities where the Church owns land, in order to oppose economic segregation and foster the development of affordable housing. Support mass transit development throughout the metropolitan area.
- Advocate for "fair share housing," in which a percentage of subsidized housing units are reserved for poor people in every municipality.
- Support just housing principles, so that mortgages can be obtained by the poor, and the negotiations of sales or rentals do not include price fixing, steering or blockbusting.
- Promote tax-sharing policies between wealthy and poor communities. These policies establish more equitable tax bases and lower tax-rates everywhere, allowing poorer communities to attract jobs and to pay for social and public services.
- Defend life by supporting legislation that opposes abortion and the death penalty.
- Support local organizations that work for fair housing and racial harmony, such as the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities and the Human Relations Foundation of Chicago.
- Vote for public officials committed to racial and systemic justice.

For more information, please contact the Office for Peace and Justice (312) 751-8390 and the Office for Racial Justice (312) 751-8336 at the office of the Archbishop of Chicago.

APPENDIX A

NCCJ'S FAITH LEADERS INITIATIVE

DELIVERABLES

(Bulleted items have been completed)

1. NCCJ will lead participating faith communities to identify and name racism as a sin, an evil that must be addressed, and a problem of the heart:

- Action item: Develop a joint statement to be dispersed by the participating national organizations, their congregations, and members.
- Action item: Create a booklet of theological underpinnings and scriptural concepts that are held in common, naming racism as a sin.
- Action item: Call for organizational and denominational policy statements about the importance of racial reconciliation.

2. NCCJ will lead participating faith leaders to declare that overcoming racism is a top priority for our nation:

- Action item: Create a clearinghouse of information on faith-based promising practices and programmatic strategies from participating faith communities related to racial reconciliation and social justice for others to replicate.

Action item: Announce plans for a forum for hundreds of faith leaders from across the country to update them on the commitments made by the diverse faith groups; allow for each leader to safely explore the needs of their community; examine how to translate national efforts into community practices; and seek commitments from more faith leaders in this historic collaboration.

3. NCCJ will lead participating faith leaders to understand that they are morally bound to engage in anti-racist activities:

Action item: Trainings will be held for select faith

leaders to explore their own issues surrounding prejudices, stereotypes, and racism and to foster a greater sense of trust, develop more flexible outlooks, and create a problem-solving process. Create a programming model for their organizations to replicate at a local or congregational level.

Action item: Select theological students will participate in an initiative that focuses on the following: racial attitudes and behaviors at a personal level; how they can more effectively assist their community around issues of racial reconciliation; strategies they can use within their denominations to create institutional change around race; and programming across interfaith lines.

4. NCCJ will lead participating faith leaders to address race issues in their own religious institutions:

- Action item: Design self-assessment sheet for participants' organizations and denominations to assess their place on the "anti-racist continuum" (modeled after Unitarian Universalist Association program).

Action item: Produce a model of grassroots curriculum to train facilitators to conduct local dialogues on race-related issues.

- Action item: Create guidelines for how to hold interreligious forums on anti-racism.

Action item: Identify potential public policy initiatives that communities of faith can address at the local and national levels to advance racial justice.

- Action item: Identify and disseminate 10 actions that each person can take to bring us towards racial reconciliation.

APPENDIX B

NCCJ'S FAITH LEADERS INITIATIVE

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dr. Rosa Banks
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Rev. Richard Cizik
National Association of Evangelicals

Mr. Sanford Cloud, Jr.
The National Conference for Community and Justice

Ms. Kit Cosby
Bahá'ís of the United States

Ms. Sarrae Crane
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Mr. Brian Foss
The National Conference for Community and Justice

Rev. Dr. Welton Gaddy
The Interfaith Alliance

Ms. Danielle Glosser
The National Conference for Community and Justice

Rev. Dr. Melvin Hoover
Unitarian Universalists Association

Bishop Thomas Hoyt
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Dr. Kathleen S. Hurty
Church Women United (former Executive Director)

Rabbi Marc Israel
Religious Action Center

Ms. Elenora Giddings Ivory
Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Mr. Bawa Jain
World Peace Summit

Elder Don Ladd
The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints

Bishop Felton May
United Methodist Church

Ms. Sammie Moshenberg
National Council of Jewish Women

Rabbi Elazar Muskin
Rabbinical Council of America

Imam Mujahid Ramadan
American Muslim Council

Ms. Sullivan Robinson
Congress of National Black Churches

Chief Jake Swamp
Mohawk Nation

Dr. Sayyid Syeed
Islamic Society of North America

Rev. W. Douglas Tanner
Faith and Politics Institute

Father Clarence Williams
Office of the Archdiocese, Detroit

Ms. Nancy Wisdo
U.S. Catholic Conference

The Right Rev. McKinley Young
African Methodist Episcopal Church

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⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ Appendix A: A Church of Many Peoples Confronts Racism. Adopted by the Mennonite Church General Assembly and General Conference Mennonite Triennial Session, August 3, 1989, 177.

⁸⁰ *Id.*, 177-8.

⁸¹ *Id.*, 178.

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.*, 179.

⁸⁵ “What do you see? RACISM.” (Pamphlet published by the Mennonite Central Committee).

⁸⁶ *Id.*

⁸⁷ The information noted in this article was submitted by Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director of the Presbyterian Church USA’s Washington Office, and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.

⁸⁸ Excerpts from the “Book of Order” and “The Book of Confession.” Diversity: What is the Unity We See in Our Diversity? (Presbyterian Constitutional Resources, 1999), 19.

⁸⁹ Virgil Cruz and Jean Cooley, Breaking Down The Walls: Responding to the Racism that Divides Us. Produced by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit and the Racial Ethnic Ministry Unity Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 13.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ NCCB, *Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism in our Day* (Washington, D.C.: USCC Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 1979), p.1.

⁹² *Id.*, p. 3.

⁹³ *Id.*

⁹⁴ *Id.*

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ *Id.*, p. 4.

⁹⁷ *Id.*, p. 5.

- ⁹⁸ Id.
- ⁹⁹ This information was submitted by Dr. Rosa Banks, Director of Human Relations, Seventh-day Adventist Church, as the public statement on racism released by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at its World Session in New Orleans in 1985, Neal C. Wilson, President. It is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹⁰⁰ Acts 10:34, 35 (New American Standard Translation).
- ¹⁰¹ Acts 17:26, (King James Version).
- ¹⁰² Gal. 3:28, (King James Version).
- ¹⁰³ Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, No. 13.
- ¹⁰⁴ Contributions made by Rev. Dr. Melvin Hoover, Director of Faith in Action, Unitarian Universalist Association.
- ¹⁰⁵ Peter W. Williams, Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements ed. Charles Lippy, et. al (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1998), 579.
- ¹⁰⁶ Id., 3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Id.
- ¹⁰⁸ Racial/Ethnic Interaction in Our Local Churches. A Resource Book for Inclusiveness with Extensive Bibliography. Prepared by the Commission on Religion and Race, Baltimore-Washington Conference, The United Methodist Church, October 1995. Selected Biblical References, 28.
- ¹⁰⁹ Social Principles: The United Methodist Church. Adopted by the 1972 General Conference of The United Methodist Church and revised by the 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1993, and 1996 General Conference (1996 Book of Principles, Para. 66). Booklet produced for the United Methodist Church by The General Board of Church and Society, Washington, D.C., United Methodist Church Publishing House, 1996, 13.
- ¹¹⁰ Id., 13-14.
- ¹¹¹ Racial/Ethnic Interaction in Our Local Churches. A Resource Book for Inclusiveness with Extensive Bibliography. Prepared by the Commission on Religion and Race, Baltimore-Washington Conference, The United Methodist Church, October 1995. Selected Biblical References, 32.
- ¹¹² 1996 Book of Principles, Para. 66.
- ¹¹³ Id., 32.
- ¹¹⁴ Id., 33.
- ¹¹⁵ 1996 Book of Principles, Para. 66.
- ¹¹⁶ This statement was submitted as "Hinduism and the Issue of Racism" by the Vedanta Center of Greater Washington, D.C., Silver Spring, MD, and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹¹⁷ Complete Works, ch. I, page 423.
- ¹¹⁸ Id. at III, 142.
- ¹¹⁹ Id. at IV, 191.
- ¹²⁰ Id. at VI, 83.
- ¹²¹ Complete Works, VI, 319.
- ¹²² Id. at V, 137.
- ¹²³ This statement was submitted by Iftekhar A. Hai, Director of Interfaith Relations, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance, and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹²⁴ Quran 5:8, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹²⁵ Quran 49:13, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹²⁶ Last Sermon delivered on Mount Arafat in year 633, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹²⁷ Quran 3:195, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹²⁸ Quran 5:48, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹²⁹ Quran 4:135, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹³⁰ Quran 2:177, cited by Iftekhar A. Hai.
- ¹³¹ uahc.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=justice&year=1963.
- ¹³² Commitment to Racial Justice, 47th Biennial Assembly, November 1963, Chicago, IL.
- ¹³³ Id.
- ¹³⁴ Id.
- ¹³⁵ uahc.org/cji-bin/resodisp.pl?file=justice&year=1999.
- ¹³⁶ "Race and the U.S. Criminal Justice System," December 1999, Orlando, Florida.
- ¹³⁷ Id. Death Penalty.
- ¹³⁸ Id. Discriminatory Profiling.
- ¹³⁹ Id. Sentencing Disparity.
- ¹⁴⁰ This paragraph was submitted by Sarrae Crane, Director of Social Action and Israel Affairs, United

- Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹⁴¹ Rabbinical Council of America. “Rabbinical Council of America Policy Statement on Racism and Prejudice: Usual Areas of Prejudice Today.”
- ¹⁴² Rabbinical Council of America. “Rabbinical Council of America Policy Statement on Racism and Prejudice: Jewish Attitude Against Prejudice.”
- ¹⁴³ Id.
- ¹⁴⁴ This statement was submitted by Chief Jake Swamp of the Mohawk Nation and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹⁴⁵ This statement was submitted by Amardeep Singh, Staff Attorney, Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART), and is presented as submitted with minor grammatical and formatting adjustments.
- ¹⁴⁶ Guru Granth Sahib, 1127-1128.
- ¹⁴⁷ Guru Granth Sahib, 1349-1350.
- ¹⁴⁸ Guru Granth Sahib, 1381.
- ¹⁴⁹ The sacred texts in this article were submitted by Rohinton Rivetna, Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ys 28.1.
- ¹⁵¹ Id. History.
- ¹⁵² Id. Interactions with Judaism and Christianity.
- ¹⁵³ Id. Zoroastrian View of the World.
- ¹⁵⁴ History of The ADL website “1913-1920 ADL—In Retrospect.” *www.adl.org/ADLHistory/print_adl_history.html*.
- ¹⁵⁵ Id.
- ¹⁵⁶ These statements were submitted by Stacy Burdett, Assistant Director of Government and National Affairs, Anti-Defamation League, and are presented in their entirety.
- ¹⁵⁷ Alenu Prayer, Prayer Book.
- ¹⁵⁸ Pirkeh Avot Ethics of the Fathers Chapter 2, Mishnah 21.
- ¹⁵⁹ Genesis, Chapter 1, Verse 27.
- ¹⁶⁰ Psalms, Chapter 34, Verse 14.
- ¹⁶¹ Pirkeh Avot Ethics of the Fathers Chapter 4, Mishnah 27.
- ¹⁶² Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 18.
- ¹⁶³ Tractate Shabbat, Talmud 31A.
- ¹⁶⁴ Pirkeh Avot Ethics of our Fathers Chapter 1, Mishnah 14.
- ¹⁶⁵ Hartmann, Susan M. *The Other Feminists: Activists in the Liberal Establishment*. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1988.
- ¹⁶⁶ Wiggins, Martha. *Dissertation in Progress*, Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY. 2000.
- ¹⁶⁷ Paper presented at The White House on March 9, 2000, “Call to Action: The President’s One America Meeting with Religious Leaders”; written by the former National President, Susan Shank Mix, and CWU’s former Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen S. Hurty.
- ¹⁶⁸ Id.
- ¹⁶⁹ Submitted by Susan Shank Mix, CWU’s former National President.
- ¹⁷⁰ Paper presented at “Call to Action: The President’s One America Meeting with Religious Leaders” at The White House on March 9, 2000; written by the former National President, Susan Shank Mix, and CWU’s former Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen S. Hurty.
- ¹⁷¹ Id.
- ¹⁷² Id.
- ¹⁷³ National Association of Evangelicals, Resolution on Racism, adopted at 1991 Annual Conference.
- ¹⁷⁴ Id.
- ¹⁷⁵ Id.
- ¹⁷⁶ Id.
- ¹⁷⁷ Id.
- ¹⁷⁸ Id.



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