

Recommendation: That the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly adopt on behalf of the Office of the General Assembly the cross-agency antiracism statement crafted by the Diverse Voices Table and the executives of each agency and entity. Further, that this statement be added to COGA’s Manual of Operations and an appendix.

Rationale: This policy was written in response to item 00-29 from the 224th General Assembly:

“Recommendation 5: Recommend that PC(USA) congregations, mid councils, and all General Assembly entities develop and adopt an antiracism policy in their bylaws by engaging Item 02-137, ‘On Amending G-3.0106 to Add an Antiracism Policy with Suggested Training for All Members of Each Council.’ This work can be done now at all levels, even in advance of the 225th General Assembly (2022), at which time that General Assembly can act on setting a constitutional requirement to do so if it chooses.”

In response to this recommendation, executives from each of the six agencies and two entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) tasked the Diverse Voices Table with crafting a joint antiracism statement that would go before each agency/entity board for approval. The DVT worked closely with agency and entity executives to develop an antiracism statement with core text that reflects PC(U.S.A.) values and respects the unique implementation needs of each agency and entity.

Antiracism Statement

Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churchwide antiracism policy, affirms that “racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. ... [it] is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others.ⁱ” Racism is a system of racial prejudice exerted by those in power – institutionally and individually, consciously and unconsciously – that is deeply ingrained in the history of the United States. It benefits white people in the dominant culture while disadvantaging and oppressing people of color.

As the six agencies and two entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we are part of an institution founded and historically run by white people that remains approximately 88% white. We must come to terms with those numbers and their implications for the work we do, and the audiences we reachⁱⁱ. We are undeniably implicated in the entrenched legacies of racism and white supremacy that continue to shape the United States and our church.

The church is mandated in *Facing Racism* to “embrace antiracism as a major part of [our] corporate identity.” To this end, we state unequivocally that racism and all forms of discrimination and marginalization are sins against humanity and God, inconsistent with our Christian and corporate values and unacceptable within our agencies and entities. We understand that each of our agencies and entities “must unlearn and undo existing racist values and structures” that persist despite our expressed values and intentions if we are to create an antiracist church where “all persons are treated with respect, all gifts are valued and encouraged, and diversity is a gift to be valued.ⁱⁱⁱ”

We recognize the strides we have made, even as we acknowledge there is more work to do. As we strive to be an antiracist church, we commit to:

- Repenting of the role we collectively and individually have played and continue to play in creating and maintaining white supremacy and systemic racism;
- providing antiracism and cultural humility training for employees as directed by the church wide antiracism policy;
- developing and implementing practices and strategies to disrupt and dismantle racism and oppression in the church and the world;
- striving for racial equity in recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees;
- expanding our use of diverse suppliers as directed by General Assembly actions;
- managing church investments in ways that increase our witness to racial justice and equity;
- taking steps of reparation and restorative action in response to disparities of wealth created and sustained by white supremacy^{iv};
- working in partnership with mid councils in their antiracism ministries;
- acting courageously and creatively against police brutality, voter suppression, educational and healthcare inequity, and other acts and practices of systemic racism on federal, state, and local levels; and

- putting into practice General Assembly directives to build an intercultural church where justice and equity prevail.

We acknowledge that this work will not be easy. But, as our church wide antiracism policy affirms: “Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

While this statement is our collective commitment to equity and inclusion, each agency and entity will implement these commitments according to their respective charters and directives.

Resources:

"Black Lives Matter," on the Presbyterian Historical Society's website,
<https://www.history.pcusa.org/blog/2020/06/black-lives-matter>

“Racial Equity,” on the Presbyterian Women’s website,
https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/antiracism

Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, 222nd General Assembly (2016)
<https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/40835/>

Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations, 216th General Assembly (2004)
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/report-task-force-reparations/>

On the Church in This Moment in History, 224th General Assembly (2020)
<https://www.pcbiz.org/#/search/3000727>

“Restorative Actions: Surrendering wealth for mutual well being,”
<https://restorativeactions.org/>

“Anti-racism statement,” Charlotte School of Social Work,
<https://socialwork.charlotte.edu/about-us/anti-racism-statement>

ⁱ *Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community*, 222nd General Assembly (2016) <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/item/40835/>

ⁱⁱ "Black Lives Matter," on the Presbyterian Historical Society's website,
<https://www.history.pcusa.org/blog/2020/06/black-lives-matter>

ⁱⁱⁱ “Racial Equity,” on the Presbyterian Women’s website,
https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/antiracism

^{iv} See the *Report of the Task Force to Study Reparations*, 216th General Assembly (2004)
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/report-task-force-reparations/>

and the Restorative Actions initiative started by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and the Co-Moderators of the 224th General Assembly - <https://restorativeactions.org/>