

## RESPONSE TO RACIAL INEQUALITY

The General Assembly of the Church of God in Eastern Canada is saddened by and condemns racism in all of its forms. We recognize that all humankind is created in the image of God (Gen.1:27). Racism is discrimination that values and privileges some groups of people above others, while denying personhood based on skin colour and ethnic origin. We call upon congregations to combat racism and its related attitudes and injustices.

It would be tempting for us in Canada to dismiss this as a problem largely outside of our borders. As we listen to the voices of our black communities, indigenous communities and persons of colour [BIPOC] in our country, we quickly discover racial prejudice adversely affects us also. Within our region and congregations, we recognize and celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures. From the beginning, God's heart has embraced all people - regardless of ethnicity or culture (Psalm 86:9, Revelation 7:9a).

We would also endorse the following recommendations, adopted from the 2015 Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) General Assembly 'Resolution on Race', to guide us into the future.

**Leadership**-- We call on pastors and leaders to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit to live out a countercultural lifestyle that works to expose and repent of the sin of racial division and acknowledge the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Prayer**--We pray for healing, repentance, unity and peace. We plead for God's mercy on our nation and on those who are compliant with the racial violence and racial disparities being manifested in the church and in the systems of this world.

**Lament**--We mourn in solidarity and sympathy with the people, the families, the congregations, and the communities affected by the traumatic impact of these racially motivated incidents. We also confess our past and present failure to walk faithfully and consistently in the light of our belief in a God who sees us all equally.

**Forgiveness**--We affirm radical forgiveness of the persons whose motivation for doing harm to others is racial hatred and discrimination, acknowledging what Jesus taught and showed us by His death on the cross, that love is stronger than hate.

**Justice**--We acknowledge that ministers in our own General Assembly and fellow congregants have been victims of racial profiling, we stand for justice to be administered on their behalf in a fair and impartial manner, we urgently call for justice in all cases of racially-motivated violence, and we support those agencies and officials who enforce the law and administer justice equitably to ensure the safety and security of all of our citizens, congregations and communities.

**Reconciliation**--We commit ourselves to a journey of healing and wholeness together with all humanity, and as people of Christian faith, to envision, strategize and work toward the realization of a reconciled church, nation and world. We embrace seasons when the sins of racism are identified, better understood and acknowledged. We respond with sorrowful repentance and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

**Action**--We commit to gain further understanding about racial inequality. We also commit ourselves to action by creating and supporting opportunities that promote equality and togetherness. We recognize our responsibility to encourage, instruct, and model lives as those who understand the implications of the gospel and embrace the racial diversity God intended for the body of Christ (Ephesians 3:6).

It is our hope and prayer that our efforts to address this issue will help us and others to overcome all instances of racial bias, prejudice and hatred in the future.