

## R15-2 Dismantling Racism

*Resolved*, that every worshipping community in the Diocese of Atlanta take seriously the sin of racism; and be it further,

*Resolved*, that we strongly encourage every clergy and lay leader in our diocese to attend an anti-racism training as required in accordance with Resolution B049 passed by General Convention 2000; and be it further,

*Resolved*, that each worshipping community, particularly over the next year, actively engage in dialogue, education, and/or action to address racial inequality; and be it further,

*Resolved*, that each worshipping community report their activity to the Beloved Community: Commission on Dismantling Racism no later than October 1, 2016.

### EXPLANATION

In our church's dioceses in the United States, racism has been identified as our original sin. The 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church has once again issued resolutions urging us to focus our efforts on dismantling racism. You can find one of these resolutions at the end of this document.

From Bishop Wright's Pastoral Letter on Dismantling Racism:

"What scripture calls 'the more excellent way' forward for us is not to be consumed by blame or guilt but to take inventory of our hearts and amend our lives. We do this courageously because, though we may be culpable, we are not condemned. We must confess all that is in us that's hostile to love, and remember we are assured of God's absolute forgiveness. Then we commit, from this day forward, to lives that actively enlarge justice, tear down inequity, make restitution and increase reconciliation. Only these things can purge us of the awful lie that divides and destroys us. By these works we are tuned instruments of peace and ambassadors for Christ now."

The Diocese of Atlanta is a leader in our efforts to dismantle racism. Our individual parishes are strongly urged to be leaders in these efforts as well. Anti-racism theology and training should be a central part of both Christian formation and the development of church leadership.

Additionally, we have been asked by The Episcopal Church to report our work and thus are asking that each parish report to The Beloved Community: the Commission on Dismantling Racism so we may compile our efforts. Here are some suggestions of work that can be done at the parish level.

- Read our history as Episcopalians on racism, including urging from General Convention. Here is one resource: [http://www.episcopalarchives.org/anti-racism/anti-racism\\_training/report.html](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/anti-racism/anti-racism_training/report.html)
- Ensure that every leader, including every vestry member and staff of your parish, has attended an anti-racism training

- Read Bryan Stephenson's *Just Mercy* and offer the book study as prepared by the Beloved Community
- Watch a film and have dinner and discussion afterwards. Titles include:
  - *Selma*
  - *Banished: How Whites Drove Blacks Out of Towns in America*
  - *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North*
- Take a church trip(s) to the Civil Rights Museum and MLK Center with discussion to follow
- Research the history of your parish, your neighborhood, your county in the history of civil rights and segregation and share it with your parish
- Offer the Liturgy of Reconciliation and Repentance at the parish level, possibly in conjunction with the above research.

*Submitted by: The Beloved Community*

*Written by Dr. Catherine Meeks and the Rev. Dr. Sharon Hiers*

From The 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church

Resolution A182

Using Education, Community Dialogue and Internal Audit to Respond to All Forms of Racial Injustice

Topic: Racism

Committee: Social Justice and United States Policy

Proposer: Social Justice and United States Policy

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recognize that many Episcopalians find it challenging to understand or know how to respond to 21st century systemic racial injustices that still occur in multiple contexts including but not limited to education; employment; housing; health care; banking; voting rights; immigration; policing, courts, and prisons, etc., be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention affirms that the Gospel, our Baptismal Covenant, and our Marks of Mission call individuals, churches, dioceses, provinces, and the wider Church to find more effective and productive ways to respond to racial injustice as we love our neighbors as ourselves, respect the dignity of every human being, and transform unjust structures of society; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention declare that “not knowing” and “not having the eyes to see and ears to hear” are serious obstacles to transforming unjust structures and therefore direct the Church at every level for this triennium to commit to increase the use of study, education, research, anti-racism training, liturgies, and Christian formation instruction that specifically address systemic racial injustice; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention urge the Church at every level to increase the number of dialogues about systemic racial injustice it has with local, state and national bodies within the public and private spheres and that these dialogues be used to identify, examine, and offer correctives to policies and practices within and among these bodies that result in systemic racial disparities and injustices; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention urge dioceses and congregations to create vehicles for listening to diverse neighbors and developing reconciling relationships; such options might include (a) listening campaigns in local communities, (b) partnerships with churches and organizations comprised predominately of a different race or culture (especially those targeted by oppression), (c) neighborhood prayer walks, (d) storytelling and speak-out events designed to facilitate truth-telling, healing and action, (e) and others with which leaders throughout the Church are familiar; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention encourage Justice and Advocacy Ministries to partner with other church offices and organizations as appropriate to host, resource, and moderate an ongoing online forum for Episcopalians dedicated to the ministry of racial justice and reconciliation, with spaces dedicated to sharing about local and diocesan efforts and resources; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention encourage Justice and Advocacy Ministries to partner with Youth Ministries to commission a gospel-centered, Internet-integrated, action-oriented, anti-racism youth ministry curriculum for congregations throughout The Episcopal Church, including those not in the United States, to be provided in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music produce and post online a set of prayers for racial reconciliation and justice, suitable for inclusion in the Prayers of the People; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention urge the Executive Council to conduct its own internal audit to assess to what extent, if at all, racial disparities and systemic racial injustices exist within the Church (including but not limited to clergy salaries and deployment); and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 78th General Convention request that the Executive Council report back to the 79th General Convention on the results of the internal audit; what concrete steps it and the wider Church took to address systemic racial injustice in the wider culture; and how effective those steps were.