

Charter for Racial Justice in an Interdependent Global Community <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/racialjusticecharter>

Adopted by the 1980 General Conference of The United Methodist Church

Because we believe:

1. That God is the Creator of all people, and all are God's children in one family;
2. That racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ;
3. That racism denies the redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ;
4. That we must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sister and brothers of other races in thought, in word and in deed;
5. That in our common humanity in creation, all women and men are made in God's image, and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God;
6. That our strength lies in our racial and cultural diversity and that we must work toward a world in which each person's value is respected and nurtured;
7. That our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships, and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures and practices of both church and state;

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and in deed, and to struggle for the rights and the self-determination of every person and group of persons.

Therefore,

as United Methodists in every place across the land, we will unite our efforts within the church to take the following actions:

1. Eliminate all forms of institutional racism in the total ministry of the church, giving special attention to those institutions that we support, beginning with their employment policies, purchasing practices, environmental policies and availability of services and facilities.
2. Create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to be the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together.
3. Increase efforts to recruit people of all races into the membership of The United Methodist Church and provide leadership development opportunities without discrimination.
4. Establish workshops and seminars in local churches to study, understand and appreciate the historical and cultural contributions of each race to the church and community.
5. Raise local churches' awareness of the continuing needs for equal education, housing, employment, medical care and environmental justice for all members of the community, and to create opportunities to work for these things across racial lines.
6. Work for the development and implementation of national and international policies to protect the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people such as through support of the ratification of United Nations covenants on human rights.
7. Support and participate in the worldwide struggle for liberation in church and community.

8. Facilitate nomination and election processes that include all racial groups by employing a system that prioritizes leadership opportunities of people from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing legacy of racial injustice, and use measures to align our vision for racial justice with actions that accelerate racial equality.

What is racism?

Racism is the use of power for maintaining privilege and systematic discrimination through institutions and structures of society in order:

- To deny access to education, employment, housing, social services and other rights and benefits of society either by law or by custom.
- To perpetuate, solidify and guarantee the economic, political and social power of one group over other groups.

Racism can be easy to see or hidden, intentional or unintentional. Its impact is measured by its effects, not by personal motivations. Racism combines with other identity issues such as gender, economic status or national origin to multiply its effects.

Where do we find racism?

Racism may be present in many circumstances:

- At the individual level, you may feel fear, rage, distress, blocked.
- At the interpersonal level, you may experience relationships of destructive conflict or exploitation.
- At the institutional level, some groups tend to be barred from certain decision-making positions or levels.
- At the cultural level, one group sets the "norm" for everyone, and the values we pursue reflect a rejection of difference and diversity.

Where does racism come from?

In the 21st century, Christians living in the United States are heirs to the legacy of racism. This is a legacy of racism by the white European majority toward peoples of color within the United States and from other parts of the world. It is a history stemming from the earliest days of the nation to this very moment. For white Americans there is the legacy of white privilege, and for persons of color there is the memory of discrimination and prejudice. Today, the realities of globalization breed economic insecurity for all and manifest structural racism that thrives by deepening the tensions and competition between communities of color but results in more benefits for the powerful. In a global context, racism is at work everywhere.

The United States—a nation of many peoples of different races, nationalities, languages and cultures—is challenged to make the Charter for Racial Justice a charter for everyone.

The Charter for Racial Justice was created and adopted by the Women's Division (now United Methodist Women) of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries in 1978. In 1980 the division successfully recommended adoption of the charter by the whole denomination. General Conference has consecutively readopted it, every eight years since, most recently in 2008. The charter continues United Methodist Women's urgent call for study and action on the principles and goals of its vision.