

ACT: Awaken! Confront! Transform!

ACT Now! Unite to End Racism

Our commitment is to **awaken** to the trauma of racism and the legacy of white privilege in the United States through self-evaluation and institutional assessment of embedded racism; to **confront** racism and white privilege through disciplined truth-telling coupled with strategies in the areas of church life and practices, and thus **transform** the hearts, minds and behaviors of people and institutions.

Take Action to Address Racism in the Church

Truth Learning, Truth Telling and Relationships

Truth-telling is needed to dismantle racism. Communities of faith are encouraged to create the space for truth-telling and truth hearing that will lead to changes in interpersonal relationships, in churches and in church related organizations. Interpersonal truth telling, congregational truth telling and organizational truth telling begin the process for transformative change.

Criminal Justice - Mass Incarceration

The United States is number one globally in the incarceration of its citizens. The US is 5% of the world population and houses 21% of the world's prisoners. This has not always been the case. Between 1989 and 2015 the number of people incarcerated in the US increased from roughly 500,000 to over 2.2 million. Another 4.6 million are under correctional control in the form of probation or parole. African Americans make up 13% of the US population but in 2014 African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34% of the total 6.8 million in the correctional population.

Economic Justice

The economy is a human creation. Unlike the weather, it follows laws laid down by humans, not by God or Nature. Most of us work a significant portion of our lives, but how much we prosper depends not only on our individual actions, but also on laws governing labor, corporations, taxation, and public investment. When Europeans began settling North America, they and their descendants established laws that appropriated land and resources from Native Americans and utilized enslaved Africans as free labor, setting the stage for the accumulation of wealth and political power primarily among people of European descent.

Media

News media often perpetuate racial stereotypes and reflect cultural norms in negative ways. A cursory look at news stories can show that crimes committed by white people are covered in very different ways than those by African Americans; likewise, those that portray the victims of crimes betray racial disparities as well. Any work that is to end racism in the US must have a strategy of changing the way race is portrayed in the

media. We will work with partners, both existing and new, to address racism in the media.

Civil and Human Rights

Racism hinders the ability of citizens to live in freedom with dignity and respect and with the opportunities to exercise the rights of full citizenship. All acts of racism are human rights violations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 sets “a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations” and “sets out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.” <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Environmental Justice

First reported in 1971, awareness of environmental racism took a giant leap in 1982 when 523 residents of Warren County North Carolina were arrested for protesting the dumping of poisoned soil along their roads. People of color comprise the majority of the population in communities within 1.8 miles of a toxic waste facility in the United States. Worldwide, people of color have done the least to cause climate change, and yet they are already (and will continue to be) the overwhelming majority of climate refugees.

Education

Racism in K-12 schools negatively impacts both school culture and student success/achievement with the dissatisfying result that there are more suspended Black and Latinx students, for example. Racism immensely impacts student achievement in class as students are missing the opportunities to grow in their learning. Furthermore, the presence of racism has provided the foundation upon which built a culture that contributed to the school to prison pipeline and exacerbated a host of institutional race issues that were mirrored by society.

Immigration

Our sacred texts and faith traditions call us repeatedly to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. Yet the cries of the tired, poor, and huddled masses that our faith, and Lady Liberty, also demand be heard and welcomed into the U.S. have often been made worse by immigration policies imbued with scapegoating, racism, detention practices, and labor abuses that result in modern day slavery enacted both before and following immigrant arrivals.