

To Study the Northern Illinois District's Ministry With Multiethnic Communities and Grow in Our Understanding and Actions of Racial Reconciliation

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention (2019 Resolution 11-04A, "To Affirm the Common Humanity of All People and Ethnicities") resolved "that the members of the congregations of the Synod be encouraged to work toward racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and within society-at large"; and

WHEREAS, Racism was defined in the 2019 Resolution as "a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism); and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Resolution said, "Racism has no basis in Scripture or the Lutheran Confessions, but rather is consistent with atheistic evolutionary ideologies and movements that claim the supremacy of one people group over another"; and

WHEREAS, Racism "manifests itself in actions that adversely affect the lives of others... especially when those who are in a position to enforce their prejudices use their influence to harm others regarded as inferior, and even to exploit them" ("Racism and the Church", CTCR 1994, p. 11); and

WHEREAS, "Racism is so much a part of the American worldview, it is often difficult for us to recognize it when we see it" ("Racism and the Church", CTCR 1994, p. 27); and

WHEREAS, Paul exhorts Christians to "take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Ephesians 5:11), "racism must be regarded among the 'works of darkness' that produce nothing of any value to anyone. The church, aware of its history in the United States, must continually employ methods—grounded in the Word and sacraments and in the proper distinction between Law and Gospel—to expose, condemn, and remove [racism]" ("Racism and the Church", CTCR 1994, p. 39); and

WHEREAS, The people of God are striving to live faithfully, but still participate in sinful thoughts, words, and deeds in what they do and leave undone (1 John 1:8-10), which can and has included the sin of racism; and

WHEREAS, Jesus tells us that the greatest commandments are to love God and love your neighbor (Mark 12:30-31); and

WHEREAS, Jesus illustrates for his disciples that they are to treat all persons as neighbor (Luke 10:29-37); and

WHEREAS, Paul exhorts us to show the love of Christ as we “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther, in his explanations of the fifth and seventh commandments, extolls us to show that love as we care for our neighbors as we support them in their needs, well-being, income, and property; and

WHEREAS, President Matthew Harrison issued a statement in 2020 in response to the killing of George Floyd saying, “Discriminatory treatment of human beings on the basis of race is irrational evil and results in evil,” and “We shall pray, but we shall do even more. We shall follow the ancient mandate of the prophet of Yahweh: ‘He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?’ (Micah 6:8)”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Northern Illinois District in convention call upon the Convention Chaplain or another leader to pray against the sin of racism in our history, asking the Holy Spirit to transform our lives to reflect God’s love for all nations; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the people of Northern Illinois District congregations, as President Harrison said, will “pray, but we shall do even more”, dismantle racist structures in our midst and engaging in acts of reconciliation; and be it further

RESOLVED, This work of antiracism be informed by an understanding of our history and the need for this work of justice. Therefore, the District President will commission an ethnically diverse task force, including professional church workers, laypeople with background in such work, and young adults, to study the Northern Illinois District’s history of mission, ministry, and education within multiethnic communities, to be completed within eighteen months, so that we might better make confession of our failures and recognize where God has granted growth to His Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the results of this task force’s study would also provide us with tangible ways to move forward in our present and future outreach efforts in multiethnic communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Churches, Districts and Synod to address and figure out ways to follow through on this study which exemplifies the ministry of reconciliation which Christ has given to us (2 Corinthians 5:11-21). Our people will follow through on the LCMS 2019 resolution (11-04A) and “work towards racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and within society-at-large, praying that those who advocate racist ideologies and those who are deceived by them be brought to repentance, and that justice and healing come to those have been wounded”; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the study will be distributed by mail to all congregations in the district and made available on the district Web site; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Northern Illinois District in convention memorialize the Synod in convention in 2023 to call on the faculty of our two seminaries to do a similar study of our national mission, ministry, and education efforts to be completed within twenty four months after district proceedings and made available on the Synodical Website and emailed to member congregations.