



The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada, Ottawa
July 29, 2020

MOTION M-36 EMANCIPATION DAY

Dear Prime Minister,

The Presbyterian Church in Canada wishes to express our support for Motion M-36 Emancipation Day, by the Honourable Majid Jowhari, Liberal, Richmond Hill, to designate August 1 of every year as “Emancipation Day” in Canada.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada recognizes that, globally as well as here in Canada, societies are at an important moment of choice; we can confront hundreds of years of systemic racial oppression and work to make real, fundamental changes—or we can try to continue with the status quo that has harmed generations of people, whether through the evil of slavery or through other forms of legal, social, and economic oppression. Working for an end to systemic racism is not only a moral and spiritual imperative, however; racism harms the common good and the social fabric, even as it privileges some people over others. If we as a nation and communities do not choose to work to end oppression in all its forms, we are choosing to continue harming ourselves.

Making August 1 “Emancipation Day” will not solve all our problems. It will not end anti-Black racism in Canada, nor will it erase the destructive harm slavery inflicted here in North America as well as around the globe. Rather, it is one important step in a series of needed changes—among them, publicly recognizing that slavery, with all its destructive effects, existed in Canada.

As we, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, seek to educate ourselves on anti-Black racism and how to be anti-racist—as we understand the Gospel command to love our neighbour as ourselves calls us to be—we have issued statements, produced resources, and sought to make common cause with other groups working to address and end systemic racism in Canada. In the light of these commitments, we support designating August 1 of each year as “Emancipation Day,” to mark the abolishment of slavery in Canada and remind ourselves as a nation of the need to work to name and end all forms of racial injustice. This is an important action in deepening Canada’s commitment towards eliminating anti-Black racism in our society.

We place our support for Motion M-36 Emancipation Day before you. As an organization committed to actively engaging in ending anti-Black racism, we appeal to you directly to support and pass this motion.

Please remain assured of our continued prayers for you and all of Parliament, as you seek to govern justly.

Sincerely,

Rev. Amanda Currie
Moderator
The Presbyterian Church in Canada