

# The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession on Racism

Reading and responding to this confession cannot be done with an unredeemed heart, still filled with prejudice, judgement and self-righteousness. To read and understand this document is going to require a transformed version of ourselves, cleansed and renewed by Jesus Christ. Racism is deeply rooted in Canadian culture. That racism has infected the church in Canada, including The Presbyterian Church in Canada, its congregations and people. Racism is to regard our own race as superior to other races, leading to actions and attitudes of prejudice, discrimination or antagonism against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. These minority and marginalized communities become racialized by the majority or dominant group who judge those they have racialized through particular pre-determined criteria. Colonialism, rooted again in the assumption that one's race and culture is superior to others, gave permission to the colonizers to subvert the colonized peoples denigrating their views, experiences, and expressions of worship. While the church has said it rejects racism and colonialism, the tendrils run deep and the church desires to be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. This confession is not the final word, but rather is part of a process in the continuing conversion of the church into the community who bears witness to the Lamb and to the one who sits on the throne of heaven, the Triune God of grace.

Before God, our fellow siblings in Christ, and in the community of the church:

We confess we have not been the church we have been called to be, for we have failed to live into your desire "to unite all people in Jesus Christ". (Living Faith 7.1.2)

In our cultural blindness we have judged people by the colour of their skin instead of recognizing them as a fellow child of God. We have not humbly listened to those of other races and cultures, in our pride assuming the supremacy of our race and culture. We have been shaped by the racist values of the dominant culture, rather than being transformed by the gospel vision of persons "from all nations, tribes and peoples and languages" gathered in praise and worship of the Triune God of grace. (Revelation 7:9)

We confess our racial bias.

We turn from our sin of racism and seek to live into your vision.

In our ministry we have not embraced the spiritual gifts brought to The Presbyterian Church in Canada by persons "from all nations, tribes and peoples and languages", instead we have acted as gatekeepers of the gifts of Spirit. In our arrogance we have elevated persons of the dominant culture, overlooking those of other races, languages and cultures. Our words and actions have told people of some other races that despite their spiritual gifts and their qualifications they can serve the church in some tasks, but that they are "not good enough" to really belong, "not good enough" to be allowed to lead. We have treated some congregations of the Christian community as outsiders, as tenants, marginalizing them, rather than recognizing them as members together with us in the body of Christ.

We confess our racial bias.

We turn from our sin of spurning the Spirit and seek to live into your vision.

In our Assemblies, synods, and presbyteries we are consumed by doing the business of the church, rather than living out the gospel's call, such as showing hospitality to the outsider, offering sympathy and empathy to the alienated among us and protecting the stranger. We have placed our culture's way of decision making above the patterns used by other cultures represented in our congregations. In the process we have blocked the full flourishing of people of every tribe and language and race within the life of the church.

We confess our racial bias.

We turn from our sin of cultural arrogance and seek to live into your vision.

May the Holy Spirit transform us. Holy Spirit, move us beyond the limitations of accommodation and co-existence into the wonder of engagement and empathy. Teach us to die to our sin of racism, so that with the people of every ethnicity and language we can be drawn beyond the divisions of race into the reign of Jesus Christ.

Then together with the great multitude that is beyond number, we shall sing, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to God forever and ever." (Revelation 7:12)