

## **PRESBYTERY OF SAN FERNANDO POLICY CONCERNING RACISM**

### **THE POLICY:**

The scriptures and our confessions direct us to pursue unity and equity, and the call to discipleship compels us to actively oppose racism in all its forms. Accordingly, the Presbytery of San Fernando commits to promoting mutual respect and interaction between members of different races, ethnicities, and cultures, and will seek to build relationships with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, listen to their concerns, and support initiatives that promote racial reconciliation and solidarity. We will also advocate for policies and practices that address the root causes of both systemic and personal racism, and that promote equality and justice.

The Presbytery of San Fernando will actively work to identify and address instances of racism within our presbytery, including discriminatory practices, racial bias, and microaggressions. We commit to refusing to participate in demeaning ethnic humor, and to lovingly but forcefully calling out racially insensitive behaviors. We will seek to create a culture of inclusivity and belonging where people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel valued, heard, and supported.

Additionally, we in the Presbytery of San Fernando are committed to educating ourselves and our communities about the history and impact of racism, both within the church and in society at large. Thus, we will provide opportunities for learning and dialogue for all ages on such topics as racial reconciliation, systemic racism, white advantage, and the experiences of people from non-dominant backgrounds. As a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), we acknowledge that Christians are called also to present intercessory prayers for ourselves and others, including prayers of confession and repentance. The Presbytery of San Fernando commits to repenting of the role we collectively and individually have played in creating and maintaining racial/ethnic prejudice and white normativity. We also lament the entrenched legacies of systemic racism and white supremacy that have shaped the United States and the American church.

The Presbytery will strive for racial equity in recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees. Recognizing the disparity between our membership and the demographics of the communities we serve, we will seek to better reflect the racial composition of the San Fernando Valley, including investing in and advancing leaders from a wide spectrum of ethnicities and cultures, so that our Presbytery might better represent the full diversity and inclusivity of God's Kingdom. We commit also to seeking and promoting resources (curriculum, worship, preaching, music, and literature) which are reflective of a wide range of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds.

By adopting this policy concerning racism, the Presbytery of San Fernando acknowledges that our approach to racism is intertwined with our witness and that our process of sanctification is ongoing, and it reaffirms our commitment to living out the gospel message of love, justice, and reconciliation. The Presbytery will review and amend this policy when necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Book of Order.