

## RACE, ETHNICITY, AND JUSTICE

Fuller Theological Seminary is committed to racial and ethnic justice and creating an environment that promotes inclusion at every level of our institution. This commitment flows from our conviction in equality of all people as well as our belief in God's particular concern for the marginalized. It is expressed in our policies listed below and enacted in our [strategic plans for greater inclusion](#).

We believe it is part of our vocation to partner with the Holy Spirit in recognizing injustice and pursuing the healing and flourishing of human communities. We seek to learn from the diverse heritages, cultures, and histories of all who make up the community at Fuller as we commit ourselves in classrooms and elsewhere to initiatives that address and root out visible and invisible forms of racism in seminary, church, and society.

Racism is a complex phenomenon that is not accurately understood as only individual prejudice; it involves interrelated factors that affect us all. We all participate in racism, even against our own best intentions, because we are part of power structures, cultures, habitual practices, insensitivities, and ignorance of others, that intentionally and unintentionally perpetuate racist attitudes and behavior. It causes the breakdown of community; results in alienation, disunity and segregation; and undermines our witness to Jesus Christ.

Overcoming racism is a process that involves becoming aware of racist ideologies and their effects, commitment to overcoming racism, confession of sorrow for participation in individual and structural racism, concrete action aimed at racial inclusion and equity, and celebration of new discipleship in Christ. It is not simply remorse; it is the joy of becoming participants in Christ who overcomes divisions (Ephesians 2). It is not only individual action, but involves examining the institutions and structures we belong to and working to change those structures into conformity with God's justice. Overcoming racism is an essential part of God's mission for individuals and for Christian communities who follow Jesus Christ.

We all need a critical theology of racial justice. Racialized and ethnic injustice is a global phenomenon that affects the entirety of the Fuller community and the communities represented here, even when our immediate contexts appear ethnically or racially homogenous.<sup>i</sup> In order to grow in love towards one another, we commit to learning the stories of the many communities represented here, acknowledging their differences, their struggles against oppression, and their joys in our classrooms, curriculum, and events.

The depth of racism in our societies and its insidious effects on all of us is not easy to understand. It includes global legacies of white supremacy and white normativity, perspectives which have at times been so pervasive they can be hard to name and to notice: all of us are sinners, and part of sin is hiding the truth even from ourselves. Our evangelical heritage has often focused on individual sins and overlooked the powers and authorities, the customs and ideologies that function in sinful, racist ways. We have often overlooked the involvement of evangelical Christianity itself in racial and ethnic injustice and in perpetuating whiteness as a vision of human maturity.<sup>ii</sup> We respond to our participation in injustice by looking to the gospel we have received, a gospel of confession, repentance, grace, and new life in Christ.

The Fuller community has a seminary-wide commitment to the authority of the Bible for daily living, for all of life. We have a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord over all the powers and authorities and over all our lives. We have the gift of gratitude for the presence of the Holy Spirit, who calls all to repentance and overcomes the dividedness of humankind into many languages by giving us the ability to engage in dialogue with one another (Acts 2). These are precious gifts from God. We treasure them, and are committed to using them so that God's will may be done here. We pray that these gifts will embolden and invigorate our commitment towards racial justice.

In light of our agreement with the above statements, we have implemented a set of policies to name and respond to incidents of racial bias and discrimination within our community. The [Policy Against Discrimination Based on Race, Color, or National Origin](#) and the Bias Incident Response illustrate our policies governing incidents of racial discrimination, the procedure for investigation, and potential institutional responses. The [Policy Against Unlawful Discrimination](#), the [Policy Against All Forms of Unlawful or Prohibited Harassment in the Workplace](#), and the [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement](#) further describe Fuller expectations and operating procedures related to race and ethnicity.

These policies are consistent with our commitment to racial justice. In addition to these policies, we also commit ourselves to examining every part of our institutional life together—both our operations and our theological, missiological, and psychological disciplines and pedagogies—so that Fuller and the education offered here become increasingly inclusive to racially and ethnically marginalized peoples. We commit to attitudes and behaviors that honor the communities represented here, uphold their belonging, and support their empowerment.

As a seminary community all of us will endeavor to:

- promote mutual respect and interaction among all members of the community;
- identify and reflect on our own ethnic and racial identities, their histories, and their effects on others individually and systemically;
- recognize and value the various cultures, languages, and backgrounds in our community;
- initiate conversations with those who are different from ourselves;
- listen patiently and courteously to those whose first language is not our own;
- refuse to initiate or participate in demeaning ethnic humor or other conversations that exhibit racism;
- offer honest and kind feedback to one another regarding racism whenever appropriate;
- seek continuous feedback from communities that experience racism;
- work with the Trustees to promote a racially just, ethnically inclusive community, in order to prepare students for the manifold ministries of Christ and His church;
- learn to recognize and resist the ideologies of white supremacy and white normativity

As students, we applaud and uphold the commitment statements of the Seminary community as written above. In addition, we as students will endeavor to:

- study and reflect on our own ethnic and racial identities and their relation to other

identities embodied at Fuller;

- participate in courses, programs, and other activities that deepen our appreciation and respect for those from other ethnic communities;
- commit ourselves to greater sensitivity and mutuality in cross-cultural, racial, and ethnic relationships at Fuller and in our communities.

As a faculty we will endeavor to:

- search for, help to create, and use curricular resources authored by people with a variety of racial and ethnic identities to help equip students to minister in diverse contexts;
- treat students of all ethnicities and races with respect as participants, rather than only as recipients, in the educational process, offering mentoring and counseling when extra support is needed;
- encourage a variety of voices, points of view, and backgrounds in every classroom discussion;
- engage in scholarship and sabbaticals in diverse settings, to learn from other cultures and traditions;
- remain attentive to the effects of racism in our academic disciplines and guilds, and seek ways to mitigate that influence;
- audit schools, divisions, and departments concerning policies for curricular inclusiveness, as appropriate for varieties of subject matter;
- develop and support appropriate ethnic and intercultural academic courses, tracks, and programs, and give priority to increasing underrepresented staff, faculty, and scholarships;
- conduct all faculty searches in a manner that promotes the school's inclusiveness and effectiveness with the many cultures we serve;
- promote and participate in seminars and other resources for pursuing racial justice and nurturing intercultural life.

As administrators/managers, and staff members we will endeavor to:

- provide equal treatment and access to information, resources, and services;
- be intentionally inclusive and fair in our recruiting and hiring, and promoting practices;
- encourage and support the Diversity Council that monitors progress and provides educational opportunities and workshops for on-growing growth in diversity;
- provide culturally-sensitive personnel policies and management;
- with leadership from the Trustees and the Development Office, seek funding that supports training and awareness programs for overcoming racism and improving our capacity to serve diverse churches;
- be attentive to the needs of ethnic and race specific programs, tracks, and courses.

*Initiated by CATS; rewritten by Joint Faculty Committee on Multiethnic Concerns; additions and revisions by Student Multicultural Concerns Committee, Staff Committee, School of Intercultural Studies and School of Psychology faculties, School of Theology Biblical Studies, Ministry Studies, and Theology Divisions, Faculty Senate, Marianne Meye Thompson, Charles Scalise, Rich Erickson, and Barbara Bell.*

*Revised May 28, 2002; JFCMC, Glen Stassen and Seyoon Kim. The statement was reviewed and edited by JFCMC in 2008-2009. The edited version was approved by the JFCMC on June 1, 2009. The statement was further revised by Aaron Dorsey, reviewed by members of the Diversity Council in 2020 and adopted by the Faculty Senate and Joint Faculty in May 2020.*

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<sup>i</sup> Sechrest, Love L., Johnny Ramírez-Johnson, and Amos Yong. 2018. *Can "White" People Be Saved?: Triangulating Race, Theology, and Mission*. Missiological Engagements Series. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

<sup>ii</sup> Willie J. Jennings, "Can White People Be Saved?: Reflections on the Relationship of Missions and Whiteness," in *Can "White" People Be Saved? : Triangulating Race, Theology, and Mission*, ed. Love L. Sechrest, Johnny Ramírez-Johnson, and Amos Yong (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018).