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June 4, 2020

### **Lutheran Church–Canada Statement Concerning Racism**

The issue of racism is in many people's eyes these days as a result of the numerous demonstrations and protests taking place as a result of the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of law enforcement officers.

Racism has been defined as “a belief that certain races of people are by birth and nature superior to others” and, as a result, as “discrimination or hatred based on race.” We in Lutheran Church–Canada condemn racism as clearly contrary to the Holy Scriptures, to the nature of the Church, and to the principles of Christian love.

The Small Catechism helps us better understand and address this matter. For instance, in connection with the Apostles' Creed we note these truths:

First, the explanation of the First Article says that “God has made me and all creatures, that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all senses.” This is true not only of myself but of every single human being, regardless of the colour of their skin or their ethnicity; for as St. Paul declares: “[God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him” (Acts 17:26-27).

Second, the explanation of the Second Article reminds me that, at the same time, I am by nature “a lost and condemned person”—just as is the case with all people regardless of the colour of their skin or their ethnicity. So the Apostle writes: “There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:22-23).

Third, the explanation of the Second Article goes on, however, to proclaim that I and all people, regardless of the colour of their skin or their ethnicity, have been “redeemed... purchased and won from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil... with [Christ's] holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering death.” So St. Paul again declares: “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Fourth, the explanation of the Third Article states that “in [the] Christian Church, [the Holy Spirit] daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers”... regardless of the color of their skin or their ethnicity. Again, St. Paul says: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:27-28).

At the end of the explanations of the First and Second Articles of the Creed, we read that “it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him” and “that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him.”

Such service and obedience to God is fleshed out in the Ten Commandments. In this matter before us, the Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth Commandments are especially timely. Namely, that “we do not hurt or harm our neighbour,” regardless of the colour of their skin or their ethnicity, “in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.” That we “help our neighbour,” regardless of the colour of their skin or ethnicity, “to improve and protect his possessions and income.” And that we “defend our neighbor” regardless of the colour of their skin or ethnicity, “speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.”

At the same time, neither do we condone the actions of some of these protesters against racism for their violations of the Fourth, Fifth and Seventh Commandments—the failure to honour and obey the governing authorities, the hurting and harming of people, and the destruction and theft of people’s possessions.

“When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent,’ He willed that the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” So wrote Martin Luther in the first of his famous 95 Theses. I would, as such, call upon all of us to do just this very thing: repent ourselves of any such racism that has reared up in our hearts and minds and speech and actions, and to call others to do the same. And let us bear fruit in keeping with repentance, working to dismantle systemic racism in our society wherever we may find it.

Finally, let us bring all this before the throne of our gracious and merciful God in prayer. We commend especially to you The Litany from our Lutheran Service Book, which would be especially fitting at this time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Timothy Teuscher". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

President Timothy Teuscher  
Lutheran Church–Canada