

APPENDIX D

POLICY ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Because God creates and loves all human beings and has acted in Jesus Christ to reconcile people to God and to each other, we, the people of God, are called to embody reconciliation in the community that is Lexington Theological Seminary. We rejoice in the gifts which particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life, and we recognize as sin every attitude and action that is based on the assumption that one racial or ethnic group is innately superior to others.

God's universal love for humankind comes to expression in both Testaments. Chiding Jonah for his lament over a plant, Yahweh reiterates the divine priority: human life is the most valuable of all created life (Jon 4: 10- 11, cf. Gen 1:11-27). Even Israel's enemies, the Assyrians, are loved and cared for by God. The canonical book of Ruth protests against racial prejudice by making David, Israel's greatest king, the product of the interracial marriage between Ruth (a Moabite) and Boaz (an Israelite). These late OT witnesses to God's universal love for all humankind protest against the racial exclusivism of other aspects of Israel's tradition, such as Nahum, the Deuteronomic tradition, and the work of the Chronicler. Thus, the First Testament witness is twofold: God's people are not immune to the temptation of racial prejudice and they must be open to the challenge of prophetic voices that speak out against bigotry in God's name.

The doctrine of the universal love of God in the New Testament comes to expression in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline corpus and in the Gospel portraits of Jesus. According to Paul, the gospel of Jesus Christ destroys the barriers between races (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Rom 10:12; 3:29-30; cr. Col 3:11; Eph 2:14-22). Jesus is portrayed by the evangelists as reaching out to include racial groups despised by the religious establishment (Mark 5:1-20/Luke 8:26-39/Matt 8:28-34; Luke 4:16-30; Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-42). The resurrected Lord is portrayed as sending disciples out to proclaim the good news to all races and peoples (Matt 28: 18-20; Acts 1:8), and the Holy Spirit is given to Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17) and Gentiles (Acts 10:34-48). The church at Antioch is deliberately portrayed by the author of Acts as multi-racial in membership and leadership (13:1). Even as the NT denies the validity of racial divisions, it calls the church to oneness as the body of Christ (Eph 4:4-6; Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 8:6, 10:17). In Christ, diversity is understood as a gift to be celebrated rather than as a problem to be solved. We need those who are different from ourselves in order to experience wholeness in Christ.

But throughout its history, the Church of Jesus Christ has continued to fall prey to the temptation of racism, as evidenced by the Christian justification of the atrocities of the Crusades, of the enslavement of Africans, and of the systemic racism of segregation and apartheid. The slaughter of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the internment of Japanese Americans, the exploitation of non-white immigrants and the continual anti-Jewish pogroms which culminated in the Nazi Holocaust, all were at least tolerated, and often encouraged by churches. But God has not ceased to send prophets against the idolatry of racism, many of whom, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., suffered martyrdom for their witness to God's universal love and the divine demand for racial justice. In recent years, various Christian groups have called the church to acknowledge that racism

is contrary to the will for God and have explored the implications of that confession (*Nostra Aetate [Documents of Vatican II, 667-68]*); *Ecumenical Statements on Race Relations: Development of Ecumenical Thought on Race Relations 1937-1964*; *WCC Statements on Actions of Racism, 1948-1979*; *Breaking Down the Walls: WC Statements on Racism*; *Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church*; "The Harare Declarations" (BWA, 1993).

In light of the clear evidence of God's equal care and concern for all human life and God's call to racial reconciliation within the body of Christ, we, as a seminary community of faith and learning, pledge ourselves to honest self-examination and mutual accountability as we open ourselves to God's powerful grace and pray for cleansing from our sins, including those of racial prejudice and injustice.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Racial Prejudice: A preconceived negative judgment about the characteristics or behavior of a racial group, or about the character of an individual, based on that person's membership in a racial group. Racial prejudices may be held by anyone.

Racial Discrimination: Any action against a person or group based on racial prejudice. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, failure to admit, hire, or promote on the basis of race; spoken or written insults and racial slurs; and nonverbal gestures that convey or reflect racial prejudice (especially when such behavior has been met with clear rebuke). Racial discrimination may be practiced by anyone. This policy condemns insulting and derogatory acts by all people.

Systemic Racism: Racial prejudice that has behind it institutional or societal power to carry out acts of racial discrimination. This results in the systemic exclusion of a racial group from power, influence, resources, or the development of their potential. Historically, socially empowered racism in the United States has most often been perpetrated by whites against non-white peoples. In Kentucky the descendants of enslaved Africans have been dominated by the economically and politically more powerful white majority.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PROBLEM IN THIS CONTEXT

Like the people of God throughout the ages, the community of Lexington Theological Seminary is constantly in danger of succumbing to the temptations of racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and institutional racism. Because of their smaller numbers and relative lack of societal and institutional power, people of color in general, and in this setting, African Americans in particular experience most acutely the effects of these forms of idolatry. They suffer from behaviors such as superior attitudes on the part of whites, speech betraying racial prejudice, and the reinforcement for stereotypes by racial jokes, and the painful invisibility that results when one or one's group is ignored as though it did not exist.

In the structures of the Seminary, people of color need to be more fully represented in the composition of the Board of Trustees and its auxiliary body, the faculty, and the administrative staff. Faculty members need to find and assign to all students excellent scholarship by persons from various racial groups. Further, all seminarians should be exposed: (a) to a curriculum in which the commitment to racial reconciliation with justice is explicitly taught and affirmed, and (b) to forms of worship and community life in which the concern for racial reconciliation with justice is made evident. The Seminary needs to find additional ways to address the problems of limited ministry opportunities and inadequate compensation for African American

seminarians and graduates of all denominations represented here. Ways need to be found to encourage African American congregations to value and support seminary educated leadership. African American staff members need institutional support for the right to be treated with dignity and respect by students, faculty, other staff, administrators, and outsiders with whom the Seminary does business.

Our rich heritage of recognizing the importance of racial justices needs to be seen as a motivation, not a substitute, for continued progress. All members of the Seminary community need to listen carefully and non-defensively to each other's' concerns with respect to racial issues. Whites in the Seminary community need to make a greater effort to acknowledge that racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and institutional racism are real problems, not just in other places, but here as well. People of color learn the details of the dominant culture from birth as a matter of survival. Whites need to make an intentional effort to learn about the experiences, values, and concerns of people of color as a matter of faithfulness to the claims of the inclusive Gospel of Jesus Christ. Racial reconciliation with justice must not simply be the concern of a particular "interest group" but of the whole Lexington Theological Seminary community.

The Seminary strives to create an environment in which people of color may bring their gifts and experiences to share with the whole body of Christ. In order to maintain the environment of academic freedom long cherished at this institution, nothing within this policy shall be construed as an attempt to restrict legitimate freedom of thought or exchange of ideas.

In this Christian context, however, we understand freedom to be limited by love (Phil 2:4, 1 Cor 8-10). Because we are Christians, our individual liberty is less important to us than hearing from our sisters and brothers the ways in which our words and actions have caused them pain (even when we did not intend to do so) and changing our behaviors to prevent further harm to them. Therefore, when a member of the Seminary community or a group within the community experiences racial discrimination (as clarified above), or believes institutional racism to be a factor in a policy or decision, an appropriate first step may be to discuss the incident or issue with the person or group responsible for the offensive speech, action, policy, or decision. The offended party should not discuss the matter with anyone before confronting the offending party. The appropriate response by the person or group so confronted is not defensiveness or self-justification, but attentive listening, an attempt to understand the experience of the offended person(s), and an attempt to resolve the situation in a way satisfactory to all involved. Once a resolution has been reached, the matter is closed and should not be discussed with anyone **by either party.**

The New Testament ideal is a community in which the level of trust and mutual regard makes possible such private reconciling of differences. However, all actual historical communities fall short of the ideal. There may be occasions when private reconciliation is not feasible, e.g., lack of trust stemming from fear of reprisal. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the following procedures.

PROCEDURES DEALING WITH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

1. This policy will be widely publicized in the Seminary community.
2. Through courses and other programs, the Seminary will seek to provide materials, bibliography, and educational events designed to make us more aware of racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and institutional racism and to help us to conduct these idolatries in ourselves, our churches, and our society.

3. If possible, informal means of reconciliation should be pursued. When an initial private conversation has failed to resolve the issue, or when a private reconciliation is not feasible, a member of the Seminary community or group within the community that has experienced racial discrimination (as clarified above), or believes institutional racism to be a factor in a policy or decision, may make an informal or formal complaint according to the grievance procedures found in Appendix B.