

**Pastoral Letter on Racism in the United States**  
**Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.**  
**October 2019**  
**Montgomery, Alabama**

Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT) seeks to bring Christians from a wide range of traditions together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness to the world. This year we gathered for our annual convocation in Montgomery, Alabama. Given Montgomery's place in history as a former slave trade capital of the United States, it was an important and timely location for our observance and lament of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the forced migration of African peoples from Angola to Fort Monroe and Jamestown, VA in 1619. As Christian pilgrims, having experienced the Legacy Museum of the Equal Justice Initiative and its Peace and Justice Garden, we contemplated the treacherous journey, inhumane treatment, and enslavement of African peoples. This included a spiritual pilgrimage retracing the steps of the historical moments of this journey. We also considered how there are still injustices faced by the African peoples globally and nationally today, promoted by racist laws, racial terrorism, societal practices, and other unjust policies that uphold inequities between races and also bolster white privilege and white supremacy. These thoughts and prayers have motivated us to action.

CCT expresses our deep lament and renunciation of any way our own communities of faith participated in or contributed to slavery or any form of racism. There have already been many noble efforts to address racism in the past. Though well intentioned, these efforts have not yet been enough to affect the necessary conversion of heart to transform racist policies and practices which still exist in our civic and religious communities. CCT commits itself to standing together for the conviction that no community can genuinely call itself Christian if it participates in or promotes any form of racism. As our Scriptures declare, a Christian community should be "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Colossians 3:11). Motivated by our faith in Christ, we commit ourselves to personal, communal and systemic transformation which will bring about an end to all forms of racial oppression, including healthcare, education, criminal justice, housing, voter suppression, food insecurity, employment and national, state and local laws. CCT will make an honest and comprehensive examination of the policies of our congregations, educational, health care, and clergy formation institutions as well as all organizations with which we are associated. We will also work to understand and consider advocacy against public policies that promote and advance racism. Should those policies contribute to any form of racism, we will take tangible steps toward immediate change. This will give us the moral authority and necessary integrity to call for the transformation of our wider community so that all people might be able to enjoy life completely free of the shackles of racism.

Montgomery's place in history is not only marked by its ominous association with the slave trade. It is also a place where historic engagements of spiritual resistance and hope expressed by Christian leaders who also became known as civil rights heroes such as, Rosa Parks and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., took effective stands against the indignities of

institutionalized and legalized forms of racism and bigotry. We thank God for all faith leaders of the past and pray for a future filled with more courageous leaders who will help to bring us even closer to the reality of a society truly free of racist prejudice and injustice. As individuals from diverse understandings of our faith in Christ who have come together as one voice to denounce racism in any form, we commit ourselves to being at the forefront of this leadership. This irrevocable obligation stems from our common conviction that “God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Reconciliation involves offering an apology and requires substantive engagement to restore that which has been lost. We join all people of good will in exploring and enacting pathways to genuine healing and wholeness.