

Proposal 3

Name: Anti-Racism

Origin: Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee, Regional Council 15

1. What is the issue?

The United Church of Canada has started work to become an anti-racist denomination. This work, however, cannot solely be done at a national level—it requires engagement from our Region, as well as our local Communities of Faith and individual members.

2. Why is this issue important?

- The current context of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Asian racism that manifests itself against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour requires the followers of Jesus to make clear commitments to contribute to a just and equitable church and world. *A Song of Faith* reminds us that Jesus “crossed barriers of race, class, culture, and gender” and that we are “a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ’s presence in the world.”
- Region 15 has its own history of perpetrating racism within our church and society, as well as living into the practices of anti-racism. In this time, we are called to repent of our racist sins and live into the call of Jesus to “seek justice and resist evil” in our words and actions.
- Author Ibram X. Kendi describes the meaning of becoming an anti-racist organization and society. He is a Black American historian, award-winning scholar, and the author of the book *How to Be an Antiracist*. Kendi shares that when people deny the reality of racism, then people allow racism to persist. Through being passive, or through inaction, systemic racism is upheld. Instead, anti-racism requires concrete action. The United Church’s anti-racism policy also states this: “Even though by action we may not have been racist, by inaction we have helped sustain a social climate where racism can occur.” Kendi, along with other anti-racist activists, clearly names that action against racism must be intentional: people must be actively anti-racist.— *Working Towards Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination*
- In June 2020, the 43rd General Council received a proposal entitled “Towards an Anti-Racist Denomination” that called on The United Church of Canada to take concrete action to denounce racism and become actively anti-racist in its policies, procedures, and practices in all levels of the church. The proposal was referred to the General Council Executive, which informed the proposal GCE 22 “Commitment to Becoming an Anti-Racist Denomination” that went before the annual online GC 43 meeting on October 24th, 2020. Both of these proposals demonstrate a deep desire and commitment from the wider denomination to become anti-racist. This work, however, cannot be done solely at a national level. Becoming an anti-racist denomination requires the engagement of our Region, our Communities of Faith, and individual members.

3. How might the Region respond to the issue?

- a) Make a clear statement committing Region 15 to the ongoing work of becoming anti-racist, and that Region 15 commit to learning, listening, and action to oppose racism in all its forms and specifically anti-Black racism within our denomination, our Region, and our Communities of Faith.
- b) Assist the Regions East Anti-Racism Network in developing an Affirming Ministry-like process that facilitates Communities of Faith and Region 15 in actively and publicly working toward being an anti-racist church.
- c) Continue to provide staff support to the emerging Regions East Anti-Racism Network through the Regional Minister for Justice.
- d) Mandate the Racial Justice training program for Regional Council Executive members.
- e) Engage in a review of all policies, practices, and procedures of Region 15 using the lens of being an anti-racist church; report the finding to the Regional Council Executive and direct the Executive Secretary to implement changes.