

## **Compilation of Comments, Suggestions, and other thoughts about the PWR anti-racism policy**

As you are reading through the various pieces in the folder, please take a few minutes to share your thoughts with the rest of the Committee. There are no wrong comments or dumb questions!

- The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve this item...The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley and other concurring presbyteries are to be commended for their sincere desire to see the PC(USA) implementing the “Facing Racism” policy (2018, renewing a 1999 version). If this overture is passed, it is important that there are both personal and shared outcomes for any antiracism policy and training. Training in and of itself does not mandate tangible action beyond certification that a training is offered, was attended, and completed. In a church that is 89% white and largely suburban, the amendment we propose is meant to encourage mid councils to be both visionary and realistic about the kind of training required to dismantle white supremacy and transform us into the Beloved Community in our particular areas. — Advice and Counsel—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)
- The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve this item ... Over the years, the Book of Order has been reduced in scope and specific content. Noticeably absent is language related to addressing systemic and structural racism. Previous efforts to address racism in the church and society are not enough. Though they have brought awareness, they have not yielded the desired results for people of color. Facing racism and overcoming racism are only steps to achieving God’s beloved community of eradicating racism. White supremacy and other racist attitudes undermine the work of the church. Therefore, REAC advises the inclusion of “All councils shall adopt and implement a dismantling structural and systemic racism policy and training” as a stand-alone requirement. — Advice and Counsel—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)
- With that affirmation, we also want to highlight the fact that mandatory stand-alone training around bias and privilege have been shown to actually reinforce bias when they are not accompanied by actual strategies for overcoming bias, structural commitment to undoing structural barriers to equity, etc. In other words, the “how” of a mandatory training matters just as much, if not more, as the “if”—without attention to this wider matrix of needs, including best-practices, required antiracism training risks becoming simply another box to check without any greater commitment to transformed interactions, norms and structures within our institutions and within the body of Christ. The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) was formed as a result of the 1983 reunion of the northern and southern streams of what is now the PC(USA). The vision for

GACOR was to address the need for relationships and vision of a better way to embody the diversity of the church together. It is tasked with bringing attention and interpretation to representational access and norms around race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, theological diversity, and more (G-3.0103). GACOR's comments are designed to bring the richness and complexity of these intersecting realities into the conversation for the body of commissioners. — Comment—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)

- All Teaching Elders who are serving as pastors to a congregation or otherwise engaged in a Validated Ministry are required to attend Baltimore Presbytery's educational program on Dismantling Racism, within one year after their arrival. A follow-up report from the training should be submitted to the Commission on Reconciliation within 6 months of the training. Failure to fulfill this requirement within the specified time will result in unpaid administrative leave until it is completed. This requirement will be included in the terms of call. Notation of their participation will be made in their permanent file. The Presbytery of Baltimore will communicate to Pastoral Nominating Committees and presbyteries who are requesting references on the status of candidates with respect to this requirement. — From Baltimore Presbytery's policy of 2018