

CONFRONT THE “ISMS” AND TAKE ACTION!



While there is no “right way” to challenge all of the “isms” we face, here are a few suggestions to consider — both personal and congregational. Recognize the ways in which you may perpetuate — knowingly or unknowingly — the “isms.” Encourage your congregation to understand and confront racism, militarism and materialism. Advocate on behalf of those most impacted. Wherever you are on this journey, start there and take the next step! As Maya Angelou writes, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Racism

“In following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others” **The Belhar Confession**

Personal

- Listen to those who report personal & systemic racism.
- Do the work of unpacking how racism manifests itself in you.
- Say something - it can be as simple as, “What you just said could be offensive.”

Congregational

- Learn about racism where you live.
- Learn about racism where you live, and host an anti-racism training through:
 - PCUSA resources facing-racism.pcusa.org; for training contact mark.koenig@pcusa.org
 - Showing Up for Racial Justice- www.showingupforracialjustice.org
 - Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training <http://crossroadsantiracism.org>
- Attend advocacy training weekend to learn ways to address these issues. <http://bit.ly/2j0wQ6m>

Advocacy

- Contact your elected officials to advocate for non-discriminatory and affirmative action policies in education, employment, policing, and prisons.
- Participate in anti-racist community events, protests, or rallies.
- Vote!

Militarism

“In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.” **(Book of Confessions, A Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4, Lines 65–71)**

Personal

- Defuse conflict, bridge divides, and reduce fear and alienation through the practice of respectful and non-violent communication (NVC). Learn about NVC at bit.ly/non-violent-comm. This is a piece from www.citizenshandbook.org that explains how to do NVC based on the rules and methods from the founder of NVC, Marshall Rosenberg.

Congregational

- Use Presbyterian Peacemaking Program studies, devotional resources, tips, and the film *Trigger*. Visit www.pcusa.org/peacemaking.
- Learn about Presbyterian Peace Fellowship at presbypeacefellowship.org.

Advocacy

- Learn about police accountability and reform efforts to demilitarize law enforcement in the Vision for Black Lives policy platform at policy.m4bl.org. Use the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness action page to ask your D.C. representatives to re-introduce the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act at bit.ly/demilitarize.

Materialism

“Justice today requires participation, the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator’s gifts for sustenance. Justice also means sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough — to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end.” **Restoring Creation, 202nd General Assembly**

Personal

- Buy conscientiously. Understand the environmental, economic, and social impact of your consumer choice. Visit www.pcusa.org/enough
- Visit www.41pounds.org to stop unwanted junk mail today!

Congregational

- Reduce overall consumption in your building.
- Use reusable napkins, towels and cups at your fellowship meals and events.
- Return waste naturally to the earth through recycling and composting.

Advocacy

- Support efforts to limit corporate and materialistic advertising to children. Take action at www.commercialfreechildhood.org/actions

Sources:

- Lent 4.5: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus
- How to Fight Racism: A Sociological Guide to Being an Anti-Racist Activist by Nicki Lisa Cole
- citizenshandbook.org

* Adopted by PC(USA) General Assembly in 2016, the Belhar Confession was written by non-white Christians in South Africa in 1982 to challenge the theological support that undergirded Apartheid. It is applicable today wherever the church is divided for any reason.

“WE AS A NATION MUST UNDERGO A RADICAL REVOLUTION OF VALUES...WHEN MACHINES AND COMPUTERS, PROFIT MOTIVES AND PROPERTY RIGHTS, ARE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEOPLE, THE GIANT TRIPLETS OF RACISM, MATERIALISM AND MILITARISM ARE INCAPABLE OF BEING CONQUERED.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1967