

**OVERTURE 55** from Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to OC)  
“Confession of the Sin of Racism, and Commitment to Christian Unity”

**Whereas**, the 43rd General Assembly considered a personal resolution on Civil Rights Remembrance and deferred action on it until the 44th General Assembly in Mobile, Alabama; and

**Whereas**, in the 1973 “Message to All the Churches,” the founding generation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) expressly declared our denomination to be the “continuing church” of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), saying, “We have called ourselves ‘Continuing’ Presbyterians because we seek to continue the faith of the founding fathers of that Church”; and

**Whereas**, as a “continuing church,” we rightly own the good Gospel legacy of the movement of Bible-believing, Reformed Christians who brought us into being, and recognize our indebtedness to them, while we also acknowledge the sins and failures of our movement and denomination, including in those areas that have ongoing and significant negative ramifications for the unity, ministry and witness of the church today; and

**Whereas**, as Calvinists who wholeheartedly believe in the Bible's teaching on sin and grace, we are unsurprised by serious sin in even our greatest human heroes ("If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8), we are also unafraid of confessing it (because of God's great mercy to us, in Christ, Ephesians 2:4-5), and thus we own and acknowledge both the good and the bad in the Bible-believing movement that brought us into being, and in our own denomination's history, and with both gratitude and sorrow remember different parts of that history and legacy; and

**Whereas**, we rejoice and give thanks that our founding fathers officially, explicitly, and tangibly rejected racism and segregation as motives for or aims of the formation of the PCA, further, we recognize that our founding fathers did not intend the PCA to be racist or to tolerate racism as they understood it, and indeed many of them during the Civil Rights era increasingly longed for, prayed for, wrote for, preached for, and worked for a Gospel solution to unbiblical segregation and discrimination in church and society; and

**Whereas**, we grieve and lament that we have become increasingly aware that during the Civil Rights era, many of those who became our founding denominational leaders, churches, and members failed to live up to their and our own Confession's Biblical doctrine of man, that all mankind is created by God "after His own image" (Genesis 1:27, Acts 17:24-28, WCF 4.2) by not only refusing to support, but also, both congregationally and individually, actively working against racial equality (the unqualified acknowledgment in belief and practice that African Americans are fully human and made in the image of God, that no ethnicity is inherently superior to another, and that the Bible provides no grounds for the enforced segregation of ethnicities) in both church and society, through sins of omission and commission including: barring African Americans from worship services; misusing and twisting the Bible to support racial segregation; participating in and defending white supremacist organizations;

1 failing to speak out against state-supported segregation, not supporting efforts to  
2 secure African Americans access to basic human and civil rights, and neglecting to  
3 show solidarity with and support for African American brothers and sisters in Christ,  
4 as they endured various kinds of discrimination and duress in the Civil Rights era; and  
5

6 **Whereas**, the 30th General Assembly adopted a resolution on racial reconciliation that  
7 confessed “covenantal, generational, heinous sins” connected with unbiblical forms  
8 of servitude, but did not deal specifically with the heinous sins committed during the  
9 much more recent Civil Rights era, which betrayed the visible unity of all believers  
10 in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22), the command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark  
11 12:31), and the image of God in all people (Genesis 1:27); and  
12

13 **Whereas**, the 32nd General Assembly adopted a pastoral letter on “the Gospel and Race,”  
14 but in doing so, adopted a statement that did not directly acknowledge our sins  
15 against African Americans that many of our founding leaders, churches, and  
16 members displayed during the Civil Rights era; and  
17

18 **Whereas**, an unwillingness to acknowledge, confess and repudiate these sins, and to speak  
19 openly and contritely of them, significantly hinders our present-day witness and  
20 unity, our efforts for solidarity and reconciliation with our African American  
21 brothers and sisters and their participation in the PCA; as well as our Gospel  
22 outreach to men and women of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation; and  
23

24 **Whereas**, The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley recognizes that the sins of racism and  
25 racial injustice—not only toward African Americans, but also toward other racial  
26 minorities—are not simply past sins, but continue to be sins with which our churches  
27 and congregants wrestle; and  
28

29 **Whereas**, scripture enjoins the necessity of unity in the body of Christ such that when a  
30 brother is thought to have something against another brother, reconciliation between  
31 them supersedes even worship (Matthew 5:23,24); and  
32

33 **Whereas**, God has once more given the PCA a gracious opportunity to show the beauty,  
34 grace, and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through confession and through the  
35 fruits of repentance: such as, clarity that racism is a sin requiring formative and  
36 corrective discipline; growing into cultural intelligence regarding minority  
37 ethnicities; establishing interracial friendships and partnerships inside and outside  
38 our denomination; renewing our church’s commitment to develop minority  
39 leadership at the congregational, presbytery, and denominational levels; and  
40 encouraging a denomination-wide vision for and commitment to a more racially and  
41 ethnically diverse church; and  
42

43 **Whereas**, we greatly rejoice that, in spite of ourselves, the Lord has graciously blessed the  
44 PCA with an increasing racial and ethnic diversity, including a larger proportion of  
45 minorities (among them Asians, Latinos and African Americans), than many  
46 traditionally majority white North American denominations (and more than we  
47 might have expected, given our history), the Lord has granted the PCA an increasing  
48 number of African American teaching and ruling elders, the Lord has raised up

1 Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) campus ministries at historic Black colleges  
2 and universities (HBC/Us) and many multi-ethnic church plants in the PCA  
3 (including our own Jackson State University RUF and Redeemer Church, Jackson),  
4 the Lord has this year brought in the largest number and percentage of African  
5 American students in the incoming class in the history of Reformed Theological  
6 Seminary, Jackson, the Lord is bringing about a resurgence of the doctrines of grace  
7 in parts of the African American church, and there are more presbytery overtures  
8 calling for repentance for racism and racial reconciliation submitted to the 44<sup>th</sup>  
9 General Assembly than for any other issue in the history of the PCA (thus showing  
10 an overwhelming, denomination-wide concern and resolve to speak faithfully to this  
11 issue) – all of this is the Lord’s doing, not ours, but it is marvelous in our eyes!  
12

13 **Be it therefore resolved**, in the light of the continuing nature of the Presbyterian Church in  
14 America, that The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley recognizes and confesses,  
15 and joins with many sister presbyteries in asking the 44th General Assembly of the  
16 Presbyterian Church in America to recognize and confess, our denomination’s  
17 history of involvement and complicity in racial injustice, congregationally and/or  
18 individually, inside and outside of our churches during the Civil Rights era; and  
19

20 **Be it further resolved**, that The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley also confesses, and  
21 asks the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in American to confess,  
22 our continued sins of racism and failure to love brothers and sisters from ethnic  
23 minorities in accordance with what the Gospel requires; and  
24

25 **Be it further resolved**, that The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley recommits itself to  
26 bear fruit in keeping with our repentance, seeking appropriate courses of action and  
27 reconciliation humbly, sincerely, and expeditiously, for the glory of God and the  
28 furtherance of the Gospel, and asks the 44<sup>th</sup> GA of the PCA to do the same; and  
29

30 **Be it further resolved**, that the attached “Pastoral Letter” from The Presbytery of the  
31 Mississippi Valley to its constituent churches be offered as an example of how a  
32 presbytery might provide shepherding leadership for its churches toward racial  
33 reconciliation; and  
34

35 **Be it further resolved**, that the attached “Bibliography and Resources” concerning race and  
36 unity be offered to our presbyteries and churches for their use in studying, evaluating  
37 and implementing their own efforts toward the goal of reconciliation with all racial  
38 minorities; and  
39

40 **Be it finally resolved**, that The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley humbly asks the General  
41 Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to urge all the congregations and  
42 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America to study this action as well as the  
43 PCA position paper on the Gospel and Race, to confess their own particular sins and  
44 failures regarding racial injustice as may be appropriate, and to seek to bring forth  
45 fruits of repentance for the Gospel’s sake within their own local communities.  
46

47 *Adopted by Mississippi Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, May 3, 2016*

48 *Attested by /s/ TE Roger G. Collins, stated clerk*

## **Attachment 1**

## A Pastoral Letter on Racism and the Gospel To the churches of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PCA)

Dear Friends,

Last year, the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) considered a personal resolution dealing with the sin of racism as it pertains to our church, both in history and in the present. Though action was deferred on it until the 44th General Assembly (which will be held in Mobile, Alabama in June), our presbytery felt it wise to give careful consideration to this matter ourselves. So a committee was appointed to report to our presbytery on the issue.

Your presbytery, having received that committee's report and recommendations, and having thoroughly discussed this issue in three different presbytery meetings, adopted an Overture to the 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PCA on "Confession of the Sin of Racism, and Commitment to Christian Unity" and now writes to you this pastoral letter.

As a presbytery, we not only want to address the past, we especially want to speak to the present and give biblical counsel and encouragement to our people and churches so that we may “all attain to the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). During our long discussions, there were moving testimonies of hearts changed, confessions of and repentances for racist language, attitudes and actions, expressions of brotherly forgiveness, and admissions by some that they are reticent to even talk about the issue of racism in the church for fear of the controversy that might ensue. In short, it became ever more clear to us that racism remains a current and ongoing pastoral issue, and that truly pursuing biblical racial reconciliation is not merely a matter of acknowledging the wrongs of the past but of endeavoring to “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly” with our God (Micah 6:8) in the here and now.

Your presbytery addresses the issue of racism in the same spirit as the PCA Pastoral Letter on the Gospel and Race (2004):

. . . we do so not because it is politically correct, or out of any pressure from outward society, but simply because it is our desire that the convicting and restoring power of God's grace in the Gospel be applied to the manifestations of racial sin of which we ourselves are guilty, and that those who experience the negative effects of these sins might know the healing power of God's grace – that we who have been reconciled to God through Christ might become together a holy temple in the Lord, reconciled to one another by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22).

Because racism is a loaded term, and some suspect an unbiblical agenda when it is invoked, we want to say precisely what we mean by racism. Racism is the denial of the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27) and its implications to someone of another ethnicity. Racism in the

1 church is a contradiction of the visible unity of all believers in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22,  
2 Revelation 5:9; 7:9). Racism inside and outside the church is a contradiction of Jesus'  
3 command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31; Luke 10:25-37, esp. 29, 37), and  
4 of God's creation of all people in his image (Genesis 1:27; Acts 17:26). So theologically,  
5 racism entails a denial of the biblical doctrines of creation, man, the communion of saints  
6 and is disobedience to the moral law. We will not mince words. Racism is not only sin,  
7 serious sin, it is heresy.  
8

9 Our final rule of faith and practice, the Holy, Inspired, Inerrant Word of God, The Bible and  
10 our subordinate doctrinal standard, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, ground our treatment  
11 of all people with dignity, justice, and kindness in **the doctrine of our creation in the**  
12 **image of God.** God created our first parents in his own image (Genesis 1:26, 27, WCF 4.2),  
13 and therefore all human beings are of the same race. Scripture says: "The God who made the  
14 world and everything in it, . . . gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he  
15 made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Act 17:24-  
16 26). Because of this, Christians are to treat every human being with equal dignity as made in  
17 the image of God. So both the biblical doctrine of creation and the biblical doctrine of man  
18 inform the Christian's treatment of everyone, including people of other and minority  
19 ethnicities.  
20

21 The Bible and our *Westminster Confession of Faith* also ground our treatment of all people  
22 with dignity, justice, impartiality, and kindness in **the moral law and Jesus' command to**  
23 **love our neighbors.** Both the Old Testament and the New Testament explicitly command  
24 love for our neighbor. Moses is very specific about what love of neighbor entails: "You shall  
25 not oppress your neighbor . . . You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to  
26 the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. . . . You  
27 shall not hate your brother in your heart, . . . lest you incur sin because of him. . . but you  
28 shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:13-18). Neighbor love, then,  
29 according to God's moral law, exemplified in the fifth through tenth commandments, calls  
30 for impartial kindness and justice to be shown to all, an equal concern for the well-being of  
31 others. Moses grounds this behavior in God's character (Levitcus 19:3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18)  
32 and our responsibility as believers to imitate him "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your  
33 God am holy" (Levitcus 19:2). And this neighbor love was not reserved for Israelites only.  
34 Moses explicitly extends it to foreigners: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land,  
35 you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native  
36 among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt:  
37 I am the LORD your God" (Levitcus 19:33-34).  
38

39 Jesus reiterates this command in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 12:31, Luke 10:25-37).  
40 After summarizing the ethical requirements of the moral law of God for the believer's life  
41 by saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and  
42 with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27),  
43 Jesus is met with the self-justifying question: "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). In other  
44 words, the lawyer who queried Jesus was seeking a delimitation of the demands of neighbor  
45 love. Jesus answers with the story of the Good Samaritan, and makes it clear that the better  
46 question is "Am I a good neighbor?" Jesus' application of the story shows that those who

1 obey God's command to love neighbor don't attempt to delimit the obligation of neighbor  
2 love, but rather show mercy indiscriminately and even at significant personal cost (Luke  
3 10:36-37). On this basis, Christians are enjoined by the moral law and by Jesus' direct  
4 exhortation to show love, care, concern for the well-being of, justice, mercy, and kindness to  
5 all people, with impartiality.

6  
7 The Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) exposition of the moral law, from Question 91  
8 to 152, has much to teach us about this current discussion, and especially Questions 122-  
9 152. We daresay that if the commands and prohibitions of this section of the Westminster  
10 Larger Catechism had been but applied to our relationships with other and minority  
11 ethnicities, it would have meant a death knell for racism among us. WLC 131 tells us of our  
12 duty "to regard the dignity and worth of each other." WLC 130 warns against an "inordinate  
13 seeking of" ourselves and our "own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure." WLC 132 condemns as  
14 sin "the undervaluing of the worth, . . . and usurping pre-eminence one over another."  
15 Racism is rooted precisely in the failure to obey in these areas. WLC 135 and 136 especially  
16 speak to our treatment of one another.

17  
18 Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

19  
20 A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are all careful studies, and  
21 lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all  
22 thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions,  
23 temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of  
24 any; by just defence thereof against violence, . . . by charitable thoughts, love,  
25 compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild and courteous  
26 speeches and behaviour; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient  
27 bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and  
28 succouring the distressed and protecting and defending the innocent.

29  
30 If Bible-believing Presbyterians had carefully studied and lawfully endeavored "to preserve  
31 the life of ourselves and others," including mistreated ethnic minorities, "by resisting all  
32 thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and  
33 practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any" and defending others against  
34 unjust violence as WLC 135 enjoins, the history of Presbyterianism in U.S. culture from  
35 Reconstruction, through Jim Crow and the Civil Rights era would read differently. If we  
36 today will relate to other and minority ethnicities with "charitable thoughts, love, compassion,  
37 meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behaviour;  
38 forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and  
39 requiting good for evil, comforting and succouring the distressed, and protecting and  
40 defending the innocent," our testimony will adorn God's sanctifying work in us and display  
41 true love of neighbor. And WLC 136 furthermore forbids the "hatred," "oppression" and  
42 "whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any."

43  
44 The Bible and our Westminster Confession of Faith ground our treatment of fellow  
45 Christians as brothers and sisters, joint heirs, as blood-bought family in **the doctrine of the**  
46 **communion of the saints**. Jesus commissioned his church to "make disciples of all nations"

1 (Matthew 28:19). The language of “all nations” (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* [panta ta ethnē]) highlights  
2 the connection of Jesus’ great commission to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant  
3 (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4) and the Gentile mission of the church. The command to  
4 make disciples from “all nations” indicates that Jesus intended us to go to all the peoples of  
5 earth with the Gospel, and that he intended his church to include disciples from all peoples.  
6 “Don’t just go to the Jewish people, but to all the Gentile peoples,” Jesus is saying. He  
7 reiterates this in Acts 1:8 when he tells his disciples that they will be his witnesses “to the  
8 end of the earth.”

9  
10 The New Testament repeatedly celebrates the fact that Jesus’ redemptive work has brought  
11 believing Jews and Gentiles, once separated by the ceremonial law, into one body, the  
12 church. No passage states this more clearly than Ephesians 2:11-22:

13  
14 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the  
15 uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh  
16 by hands -- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated  
17 from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise,  
18 having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you  
19 who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he  
20 himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his  
21 flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments  
22 expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place  
23 of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body  
24 through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached  
25 peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through  
26 him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer  
27 strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members  
28 of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
29 Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being  
30 joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are  
31 being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

32  
33 Paul indicates here that Christians of all ethnicities have been made heirs of the covenant  
34 promises, have been brought into one body with all other believers, are members of the  
35 family of God and part of the one holy temple that the Lord is building. All of this is the  
36 result of the work of Christ. To deny the multi-ethnicity of the church is to deny an  
37 accomplishment of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. It is a contradiction of what the Gospel  
38 does in reconciling all believers “to God in one body through the cross” (Ephesians 2:16). A  
39 policy of segregation in the church, or indifference to it, is thus inimical to the Gospel and to  
40 the purposes of the saving work of Christ, since all who are united to Christ are united to all  
41 who are united to Christ, no matter their ethnicity. The work of Christ creates the  
42 communion of the saints, and the church visible is to bear witness to the reality of that  
43 communion.

44

1 WCF 26.1-2 speaks directly to this:

2  
3 I. All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by  
4 faith, have fellowship with Him in His grace, sufferings, death, resurrection,  
5 and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in  
6 each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such  
7 duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the  
8 inward and outward man.

9  
10 II. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and  
11 communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual  
12 services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in  
13 outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which  
14 communion, as God offers opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who,  
15 in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

16  
17 Racism in the church denies the reality of this communion of the saints, disrupts the unity of  
18 Christ's body, resists one of the purposes of his redemptive work, tarnishes the witness of  
19 the church, harms members of the body for whom we are called on in *WCF* 26.1 to perform  
20 "such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and  
21 outward man," and refuses to extend communion "unto all those who, in every place, call  
22 upon the name of the Lord Jesus." Can you imagine the members of the Assembly of  
23 Divines hearing that people who had subscribed these words (from *WCF* 26.1-2) as a  
24 statement of their faith and theological commitments had argued for segregating the church  
25 on the basis of race, had refused Christians from different ethnic minorities admission to  
26 worship services, and were indifferent to the well-being (in church and society) of fellow  
27 Christians who are ethnic minorities? They would have been horrified.

28  
29 In sum, Racism fails to affirm, explicitly or implicitly, in belief and/or practice (1) that all  
30 people, of every ethnicity, are fully human and made in the image of God, (2) that no  
31 ethnicity is inherently superior to another, and (3) that the Bible provides no grounds for the  
32 forced or institutional segregation of ethnicities. Racism is, of course, the sin of persons, but  
33 it can become endemic to cultures and societies. When it becomes so, very often those who  
34 are dominant in those cultures and societies are blind to its presence, pervasiveness, and  
35 consequences.

36  
37 Racism may manifest itself in belief, prejudice, and practice. Racist belief asserts the  
38 superiority of one ethnicity over another or others, and hence attempts to segregate the  
39 "superior" from the "inferior" ethnicity/ies. Racist prejudice makes sweeping negative  
40 assessments of ethnicities from the standpoint of condescension and based on stereotypical,  
41 preconceived and uncharitable opinion. Racist practice treats people inequitably and unjustly  
42 because of ethnicity. Racism is condemned by our sole final authority in faith and practice,  
43 the Holy Scriptures, and by our subordinate standards, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*  
44 and Catechisms.

45

1 So, if racism is sin, serious sin, heresy, and not merely an issue of the past but a matter that  
2 needs our current and ongoing attention, what should we do? What practical steps can we  
3 take? An issue this controversial, a problem this big, can seem daunting and can leave us  
4 feeling like there is nothing we can do. But there are important, simple things that any and  
5 every believer can do to begin engaging this significant challenge.

6  
7 As believers, we can learn, pray, acknowledge, relate, and commit. Here is what we mean by  
8 those five things.  
9

10 Most of us in the PCA churches of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley are white,  
11 though we live in a state with a population that is 37% black (and the Jackson metropolitan  
12 area is about 50% black). Denominationally, less than 2% of PCA pastors are black. We  
13 don't have statistics on the ethnicity of our church membership in PMV, but ethnic  
14 minorities are probably in the low single digits percentage-wise. One of the things that this  
15 means is that we will have to make a deliberate effort to gain another perspective on this  
16 issue outside of our own "bubble." Relatively few of us have close friends of other  
17 ethnicities, especially in the context of our local churches. That means that understanding  
18 the perspective of fellow Bible-believing Presbyterians, who are of a different ethnicity, and  
19 with whom we have an actual relationship, on the issue of racial reconciliation, is a  
20 challenge.  
21

22 This means that the very first thing we have to do is want to learn. We don't know what we  
23 need to know about this issue.  
24

## 25 **1. Learn**

26  
27 Read the PMV overture on "Confession of the Sin of Racism, and Commitment to Christian  
28 Unity." Keep up with the other overtures on this issue coming to the PCA General  
29 Assembly. Especially take the time to read the PCA General Assembly's "The Gospel and  
30 Race: A Pastoral Letter" (2004).  
31

32 Read the material mentioned in the PMV "Suggested Resources on Race and our History for  
33 the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley." This will take a while. There is a lot to chew on.  
34

35 Seek to learn from Reformed, African American perspectives on these issues. Talk to black  
36 PCA ministers, elders, and members. Tell them you want to learn from them. Listen. Go  
37 online and listen to their sermons. Read Reformed, black writers on the internet. Here are  
38 four places you can go online to do this.  
39

40 Ellis Perspectives <http://www.ellisperspectives.com/> Dr. Carl and Karen Ellis. Dr. Ellis is a  
41 black PCA minister, teaches for RTS, and his wife Karen is an expert in the persecuted  
42 church.  
43

44 The Front Porch <http://thefrontporch.org/> Where black Reformed ministers talk about the  
45 Bible, the Black Church, Culture/Ethnicity, Family, God, the Gospel, Leadership, Missions,  
46 Preaching, Salvation, Shepherding, Theology, Women and Worship.  
47

1 The Reformed African American Network <https://www.raanetwork.org/> Here you will  
2 encounter the voices of many younger, black, Reformed people (and others committed to a  
3 multi-ethnic church) talking about the Bible, church, race, culture and current events.

4  
5 Pure Church <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/thabitianyabwile/> This is the blog of Thabiti  
6 Anyabwile, a black pastor of Anacostia River Church in southeast Washington, DC.

7  
8 For pastors, elders, and church members wanting to dig deep into a biblical understanding of  
9 race and to get perspective on how racialized our society has been and is, three books would  
10 provide a huge help.

11  
12 J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* in New Studies  
13 in Biblical Theology, edited by D.A. Carson (IVP Academic, 2003).

14 This is a book written by a conservative, Bible-believing scholar and edited by a renowned  
15 evangelical theologian. It is a study of the Bible's teaching on ethnicity in the sweep of  
16 redemptive history (from Genesis to Revelation) and it convincingly shows that God's grand  
17 saving plan finds its culmination in the one people of God, at the consummation of history,  
18 depicted as a multi-ethnic congregation, gathered together in the worship of the one, triune  
19 God, around his throne. When you realize that this is where the history of the people of God  
20 is going, it changes your understanding of the here and now.

21  
22 Jarvis J. Williams, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology*  
23 (B&H Academic, 2010).

24 Dr. Williams is a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, and  
25 teaches for Reformed Theological Seminary as well. In this book Dr. Williams, who is  
26 African American, argues that Christ's death for our sin is God's only solution to racial  
27 hostility and the only provision for racial reconciliation. This is precisely what most of the  
28 founding fathers of the PCA thought and taught. This book will help you understand what  
29 the gospel says about race and race relations, which is hugely important since we often  
30 allow cultural prejudices to shape our understanding of race instead of scripture.

31  
32 Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the*  
33 *Problem of Race in America* (Oxford University Press, 2001)

34 Dr. Mike Campbell, former Senior Pastor of Redeemer Church (PCA), Jackson, MS,  
35 recommended this book to the faculty of RTS to read a few years ago. The RTS Jackson  
36 faculty read and discussed it, with much profit. It attempts to explain why white evangelicals  
37 in general don't view racism and racial reconciliation the way black Christians do. It is very  
38 illuminating on that front. Emerson and Smith are respected sociologists and are fair-minded  
39 in the way they present their case. You don't have to agree with everything in the book to  
40 benefit greatly from its perspective. For instance, if you don't understand the difference  
41 between "racist" and "racialized" you are probably blind to important presuppositions you  
42 are bringing to this discussion.

43  
44 In all of this, we should aim to better understand our presuppositions, our history and our  
45 context. If we are unaware of our presuppositions, lack knowledge of the history of racism

1 in the churches, and have failed to scrutinize how our context may have unwittingly  
2 influenced our attention to and understanding of how the Bible speaks to this issue, we will  
3 be hampered in our consideration and discussion.

4

5 **2. Pray**

6

7 There is nothing more important we can do than to pray. Racial reconciliation is impossible  
8 in our own strength. Only God and the Gospel can avail. And that means we need to pray. In  
9 prayer we acknowledge our own powerlessness, but at the same time acknowledge God's  
10 power to act, save and change.

11

12 The following prayer suggestions assume our social and geographical location, in  
13 Mississippi and Louisiana, in the Southeastern United States in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup>  
14 century, with all the history of racial conflict that entails. Hence, these suggestions will  
15 focus more on black-white relations in our churches, than on other ethnicities (though much  
16 will be transferable to prayer in other situations and for other peoples). These prayers also  
17 take into consideration that most of us in PCA churches in Mississippi and Louisiana are  
18 white, and they ask us to bear in mind fellow believers who are not.

19

20 Praise God as the one true God, creator of all humanity, maker of every person of every  
21 tribe, tongue, people and nation, in His own image.

22

23 Praise God for his saving plan to make out of all peoples and nations, one people, a people  
24 for himself.

25

26 Praise God that at the consummation of human history, men and women and boys and girls,  
27 from all the world in every corner, from every tribe, tongue, people and nation, who have  
28 been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, who have believed the Gospel and trusted Christ,  
29 who have been saved by sovereign grace, adopted into God's household, made members of  
30 Christ's body, will worship God and the Lamb, forever,

31

32 Praise God that in some measure the church visible now bears witness to that future reality.

33

34 Thank God for your African American brothers and sisters in Christ, and for every ethnicity  
35 that is part of the church visible. "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his  
36 sight."

37

38 Thank God that there is a reawakening of Reformed Theology in the African American  
39 community.

40

41 Thank God that he is raising up outstanding African American Reformed preachers in our  
42 generation.

43

44 Thank God for the increasing ethnic diversity in the PCA that has grown up because of the  
45 power of the Gospel, the work of the Spirit and our union with Christ.

- 1 Thank God that our denomination's founding fathers wanted a church for all peoples and  
2 that as the PCA approaches fifty years old we are closer to that aspiration than we were in  
3 1973.
- 4
- 5 Confess whatever your own personal and congregational sins and failures may be, whether  
6 by omission or commission, pertaining to loving our African American brothers and sisters  
7 in Christ.
- 8
- 9 Grieve and lament that the evangelical branch of the Presbyterian tradition from which we  
10 come fell so short of the Bible and Reformed Theology in our treatment of people of  
11 different ethnicities, especially African Americans, even in the church: barring them from  
12 worship attendance and church membership, misusing and twisting the Bible to support  
13 racial segregation; failing to show solidarity with and support for African American brothers  
14 and sisters in Christ as they endured various kinds of discrimination and duress in the Civil  
15 Rights era.
- 16
- 17 Grieve the consequences of this for our own day and ask the Lord to open your eyes to  
18 blindspots and behavior that continue to cause us to fall short of our biblical duties towards  
19 fellow believers of different ethnicities, especially African Americans.
- 20
- 21 Ask that God, by grace, would grant an extraordinary work of racial healing and  
22 reconciliation among believers, and that our past failures would not hinder present ministry.
- 23
- 24 Ask God that by the Holy Spirit he would break down barriers that separate us from one  
25 another and create the unity that ought to be exhibited within the body of Christ.
- 26
- 27 Ask God that the real, biblical, Gospel, Holy Spirit-wrought, racial reconciliation in our  
28 church might be a powerful witness to the culture around us that would cause even  
29 unbelievers to say: "surely God is among them."
- 30
- 31 Ask God to bless the ministries of faithful, Bible-believing African American pastors,  
32 especially PCA pastors, as well as those of other ethnic minorities.
- 33
- 34 Ask God that you words, actions, and attitudes would be encouraging to your African  
35 American brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as to other ethnic minorities.
- 36
- 37 Ask God to grant his heart and help to the PCA and other solid biblical churches so that we  
38 would do a better job of reaching out to African Americans, and other ethnic minorities,  
39 with the Gospel.
- 40
- 41 Ask God to so work in us congregationally by his sanctifying Holy Spirit that ethnic  
42 minority attenders and members of our churches will feel welcome, loved, at home and part  
43 of the family.
- 44
- 45 Ask for God to raise up more African American (and other ethnic minority) pastors,

1 missionaries, church planters, seminary and college professors, campus ministers, elders,  
2 deacons, women in the church leaders, and ministerial candidates in the PCA. Pray for  
3 minority leadership at the congregational, presbytery, and denominational levels.

5 Our Father,

13 But we sought ourselves instead and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator,  
14 And so we were estranged from You, Romans 1:25 Genesis 11:8-9  
15 And estranged from one another, like the people of the plain of Shinar.

17 Yet in your grace, you not only created, called and saved your people Israel, but also  
18 promised that your covenant with Abraham would mean blessings for all the families of the  
19 earth. Genesis 12:3

21 Through Jesus Christ you brought the blessings of Abraham to the Gentiles, Gal. 3:13-14  
22 And you made Jew and Gentile into one new man, your people, your church.

32 Grant that we would long for that, and look like that more. Now.

34 In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### 36 3. Acknowledge

If we do not acknowledge that racism is a problem and we do not aspire to racial reconciliation and Gospel unity, it won't happen. We can learn all we want, but if we don't see our sin and need in this area, if we don't buy in to its importance, if we aren't ready to make changes, it won't matter much whatever else we do.

Acknowledgement not only means owning up to our part of the problem, and that a problem exists, and that it is important, but also recognizing how big the challenge is. Racial reconciliation has not been, is not, and will not be an easy thing. Only the Gospel is big enough to address it.

1 And acknowledgement doesn't come easy for many evangelical Christians, for a variety of  
2 reasons. As we have already noted, many evangelical Christians view today's discussions of  
3 racism as just another example of political correctness being foisted on the church.  
4 Sociologists Emerson and Smith noted in their book ***Divided by Faith*** that most evangelicals  
5 think of racism as a thing of the past. Hence, when the subject is introduced some respond  
6 by saying "It's time to move on."

7  
8 But we also need to realize and acknowledge how hard this discussion is for our African  
9 American brothers and sisters in the church. They too, are often "tired" of this conversation,  
10 but not for the same reason many white evangelical Christians are. Black Christians are  
11 "tired" of having to justify the validity and relevance of the conversation in the first place,  
12 and are often deeply discouraged by how little their white brothers and sisters seem to have  
13 thought or cared about it, or to have realized the dramatic effect racism has had upon their  
14 lives.

15  
16 Let's be honest and admit how big a challenge all this is. All you have to do to show how  
17 difficult the discussion is is to bring a group of black and white Bible-believing Reformed  
18 Christians into a room and say the words: social justice, systemic racism, white privilege,  
19 mass incarceration, police brutality, racial profiling, gentrification, spirituality of the church,  
20 – and prepare for the whirlwind! The point is not that there is one right view of these things  
21 (one quickly learns that there is not one "black view" of these things, even among PCA  
22 African Americans). The point is this: even among people with shared Reformed theology,  
23 our social and cultural experiences are so different, and our perspectives so varied, that  
24 constructive conversation is very difficult on many subjects, especially at first, and requires  
25 a long season of trust-building and personal relationship (which leads to our next point).

26  
27 The problem is real. The solution is not easy. Only God and the Gospel can prevail.

28  
29 **4. Relate**

30  
31 Make friends. Do not underestimate the power of friendship. This whole discussion will  
32 remain abstract until you meet and befriend a person whom you come to care about, who is  
33 different from you, and who can give you a perspective on this issue different from your  
34 own. For white PCA Christians, that is going to mean establishing interracial friendships.

35  
36 Start with deliberately seeking to cultivate friendships with Reformed and PCA African  
37 American Christians. Then reach out to other Bible-believing black Christians. Then seek to  
38 be a better friend to African Americans in your neighborhood, work, and community.

39  
40 Maybe there's someone in your church who is of a different race. You know each other, but  
41 you've never spent significant time together or had a serious conversation. Why not invite  
42 that person out to coffee, or to breakfast or lunch, or have their family over for dinner? This  
43 is a natural, organic way to deepen a relationship you already have.

44  
45 Be intentional. We don't naturally gravitate toward those who are different from us. We

1 naturally gather in similar groups. We have to do something unnatural, or rather, supernatural  
2 to break the cycles of social sameness that hinder racial reconciliation. Think like a missionary  
3 or a church planter or a campus minister. All these folks are deliberately on the look out to  
4 try to make friendships and connect with people for the sake of the Gospel and ministry.  
5 Apply that attitude and approach to interracial friendships.

6  
7 Pastors, consider entering into a friendship with a pastor of a different ethnicity. Get together  
8 for coffee and meals, and discuss substantial issues. Pray for one another. Get to know each  
9 other's families. Swap pulpits, where appropriate and possible.

10  
11 **5. Commit**  
12

13 Commit to this issue as a part of your personal and congregational sanctification. Determine  
14 to grow in your cultural intelligence regarding ethnic minorities. Learn from godly Christians  
15 who are already engaged in racial reconciliation and demonstrating Christian unity.

16 Pastors and elders may want to consider asking people from ethnic minorities in your  
17 community their impression of the reputation of your church regarding racism, neighbor  
18 love and impartiality.

19  
20 Pastors and elders may want to examine patterns, language, and culture within our churches  
21 that erect barriers to other races.

22  
23 With pastoral prudence and sensitivity, pastors and elders may want to consider preaching  
24 and teaching in our churches concerning racism, highlighting the biblical doctrines that  
25 inform the Christian view, but clearly anchoring the study in Scripture.

26  
27 Establish a minority scholarship for those preparing for the Gospel ministry in the PCA, for  
28 both college and seminary education (since both are required for PCA ordination and since  
29 many ethnic minorities lack the resources for them).

30  
31 Consider and cultivate interns from ethnic minorities to be discipled for ministry, as you  
32 would any other ministerial candidate or person with potential for service in the church.

33  
34 Be intentional with discipling minority members for church leadership.

35  
36 Endeavor to prepare African American (and other ethnic minority) pastors, missionaries,  
37 church planters, seminary and college professors, campus ministers, elders, deacons, women  
38 in the church leaders, and ministerial candidates in the PCA.

39  
40 Think carefully about the hiring practices of your church. For instance, is one type of  
41 employee typically from an ethnic minority? What message do you intend to send: to the  
42 employee, to the members, to visitors, to the watching world?

43  
44 Deliberately reach out to and evangelize people of other and minority ethnicities within our  
45 communities, near our churches, and within the areas covered by our regional church, the  
46 presbytery.

- 1 Show church members what personal loving interracial friendship and hospitality look like by hosting members, attenders, and friends of all ethnicities in your home.
- 2
- 3
- 4 Read publications by authors of other ethnicities, especially Bible-believing and Reformed authors from other and minority ethnicities.
- 5
- 6
- 7 Don't exclude or discourage, on the basis of ethnicity, any person from membership, privilege, or responsibility, including leadership, in any church or in the presbytery.
- 8
- 9
- 10 Don't discriminate, on the basis of race, against a Christian participant in worship services, or other services or functions of the church (including weddings).
- 11
- 12 Don't tolerate racist attitudes, language, and practices among the membership of the church.
- 13
- 14
- 15 Don't expect that we will agree about everything (like church music!), with fellow Christians from ethnic minorities, even within the PCA.
- 16
- 17
- 18 So, learn, pray, acknowledge, relate, and commit. These pastoral suggestions are offered in the spirit of "stirring one another up to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). Your presbytery writes as fellow elders, brothers, and members of the congregations of PMV. May the Lord himself grant us Gospel unity, racial reconciliation, and enable us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:8).
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24 The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley
- 25 May 3, 2016
- 26 French Camp, Mississippi

## **Attachment 2**

## **Suggested Resources on Race and our History for the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley**

## **Important Online Resources:**

## Race and Church

Thabiti Anyabwile, "Jonathan Edwards, Slavery, and the Theology of African Americans," <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/files/2012/02/Thabiti-Jonathan-Edwards-slavery-and-theological-appropriation.pdf>

Thabiti Anyabwile, "Bondage or Freedom? Questions in Early American Theology," The John L. Girardeau Lectures, First Presbyterian Church (ARP), Columbia, SC  
<http://www.firstprescolumbia.org/om-girardeau>

## Lecture 1 Audio - “Reformed Theology and the Status Quo”

## Lecture 2 Audio – “Reformed Theology and Social Change”

Otis Westbrook Pickett, *Race and the American Church*, Reformation21

Part 1 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-1.php>

Part 2 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-part-ii.php>

Part 3 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-part-iii-1.php>

Part 4 <http://www.reformation21.org/featured/race-and-the-american-church-part-iv.php>

Part 5 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-part-v.php>

[Part 6a http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-part-vi.php](http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-and-the-american-church-part-vi.php)

Part 6b <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/americans-also-supported-a-physical.php>

Dr Pickett's Lament for Charleston <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/for-such-a-time>

By Pickett's Lament for Charleston <http://www.wirerandomizer.org/articles> for such a time as this.php

[Dr. Pickett](#) is native of Charleston, SC, from a long line of low-country South Carolinians.

Dr. Fickett  
He is a PC

Dr. Pickett is native of Charleston, SC, from a long line of low-country South Carolinians. He is a PCA member (at Redeemer Church in Jackson) and Assistant Professor of History and Political Science at Mississippi College, Clinton, MS. He is a graduate of Clemson University, Covenant Theological Seminary and the University of Mississippi. He loves the South, Southern History and Southern Presbyterianism. These articles offer a sympathetic, but honest assessment of the history of race and the American Church.

Jemar Tisby, "The Image of God in the African American Experience"

<https://jemartisby.com/2015/01/07/the-image-of-god-in-the-african-american-experience/>

Jemar Tisby, Trillia Newbell, and Thabiti Anyabwile, “Doing Racial Harmony,” TGC National Conference <https://www.raanetwork.org/tgc-2015-doing-racial-harmony/>

Matthew Tuininga, *Presbyterians and the Political Theology of Race*, Reformation21  
Part 1 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/presbyterians-and-the-political-theology-of-race-part-1-cultural-captivity.php>

1    [race-part-2-old-testament-politics.php](http://www.reformation21.org/articles/race-part-2-old-testament-politics.php)  
2    Part 3 <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/presbyterians-and-the-political-theology-of-race-part-3-gospel-politics.php>  
3    Review of Carolyn Renée Dupont, *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1975* <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/mississippi-praying.php>

4  
5  
6       Dr. Matthew J. Tuininga is Assistant Professor of Moral Theology at Calvin  
7       Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI.  
8  
9

## 10      The Spirituality of the Church

11  
12     Adam S. Borneman, *Presbyterians, Civil Rights, and the Spirituality of the Church: A Brief Historical Survey* in Political Theology Today: A forum for interdisciplinary and  
13     interreligious dialogue, October 9, 2013  
14  
15     <http://www.politicaltheology.com/blog/presbyterians-civil-rights-and-the-spirituality-of-the-church-a-brief-historical-survey/>

16  
17     Borneman is pastor of Second PC(USA) in Birmingham, AL, and a graduate of Samford  
18     University and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

19  
20     David Coffin, Annotated Bibliography on the Spirituality of the Church  
21     <http://www.newhopefairfax.org/files/spiritualityofchurchreadings.pdf>

22     Audio Lectures on the Spirituality of the Church  
23     Lecture 1 <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=102411131389>  
24     Lecture 2 <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1024111321204>

25     Dr. David Coffin's annotated bibliography and audio lectures feature an approach to the  
26     spirituality of the church, from a perspective sympathetic to 19<sup>th</sup> Old School American  
27     Presbyterian divines.

28  
29     Kenneth Taylor, *The Spirituality of the Church: Segregation, The Presbyterian Journal, and the Origins of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1942-1973*, Reformed Perspectives Magazine, Volume 9, Number 34, August 19 to August 25, 2007 (Third Millennium Ministries)

30  
31     [http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/ken\\_taylor/ken\\_taylor.church.spirituality.html](http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/ken_taylor/ken_taylor.church.spirituality.html)

32  
33     This article was published in Richard Pratt's online magazine. Mr. Taylor, the author, taught  
34     history at Piedmont College, specializing in the intersection of race, religion, and southern  
35     history. He is a communicant at St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church, Athens, Georgia.

36  
37  
38     Matthew Tuininga, *Rightly Defining the Spirituality of the Church*, Reformation21  
39     <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/the-kingdom-and-its-righteousness-rightly-defining-the-spirituality-of-the-churc.php>

1   **PCA History and Race**

2  
3   Sean Michael Lucas, *Race and the Roots of the PCA*, Reformation21

4   Part 1 <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/02/race-and-the-roots-of-the-pres.php>

5   Part 2 <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/02/race-and-the-roots-of-the-pres-1.php>

6   Part 3 <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/02/race-and-the-roots-of-the-pres-2.php>

7   Part 4 <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/02/race-and-the-roots-of-the-pres-3.php>

8   Part 5 <http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2015/02/race-and-the-roots-of-the-pres-4.php>

9   Dr. Lucas is senior minister of the historic First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, MS, and  
10 Professor of Church History, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS. He is a  
11 graduate of Bob Jones University and Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia  
12 (Historical and Theological Studies: American Reformed Tradition). He also served as Chief  
13 Academic Officer and associate professor of church history at Covenant Theological  
14 Seminary, St. Louis, MO.

15  
16   David Peterson, *Southern Presbyterian Conservatives and Ecclesiastical Division: The  
17 Formation of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1926-1973*, Master's Thesis, University  
18 of Kentucky, 2009

19 [http://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1078&context=gradschool\\_theses](http://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1078&context=gradschool_theses)

20 This thesis argues that “Disgruntled by a liberal-moderate coalition that held power [in the  
21 PCUS], many conservatives withdrew and created the Presbyterian Church in America  
22 (PCA) in 1973, the first major division of a Southern denomination. The PCA was not solely  
23 founded because of racial disagreements or any single cultural debate; rather decades’ long  
24 theological disagreements regarding the church’s role in society fueled separation along with  
25 several sharp social controversies.”

26  
27   R. Milton Winter, *Division & Reunion in the Presbyterian Church US: A Mississippi  
28 Retrospective*, *Journal of Presbyterian History* 78:1 (Spring 2000)

29 <http://history.pcusa.org/sites/default/files/08Winter.pdf>

30 This journal article argues that “Mississippi mirrored the tensions within Southern  
31 Presbyterianism during an era of civil rights agitation, theological reassessment, and a  
32 conservative secession to form a separate Presbyterian Church in America.” Dr. Winter  
33 (who did his PhD in history at Union Seminary in Richmond, VA), is a PC(USA) pastor in  
34 Holly Springs, cousin of Mississippi Governor William Winter (himself an elder at Fondren  
35 PC(USA) in Jackson), and attended First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS for a season in  
36 the early 1970s.

37  
38   **Reformed, African American Perspectives on Theology, Culture, Church and Society**

40   Ellis Perspectives <http://www.ellisperspectives.com/>

41   The website of Dr. Carl and the-soon-to-be Dr. Karen Ellis. Carl is currently the Associate  
42 Pastor for Cultural Apologetics at New City Fellowship, and teaches at Redeemer Seminary  
43 in Dallas and Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson. Dr. Ellis was Dean of  
44 Intercultural Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA and studied  
45 under Francis Schaeffer at L'Abri in Switzerland. Karen Angela Ellis, is pursuing her PhD

1 and works alongside her husband, exploring the zones where identity, human rights and  
2 theology intersect. She has performed, spoken and lectured in Eastern Europe, Canada, the  
3 Caribbean, Indonesia and in South America. In her twenty year career, she has been seen in  
4 classrooms, conferences, on radio, television, film and onstage. Karen holds a Master of  
5 Arts in Religion from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a Master of Fine Arts from  
6 the Yale School of Drama.

7  
8 The Front Porch <http://thefrontporch.org/>  
9 “Conversations about biblical faithfulness in African-American churches and beyond.”  
10 Topics covered include: The Arts, The Bible, The Black Church, Culture/Ethnicity, Family,  
11 God, The Gospel, Leadership, Missions, Preaching, Salvation, Shepherding, Theology,  
12 Women and Worship.

13  
14 The Reformed African American Network <https://www.raanetwork.org/>  
15 “The mission of the Reformed African American Network is to fuel modern reformation in  
16 the African American community and with a multi-ethnic mindset by providing biblically-  
17 faithful resources, by connecting Christians who adhere to Reformed doctrines—especially  
18 African Americans, and by building theology in community from a Reformed and African  
19 American perspective as well as with others from diverse ethnic backgrounds.”  
20

21 Pure Church <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/thabitanyabwile/>  
22 This is the blog of Thabiti Anyabwile, pastor of Anacostia River Church in southeast  
23 Washington, DC, council member of The Gospel Coalition, plenary speaker for Together for  
24 the Gospel.  
25

26 **Books and essays:**

27  
28 Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to*  
29 *Cultural Captivity* (IVP, 2007)

30  
31 Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering*  
32 *African-American Pastors* (Crossway, 2007)

33  
34 Thabiti Anyabwile, *Reviving the Black Church: New Life for a Sacred Institution* (B&H,  
35 2015)

36  
37 James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (Banner of Truth, reprint, 1868), Vol. 1, pp. 94-  
38 275.

39  
40 Anthony Carter, ed., et al, *Glory Road: The Journeys of 10 African-Americans into*  
41 *Reformed Christianity* (Crossway, 2009)

42  
43 Anthony Carter, *On Being Black and Reformed: A New Perspective on the African-*  
44 *American Christian Experience* (P&R, 2003)

45 Anthony J. Carter (M.A.B.S., Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando) is cofounder of

- 1 the Black Alliance for Reformed Theology, its director of ministry, and editor of its online  
2 journal, Vinedresser. He is assistant pastor for preaching and teaching at Southwest  
3 Christian Fellowship, Atlanta.
- 4
- 5 Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of*  
6 *Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Crossway, 2011)
- 7
- 8 Carl Ellis, *Free at Last! The Gospel in the African-American Experience* (IVP, 1996)
- 9
- 10 Carolyn Renee Dupont, *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil*  
11 *Rights Movement, 1945-1975* (New York University Press, 2013), 181-198.
- 12
- 13 Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the*  
14 *Problem of Race in America* (Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 15
- 16 J. Daniel Hays, *From Every People and Nation a Biblical Theology of Race* (IVP Academic,  
17 2003)
- 18
- 19 Stephen R. Haynes, *The Last Segregated Hour: The Memphis Kneel-Ins and the*  
20 *Campaign for Southern Church Desegregation* (Oxford University Press, 2012)  
21 Stephen Haynes is Professor of Religious Studies, Rhodes College, and the author  
22 of many books, including Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American  
23 Slavery.
- 24
- 25 Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* in *Annotations on a Letter*  
26 *that Changed the World from a Birmingham Jail* by Peter Lillback (Providence  
27 Forum Press, 2013)
- 28
- 29 Bryan Lorritts, *Letters to a Birmingham Jail: A Response to the Words and Dreams*  
30 *of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Moody, 2014)
- 31
- 32 Sean Michael Lucas, *For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian*  
33 *Church in America* (P&R, 2015).
- 34
- 35 Sean Michael Lucas, "Owning the Past: The Spirituality of the Church in History, Failure,  
36 and Hope," *Reformed Theological Seminary Journal*, 1.1 (2016) forthcoming.
- 37
- 38 Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton  
39 University Press, 2008).
- 40
- 41 John Piper, *Bloodlines: Race, Cross and the Christian* (Crossway, 2011)  
42 "Sharing from his own experiences growing up in the segregated South, pastor John  
43 Piper thoughtfully exposes the unremitting problem of racism. Instead of turning finally  
44 to organizations, education, famous personalities, or government programs to address  
45 racial strife, Piper reveals the definitive source of hope—teaching how the good news

1 about Jesus Christ actively undermines the sins that feed racial strife, and leads to a  
2 many-colored and many-cultured kingdom of God.”

3  
4 Peter Slade, *Open Friendship in a Closed Society: Racial Reconciliation in Mississippi*  
5 *after the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

6  
7 Guy Waters, *How Jesus Runs the Church* (P&R, ), especially pages 66-70.

8  
9 Jarvis Williams, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology*  
10 (B&H Academic, 2010)

11  
12 **PCA Documents** (available at  
13 <http://www.pcahistory.org>):

14 2002 Declaration on Racial Reconciliation  
15 2004 Pastoral Letter on the Gospel and  
16 Race 2015 Duncan/Lucas Personal  
17 Resolution  
18 2016 Overtures: <http://www.pcaac.org/general-assembly/overtures/>.

19  
20 **Articles on PCA Personal Resolution**

21 Sean Michael Lucas in *ByFaith Magazine*: [http://byfaithonline.com/grace-](http://byfaithonline.com/grace-race-and-the-pca/)  
22 [race-and-the-pca/](http://byfaithonline.com/grace-race-and-the-pca/)

23 PCA's action in *Christianity Today*:  
24 [http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/september/presbyterian-church-](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/september/presbyterian-church-america-pca-race-apology.html)  
25 [america-pca-race-apology.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/september/presbyterian-church-america-pca-race-apology.html)

26  
27 **Videos**

28  
29 Ligon Duncan, Sean Michael Lucas, and Jemar Tisby, RAAN video explanation of  
30 Personal Resolution, June 2015: <https://www.raanetwork.org/the-reasons-behind-the-resolution-on-civil-rights-remembrance/>

31  
32 Trip Lee, Alex Medina, and Jemar Tisby, “How Did You Become Reformed? Trip Lee,  
33 Alex Medina, and Jemar Tisby on the Journey to Calvinism as Minorities,” The Gospel  
34 Coalition, April 5, 2016: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-did-you-become-reformed>

35  
36 Trip Lee, Alex Medina, and Jemar Tisby, “What About the Minority Experience in  
37 America Do Whites Often Miss? Trip Lee, Alex Medina, and Jemar Tisby on Loving Our  
38 Whole Christian Family,” The Gospel Coalition, October 6, 2015:  
39 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-about-minority-experience-america-do-whites-often-miss>

40  
41 Sean Michael Lucas, lecture on "Divided by Faith," given at RTS, August 2015:  
42 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-pKFDeK1uA>

- 1 Sean Michael Lucas, “Confessing Generational Sins” and “The Spirituality of the  
2 Church,” Reconciliation and Justice Conference, January 2016:  
3 <https://www.youtube.com/user/FPCHattiesburg>.
- 4
- 5 Sean Michael Lucas, in “Division and Reunion: A Reflection on American  
6 Presbyterianism,” PC(USA) General Assembly, June 2014: <http://www.upsem.edu/dr>
- 7
- 8 Sean Michael Lucas, “Telling the Truth: How the Gospel Shapes Corporate Confession  
9 and Repentance,” Race and the Church Conference, January 2016:  
10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvVWL2YTdeQ>.
- 11
- 12 Peter Slade, “Open Friendship in a Closed Society: Racial Reconciliation in Mississippi  
13 after the Civil Rights Movement,” The Project on Lived Theology, Department of Religious  
14 Studies at the University of Virginia, November 2014:  
15 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJ2LA9Qss1M>