

Kuyper College Statement on Racism

This Statement on Racism serves as a guidance document for our community as we love God and our neighbor and earnestly pursue our mission, vision, and values.

The following liturgy was written by a diverse group of students, staff, and faculty members as a witness to our community's biblical values, as a lament over experiences in our community and beyond, as a confession regarding sinful practices in the Christian church, past and present, and as a commitment to live in the hope of God's renewing Spirit as we work for the flourishing of everyone in our community.¹

Kuyper College equips students with a biblical, Reformed worldview to serve effectively Christ's church and his world.

Because of our commitment to the teachings of the Bible, we believe:

- God created every person in his image. (*Genesis 1:26-27, Galatians 3:27*)
- Life is sacred. (*Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17*) It is "a gift from God's hand, who created all things."² (*Psalms 104:14-30, Psalm 139:14-16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*)
- Sin has permeated all of life. (*Genesis 3, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12*)
- God commands us to love our neighbor, especially the oppressed. (*Leviticus 19:18, Jeremiah 22:3, Amos 5:10-15, Mark 12:31, Matthew 22:39*)
- Loving our neighbor means that we are "to protect them from harm as much we can."³ (*Isaiah 58:3, 6-7, 9-10, Matthew 25:42-46*)

Therefore, with reverence for the Creator of life, and following Jesus Christ as our redeemer and model for living:

Kuyper College stands against racism.⁴

We believe that racism works against God's good intention for creation, and we "protest and resist all that harms, abuses, or diminishes the gift of life."⁵

We condemn the racism and the white supremacy⁶ that has been a harmful force in the world and in the Christian church for centuries.⁷

We lament the centuries of oppressive acts in the United States that caused suffering and death among many ethnic and racial groups. These acts include enslavement, murder, internment, detention, and mass incarceration.⁸

We confess that we, through our action and inaction, have fallen short of God's commands to love our neighbor and work towards shalom for all people.

We stand with those in our community who have been harmed by brutal acts committed by those in authority. As a testimony to Christ who conquered enmity and division, we stand united with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have suffered injustice at the hands of those in power.⁹

We pledge to learn more about race and color and the impacts they have on people, organizations, and systems. We embrace the opportunity to educate students, staff, and faculty to be seekers of

justice¹⁰ as they—his image bearers—are vital to changing the future and impacting the world according to his will.

We seek to restore justice. We call on all people from all spheres of society to bring justice to the poor and oppressed and “to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals, groups, and institutions so that each may do their tasks.”¹¹

We commit to do our part to end racism, hatred, violence, and inequities. And we commit to work for the dignity and flourishing of all, equipping the church so that people “from every nation, tribe, people and language”¹² can thrive in God’s kingdom.

Notes

1. This liturgical movement of confession and lament is influenced by *From Lament to Advocacy* (2020). Faculty member Dr. Richelle White is a contributing author and the book was read and discussed by faculty.
2. *Our World Belongs to God*, Section 44.
3. *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q&A 107.
4. “Racism = Race Prejudice + Misuse of Power by Systems and Institutions.” *Understanding Racism*, CORR, 2020.
5. *Our World Belongs to God*, Section 44.
6. Dismantling Racism Works (a training organization for anti-racism) defines White Supremacy as “The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to BIPOC communities and people and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.”
7. The European Church supported the Doctrine of Discovery, a legal construct that justified colonization, codified racial hierarchies into law, and placed European, Christian nations in the position of power. The end result was the justification of genocide of indigenous people and the enslavement of millions from Africa and their descendants. We also lament that certain writings of our college’s namesake, Abraham Kuyper, impacted the architects of Apartheid legislation in South Africa. For more information about the Doctrine of Discovery, see: https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/doctrine_of_discovery.pdf For more information about the legacy of Abraham Kuyper, see: Bartholomew, Craig G. “Sphere Sovereignty: Kuyper’s Philosophy of Society.” *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition: A Systematic Introduction*. IVP Academic, 2017, pp. 152-157. & Bratt, James D. “Shadows: 1898-1920.” *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013, pp. 292-296.
8. People groups that have been victims of racial violence in the United States include Indigenous and Native, Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Asian and Pacific Islander, among others. Prominent examples from the most recent decades include Emmett Till, Rev. Dr. King, Vincent Chin, the Emanuel AME Nine, Srinivas Kuchibhotla, the victims of the Poway Synagogue shooting, the victims of the 2019 El Paso Shooting, Ahmaud Arbury, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, among others.
9. *The Belhar Confession*.
10. Theologian Carl Ellis defines justice as “Doing what is right toward your fellow image bearers.” “Biblical Righteousness Is a Four-Paned Window,” 2018.
11. *Our World Belongs to God*, Section 53.
12. “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” Revelation 7:9, NIV. This verse offers a grand picture of what we will one day see, and, John 17:20-26 (esp. vs. 23) addresses the impact that we through Christ are to have on the world.