RES 20-06 | STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RACIAL EQUITY FOR CAL-PAC CONFERENCE

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan for Racial Equity in the California-Pacific Annual Conference

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT: $100,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Fund
SOURCE OF STAFF TIME: 20-40 hours/week

WHEREAS we are baptized to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves;

WHEREAS the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church in its pastoral letter of June 8, 2020 states: “We ask every United Methodist to name the egregious sin of racism and white supremacy and join together to take a stand against the oppression and injustice that is killing persons of color;”

WHEREAS in our Constitution, “The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large.” (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016, ¶5);

WHEREAS supported by the leadership of Strengthening the Black Church, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Black Clergywomen, and Ebony Prophets;

WHEREAS we are in a moment of collective and individual reflection on the historic and lasting impact of racism in our country, in our communities, and in ourselves;

WHEREAS we cannot confront racism without an honest and humble examination of the ways we participate in and perpetuate oppressive structures. Without hearing from People of Color (POC) about their wide-ranging experiences in our conference, we cannot know where we are starting in the anti-racist work set before us;

WHEREAS engaging in the hard work of confronting systemic racism requires personal and institutional ownership of the process and resulting recommendations, and meaningful anti-racist work requires the focus, dedication, and participation of the body; and

WHEREAS our Bishop is dedicating prophetic leadership, conference resources, staff, and money towards anti-racism in the California-Pacific Annual Conference;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the California-Pacific Annual Conference joins the Bishop in condemning racism in all of forms and seeking to understand the ways structural and systemic racism have historically impacted, and continue to impact, the experience and well-being of our POC conference members;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the California-Pacific Annual Conference claims anti-racism as a primary value and focus, and supports a structured, accountable, transparent plan to address institutional inequity at all levels of our church body;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a racial disparity audit will be conducted at every level of the conference in order to identify and create a record of current structural disparities, experiences, and mental health and financial outcomes, so that we can evaluate the changes necessary to address and dismantle oppressive structures and systems. This audit will provide information that is visible and measurable, so that change can be monitored and evaluated over time;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a half-time conference staff person will be hired and dedicated to the examination of race and racism in our conference, creating meaningful next steps based on the internal audit, and tasked with leadership of this community effort toward a more equitable church for all.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will empower the Commission on Religion and Race (CORR) to oversee and monitor the progress and applications of this resolution and report back to the body with updates and recommendations. The California-Pacific Annual Conference will prioritize filling vacancies in this commission and offer them our trust as a force for accountability, transparency, and renewed focus; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding shall be set aside for a Leadership Development Institute for Young People of Color to address justice issues affecting them and their communities. That per this resolution, funding of $12,000 per year (or $48,000 over the next quadrennium) be designated toward these ministries for the wellbeing of young people and as a pipeline of support for young Black lay and clergy leadership in the life of the California-Pacific Annual Conference. The funding shall be administered by the Strengthening the Black Church (SBC).