

# DISMANTLING RACISM

## PRESSING ON TO FREEDOM

### GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS\*

**Culture** – Culture is both objective and subjective. Objective culture refers to the artifacts and institutions created by a group of people, reflected in such areas as art, architecture, literature, dance, holidays and collective history. Subjective culture is the patterns of interpretations (values, beliefs, perceptions) and behavior learned from one’s group that guide individual group activity.<sup>1</sup>

**Discrimination** – Negative behavior towards a group based on stereotypes, prejudice, biases and/or implicit biases.<sup>2</sup>

**Diversity** – The mix of differences that may make a difference in an interaction (individual to individual, individual to group/organization, and organization to organization) that are rooted in culture.

**Implicit Bias** – Unconscious thinking that influences our conscious thoughts, speech, and actions that evaluates one group and its members relative to another group even when that thinking does not align with stated beliefs, values, or commitments.<sup>3</sup>

**Inclusion** – Occurs when people are working together effectively, and their cultural experiences and difference feel valued and engaged. Allows individuals to bring their unique experiences, preferences, and strengths to the table without sacrificing or minimizing core aspects of their identity, background, or perspective.<sup>4</sup>

**Individual Racism** – (Sometimes called *Personal Racism*) Manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system.<sup>5</sup>

**Institutional Racism** – (Sometimes called *Systemic Racism* or *Structural Racism*) The established social pattern that supports implicitly or explicitly the racist value system.<sup>6</sup> The system which prioritizes one race above others and protects those values and beliefs with policies, laws, practices, and procedures. This results in the exclusion of substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions.<sup>7</sup> This means resources, opportunities, and priorities benefit the dominant cultural group (white people) to the detriment of non-dominant group members (People of Color).

**Microaggression** - the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups. The difference between microaggressions and overt discrimination or macroaggressions, is that people who commit microaggressions might not even be aware of them.<sup>8</sup>

**Prejudice** – A preconceived judgement or opinion often demonstrated as an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> Intercultural Development Inventory Qualified Administrator Workbook

<sup>2</sup> YWCA of Greater Cleveland (It’s Time to Talk Seminar, 2.23.18) and National Museum of African-American Race & Culture, TALKING ABOUT RACE.

<sup>3</sup> GCORR Implicit Bias Workbook, p 11

<sup>4</sup> Intercultural Development Inventory Qualified Administrator Workbook

<sup>5</sup> Book of Discipline, 162 A) Right of Racial and Ethnic Persons

<sup>6</sup> Book of Discipline, 162 A) Right of Racial and Ethnic Persons

<sup>7</sup> YWCA of Greater Cleveland (It’s Time to Talk Seminar, 2.23.18) and National Museum of African-American Race & Culture, TALKING ABOUT RACE.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away>

**Racism** – The combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others.<sup>9</sup>

**Reverse Racism** – A myth that attempts to describe situations when people of color discriminate or have prejudices against white people. White people can experience prejudice and discrimination from people of color, but they do not experience racism. Disregards the issues of power held by members of the dominant cultural group (see *Racism*).<sup>10</sup>

**Stereotype** – Evaluative, overgeneralized personal traits assigned to a group that support less complex perceptions and experiences of cultural differences and commonalities.

**White Fragility** – A form of bullying and defensiveness in which white people invoke the power to choose when, how, and to what extent racism is addressed or challenged in order to protect themselves from a perceived attack and to reject culpability.<sup>11</sup>

**White Privilege** – White privilege are advantages that white people enjoy that are generally not extended to the same extent to People of Color. Common examples: white people are seldom asked to speak for or represent their entire race; white Christians can visit most U.S. churches and find Jesus and Biblical characters portrayed as white; white children can count on school curricula celebrating heroes and heroines from their racial group; white people can remain oblivious to the language and customs of People of Color without feeling any loss or penalty because of that lack of knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

**White Supremacy** – A) Term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people. As a full-fledged ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists today further believe that the white race is in danger of extinction due to a rising "flood" of non-whites, who are controlled and manipulated by Jews, and that imminent action is needed to "save" the white race.<sup>13</sup>

B) The defense of the supremacy of whiteness. The way in which a society organizes itself, and what and whom it chooses to value. A set of practices informed by the fundamental belief that white people are valued more than others.<sup>14</sup> Demonstrated through Slavery and Jim Crow, and sustained through institutions including the Church.

*\*This list of terms and definitions is meant to be a guide and foundation for a common use of language for The East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. We recognize that this is not fully exhaustive and that there are other academic perspectives and definitions of the above terms.*

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<sup>9</sup> Book of Discipline, 162 A) Right of Racial and Ethnic Persons

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gcorr.org/is-reverse-racism-really-a-thing/>

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Robin Diangelo, *White Fragility*, 109. (Penguin Random House UK, 2018)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gcorr.org/overt-and-covert-racism/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-supremacy>

<sup>14</sup> Robert P. Jones, *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, 16. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020).