

Amendment #3: Article V, Racial Justice

- **Have we as a church shown racism?** Yes. The United Methodist Church and its predecessor bodies have historically participated in and perpetuated racism—for example, by segregating Black Methodists into the racially separate Central Jurisdiction (1939–1968) and excluding people of color from leadership and full participation.
- **What is an example of a racist structure within the church?** The Central Jurisdiction (1939–1968), which segregated African American churches and clergy into a separate jurisdiction based solely on race, is a prime example of structural racism in the UMC.
- **What racist structures exist within the UMC?** While the Central Jurisdiction in the U.S. was dismantled, situations exist where racial inequities remain in leadership representation, appointment patterns, funding of churches, access to decision-making spaces, and persistent underrepresentation of people of color in denominational leadership.
- **What about hidden racism; “cliques” within churches and the conference?** Yes, informal networks, social cliques, or unwritten norms can reflect hidden or unintentional racism by excluding people of color from influence or full belonging. This is sometimes referred to as implicit bias or cultural gatekeeping.
- **What will the response be to historical injustices?** The amendment calls the Church to name its history honestly and take concrete steps to confront and dismantle racism. This includes education, advocacy, more equitable leadership practices, and collaboration with historically marginalized communities.
- **What does admitting that my ancestors did wrong do — how does it help me?** Acknowledging past injustice helps us understand how systems were shaped and what legacies still affect people today. It’s not about personal blame, but about taking responsibility to help heal, repair, and build a more just future.
- **Is using the language of “white privilege” racist itself?** No. “White privilege” is not an insult or accusation. It names the unearned advantages people may have in society because of being perceived as white. Acknowledging it is not racist—it’s part of understanding how systems work and how to make them more just.
- **Why does General Conference think this is important worldwide?** Racism, white supremacy, and colonial legacies are not only U.S. problems. They exist in different forms in all parts of the world. The Church believes naming these realities is essential to living faithfully and being a witness to justice and reconciliation in all contexts.
- **Why aren’t we already doing this?** The UMC has addressed racism in policies and statements, but the Constitution—the highest level of church law—has not named it explicitly. This amendment formalizes anti-racism as a core identity of the Church and gives stronger accountability to this work.
- **Why the use of the word “colonialism”; why is it now relevant?** Colonialism shaped much of the worldwide Methodist mission and church structures, often through unequal power and

cultural domination. Naming colonialism acknowledges this part of our history and seeks to break from harmful patterns that still affect how churches operate across regions.

- **Will there be a clear commitment to UMC anti-racism?** Yes. This constitutional amendment is a clear, binding commitment. If ratified, it places anti-racism and racial equity at the heart of the Church's identity and structure, requiring all levels of the Church to actively confront racism and injustice.
- **Will there be guidelines to help clergy and lay people deal with difficult conversations?** There is a list of resources at the bottom of this article: [How to Stay Connected After A Conflict](#)