

Make
Us



June 2022 UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Jesus, when he was at the end of His earthly life prayed a prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane that should capture our full attention: three times, He asks the Father to make us one, not only with each other, but also with Him.

- *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one. (John 17: 11b)*
- *I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you (John 17: 20–21)*
- *I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them, even as you have loved me (John 17: 22-23)*

God calls us to unity and reconciliation, not only with Him, but with each other. As believers, we have already been made One in Christ positionally, but as we see in the Scriptures, in practice we stumble along and fall short of the glory and oneness that God intends for us.

Unfortunately, racism is no stranger to the Church; we see it throughout history, in the early church, in the compromised position of the Church in slavery, during segregation and the Civil Rights movement, and yes, even today.

In 2020, we made the choice to speak out more clearly about the evil of racism in our midst and declare that we need to take steps to more deeply value the beauty and richness of diversity of our Church body and seek the Holy Spirit's transformation to live more into our oneness in Christ. Our Lead Pastor Brett McBride has preached sermon series on this topic in 2020 and 2021; we have prayed together; we have established a "Make Us One" Advisory Committee and Prayer Wall meeting and we have conducted focus groups and surveyed our congregation to understand their experiences with racism and diversity in our church.

UPDATE

The results of our congregational survey, as well as focus groups of congregants and staff, informed the Kojo Institute's Organizational Assessment Report commissioned by The Peoples Church. This report was presented to the Board, the Make Us One Advisory Committee, and the Executive Team. The key findings are as follows:

- *We have the opportunity to improve diversity in our approach to welcoming people, to enhance the potential for all who join us in this church to feel like they belong*
- *We have the opportunity to increase diversity in our staff and leadership teams, in our worship, and in our decision-making practices*
- *We have the opportunity to go deeper than our culture of politeness and agreement has generally allowed, and actively engage in creating an anti-racism culture*
- *We need to establish clear policies and procedures for reporting and responding to experiences of racism in the church*
- *We have the opportunity to continue to acknowledge the impact of historical realities such as colonialism in global missions, work with our partners to continue to enhance our approach of partnership and enabling national approaches and enhance our transparency around how our global mission funds are spent.*
- *We have the opportunity to help close gaps in knowledge and awareness by offering a scriptural education series on issues of racism and anti-racism in the church and creating a culture of "practice rather than perfection" as we work towards greater unity in the Body of Christ.*

The Make Us One Advisory Committee, the Board and the Executive Team have reflected what we learned from this organizational assessment. Over the year ahead, our first action items to respond to the report will be:

- *Hosting a Make Us One Forum (Fall 2022) for leaders and volunteers at TPC to:*
 - *Review the scriptural call to unity in the Body of Christ and how the early church struggled, prayed through and addressed these issues*
 - *Answer questions on the organizational assessment*
 - *Provide more information on the path ahead*
- *Establishing policies and procedures for reporting and responding to incidents of racism in the church*
- *Designing and implementing a program of workshops, sermons and discussion opportunities to help close gaps in knowledge and awareness of racism in the church, and how Jesus calls us to address these issues*
- *Enhancing diversity in our decision-making processes*

Each of these steps will be designed and implemented through a co-creation approach, honouring the diversity in our congregational body. This work will continue to be reviewed regularly, and input provided by the Make Us One Advisory Committee.

If you have any questions about this update, or our Make Us One work, please contact:

Brett McBride, Lead Pastor

Karen Hurlburt, Executive Pastor

Fanta Lewis, HR Director, and Staff Lead for *Make Us One*



We ask you to continue to open yourself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit considering how you can bring glory to God as He calls us into deeper unity with each other and with Him.



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