

A LAMENTATION OF RACIAL REALITIES

Leader 1: We lament.

Nationally, the infant mortality rate for African American babies is 11.3%, more than twice the rate for White babies (5.1%). This disparity is doubled in some states and nearly tripled in Kansas and Wisconsin (14.2% to 5.5% and 14% to 5%).

All: Lord, have mercy! Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 2: We lament.

In 2012, Black students graduated from high school at a rate of 69 percent, 73 percent of Hispanic students graduated, and 86 percent of White students graduated.

All: Lord, have mercy! Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 3: We lament.

Since 1995, more than 80% of all White new college enrollments have been at the nation's elite and competitive institutions, while more than 70% of new Black and Hispanic enrollments are at open-access two-year and four-year colleges.

All: Lord, have mercy! Open our hearts and minds to our neighbors that we may seek their relief.

Leader 1: We lament.

In 2012, the median income for White households in America was \$57,000, compared to \$33,000 for Black households and \$39,00 for Hispanic households.

All: Lord, have mercy! Grant us the hunger and capacity to advocate for racial justice.

Leader 2: We lament.

In the United States, people of color are more likely to be uninsured than Whites.

All: Lord, have mercy! Teach us how to have compassion on our neighbors.

Leader 3: We lament.

For most of us, our home is our wealth. Nearly 75% of White households own their homes, compared to 45% for Blacks, 48% for Hispanics, and 52% for American Indians.

All: Lord, have mercy! Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 1: We lament.

The United States has 5% of the world's population and 25% of the world's prisoners. One in six Black men has been incarcerated. If trends continue, one in three Black boys born today will spend time in prison during his lifetime.

All: Lord, have mercy! Give us understanding of how we have come to this place.

Leader 2: We lament.

Five times as many Whites use illegal drugs as African Americans, yet African Americans are sent to prison for drug offenses at ten times the rate of Whites.

All: Lord, have mercy! Grant us compassionate hearts.

Leader 3: We lament.

In 2013, 380 out of 100,000 White Americans are incarcerated; 966 out of 100,000 Hispanics and 2,207 out of 100,000 Black Americans.

All: Lord, have mercy! Grant us wisdom and hearts that hear. Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 1: We lament.

Police in Ferguson, Missouri, which erupted after a White officer killed an unarmed Black teen, arrest Black people at a rate nearly three times higher than people of other races.

All: Lord, have mercy! Teach us how to advocate for your justice. Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 2: We lament.

In 2002, almost 49 percent of hate crimes were based on race and another 15 percent were based on ethnicity or national origin. More than two-thirds of those who were attacked based on their race were Black Americans.

All: Lord, have mercy! Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 3: We lament.

The ELCA set as a goal to grow in the number of people of color within our denomination and set becoming an anti-racist church as part of our vision for our church. We remain mostly White.

All: Lord, have mercy! Show us how we have come to this place.

Leader 1: May we repent where we need to repent;

All: May we change direction where we need to change direction;

Leader 2: May we grow in knowledge as well as compassion;

All: May we name and celebrate every victory against the evil of racism as we move forward.

Leader 3: Lord in your mercy, hear our lamentation and grant us your grace!

All: Amen.