



## **Board of Trustees' Statement on Intercultural Learning and Engagement**

The Board of Trustees holds fiduciary responsibilities beyond functional questions about academics, student life, finances, and facilities, as examples. Most foundational to our Trusteeship is care-taking for mission and values of the University. In particular, we value our strategic position and high potential to realize racial equity and influence leaders and communities observing us to do the same.

Bethel University is committed to the equality, dignity, and inherent worth of all individuals as bearers of God's image (Genesis 1:26). Bethel strives to nourish a Christ-centered community of grace and hospitality that casts out the hostility between races and ethnicities, and treasures the dignity of every person. We endeavor to live up to our name Beth-El – the house of God – by fostering a climate and a community of harmony with all humanity, from every nation, ethnicity, and language with whom God resides.

We firmly reject the unbiblical view that explicitly or implicitly devalues the lives and inherent worth of any one group of people in our society (1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). We reject all forms of racism, meaning *any* form of prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism against individuals on the basis of their race or ethnicity. We commit the Bethel community to not only repudiate attitudes, acts, and policies that hurt and degrade fellow human beings, but also invite our community to act on behalf of racial and ethnic equality, healing, and reconciliation on our campus, where that influence can be effective.

Consequently, Bethel University commits to pursue racial equity in financial aid, hiring practices, academic support, training, curricula, worship, and other domains as the Holy Spirit directs our attention.

We declare that our motivation for standing up against racism and for racial and ethnic justice springs neither from a particular political ideology nor from a desire to be culturally savvy. It is fundamentally biblical. Justice is a fundamental attribute of God's character (Isaiah 61:6-8; Isaiah 30:18-19). Therefore, faith in Jesus has direct and immediate implications: to stand against any corruptive force that marginalizes and degrades people, to stand for and with the most vulnerable members of our society, among whom we find racial and ethnic minorities, and to seek their well-being.

We affirm our commitment to on-going learning about and pursuing racial and ethnic justice, healing, and wellbeing. As people grasped by the infinite love of God in Jesus Christ, we welcome the growth that results from loving our racially and ethnically diverse neighbors in ever more concrete, competent, and complete ways (Ephesians 3:18). As an education and discipleship community, we expect to be mentored by the Holy Spirit and each other continuously, and remain in a posture of humility and curiosity to discover how God advances this work in and through us.

We affirm that the sustained commitment to and celebration of racial and ethnic diversity at Bethel will yield far-reaching and self-replicating benefits from seeing the work of God in others, expanding awareness of cultural difference, creating hospitable communities, and navigating the complex nature of our multicultural environment.

We believe this is why our mission statement calls us to “enlarge the vision,” and our educational philosophy statement compels us toward a “heart of compassion for people from differing religious, racial, ethnic, and economic contexts while recognizing our world citizenship.”