

## ■ O God, I Get So Tired of Racism Wherever I Go

O God, as a black man, I get exceedingly tired and so filled up with confronting and fighting racism, that formidable foe. It passes its poison from one generation to another. It has polluted all of the wellsprings of the nation's institutional life. More widespread than the drug scourge, more explosive than nuclear weapons, more crippling than germ warfare – racism has washed up on the shores of every nation of every continent.

O God, I get tired of racism wherever I go – abroad and at home. From stores that let me know that I have gotten “out of place;” from looks of fear that my black manly presence engenders in some, from small insults to major offenses; from polite, subtle, condescending paternalism or maternalism to outright, open hostility, from insulting jokes about my intelligence to curiosity about alleged black sexual prowess; from caricatures and stereotypes to the “you are the exception” syndrome – racism rears its many heads and shows its various faces all the time.

Yet, I bow before you, O God; I pledge to you, to my ancestors who sacrificed greatly so that I might enjoy whatever rights and privileges – however limited or circumscribed – are mine to experience, and to my children and to their children that I will keep up the noble fight of faith and perseverance. I will not go back to the back of the bus. I will not accept the invincibility of racism and the inviolability of its mythical sacred precepts.

I know that greater is the One that is in me than the one that is in the world. May that Spirit's presence and power direct and inspire me now and evermore until victory is won for my people, and all people, and until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Amen.

William Donnel Watley, in *Conversations with God: Two Centuries of Prayers by African Americans*, James Melvin Washington, ed., HarperCollins, 1992.