

Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments: Training Resource

The General Board of Higher
Education and Ministry

HiRho Y. Park, D.Min., Ph.D.
Director, Clergy Lifelong Learning

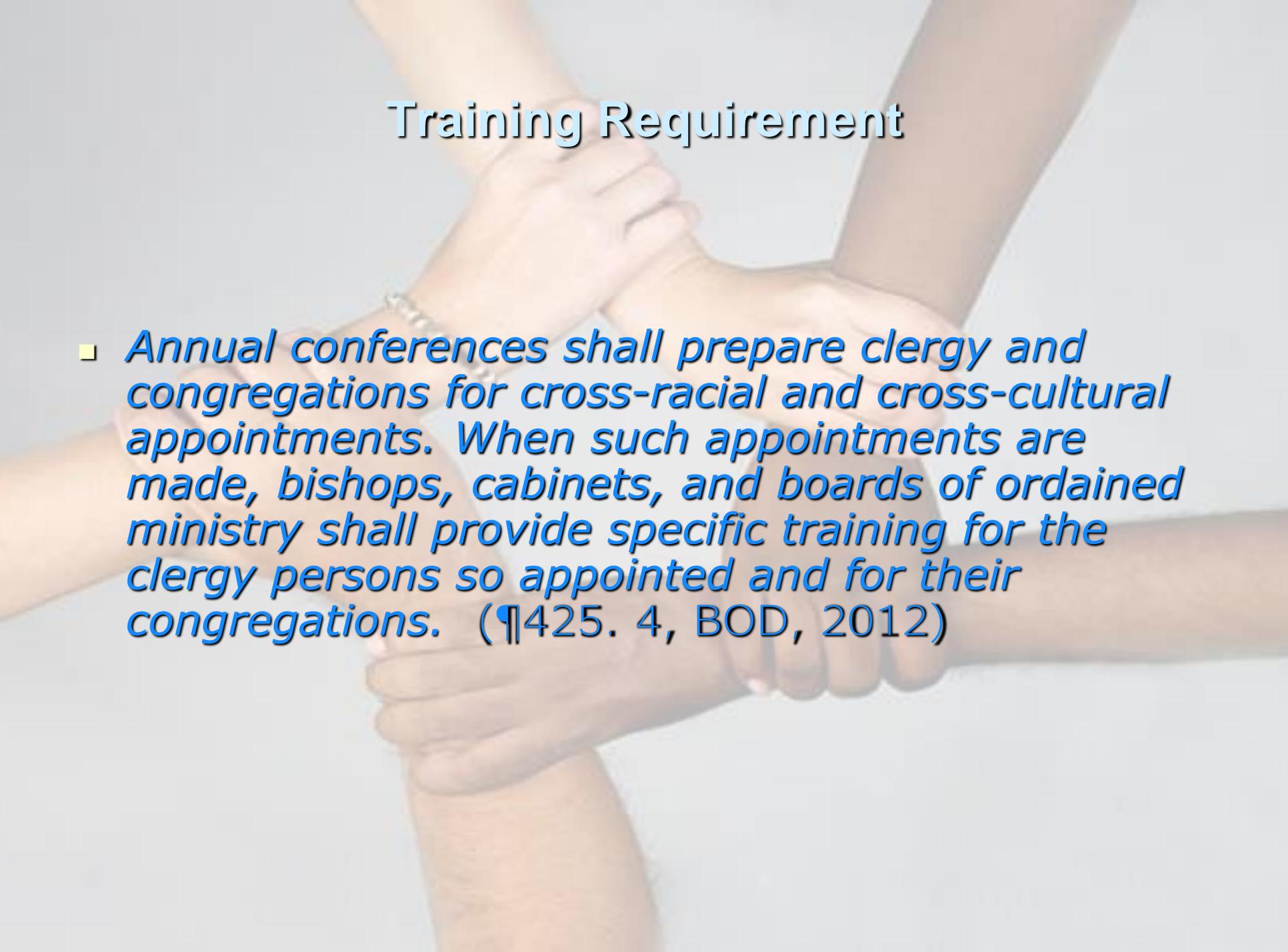
Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments and GBHEM

- The 2008 General Conference passed new legislation regarding cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments which the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry submitted.
- The new legislation emphasizes the Church's commitment to open itinerancy and inclusiveness and provides the definition of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. It also requires annual conferences to prepare and train clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.

What is cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments in the UMC?

- **Definition of Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments:**

Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the church and in its leadership. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. (¶425. 4, BOD, 2012)

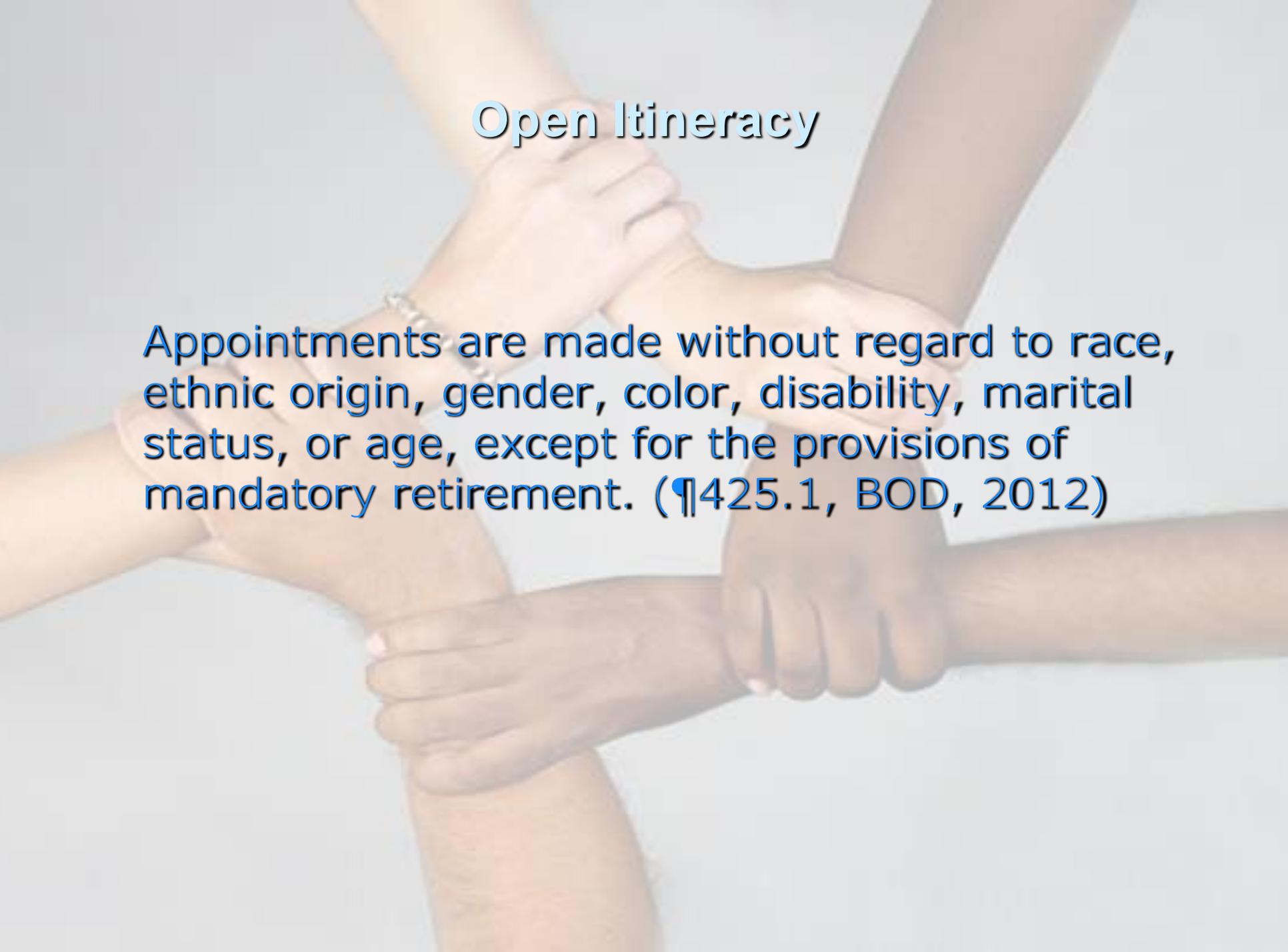


Training Requirement

- *Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments. When such appointments are made, bishops, cabinets, and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergy persons so appointed and for their congregations. (§425. 4, BOD, 2012)*

Emphasis on Open Itineracy

- *Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age. (§425.1, BOD, 2012)*
- *The United Methodist Church promotes and holds in high esteem the opportunity of an inclusive church (§4. Article IV) with the formation of open itineracy (§425.3, BOD, 2012)*



Open Itineracy

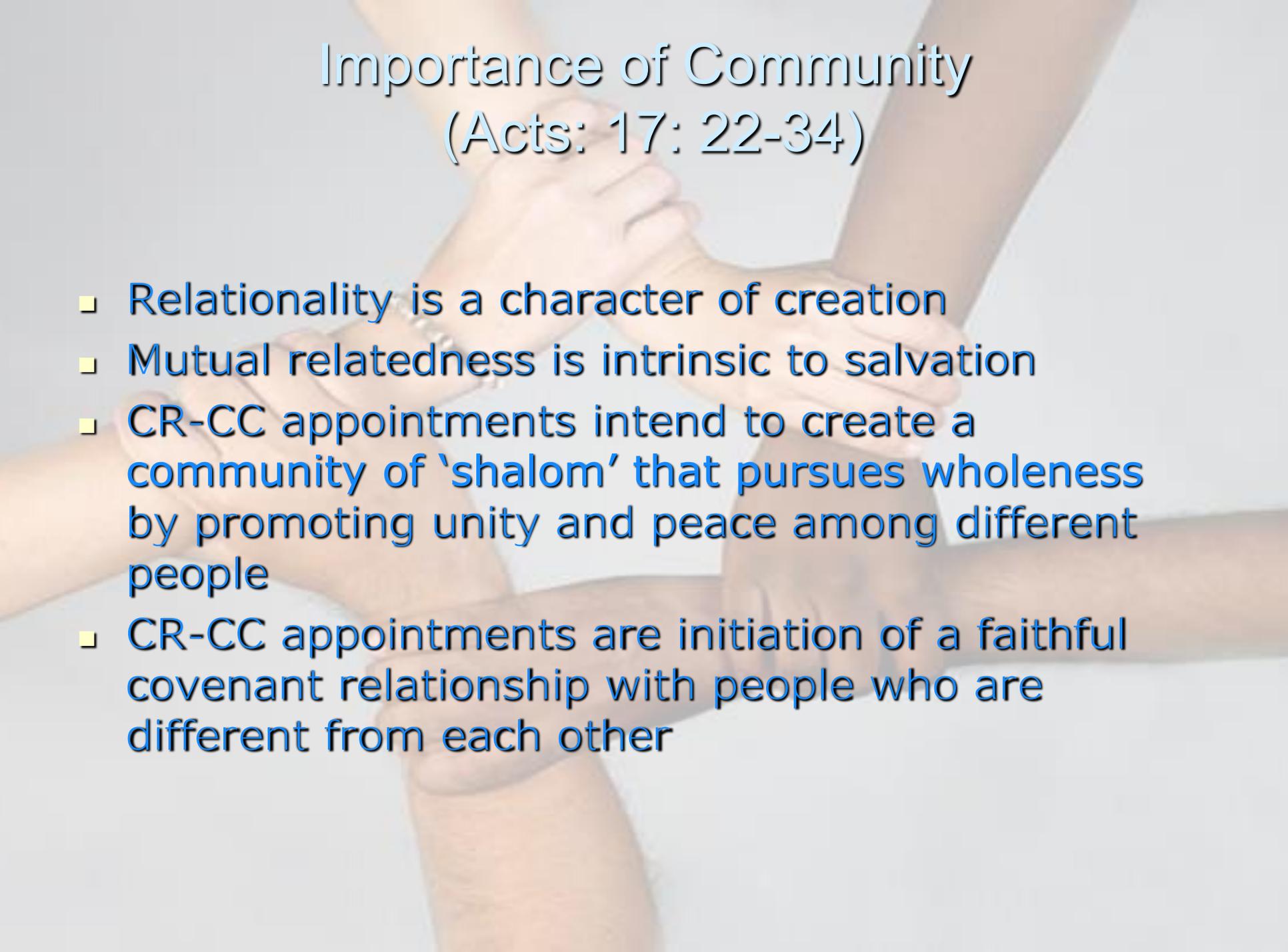
Appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. (§425.1, BOD, 2012)



Theological and Biblical Foundation of Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments

Importance of God's Image (Genesis 1:26-31, Acts 17:24-26)

CR-CC appointments are based on the principle of 'Imago Dei,' that Christians denounce favoritism with their partners in ministry according to their racial and cultural background. The practice of CR-CC appointments affirms absolute value, authority and dignity of individuals and expresses the belief that all are created in the likeness of God.



Importance of Community (Acts: 17: 22-34)

- Relationality is a character of creation
- Mutual relatedness is intrinsic to salvation
- CR-CC appointments intend to create a community of 'shalom' that pursues wholeness by promoting unity and peace among different people
- CR-CC appointments are initiation of a faithful covenant relationship with people who are different from each other

Importance of the Gift of Diversity (Genesis 11:1-9)

- The motivation for building the tower was the fear of the unknown, which is the foundation of racial and cultural prejudice.
- The scattering of languages prevents self-serving, self-preserving ethnocentrism.
- Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's cultural values and beliefs are the best and that one possesses the superior culture.
- The first step toward becoming a multicultural community is to recognize our own tower of Babel – our ethnocentrism.



Importance of the Gift of Diversity (Pentecost: Acts 2)

- God granted the Holy Spirit that bound people together in spite of their differences.
- The Gospel transcended the language and cultural barriers and maintains the differences that they reflect.
- Linguistic diversity enriches the people's understanding of the world around them.
- The Pentecost miracle presented the various peoples of the world simultaneously understanding the same language of love of God through Jesus Christ while clearly maintaining their own individuality.

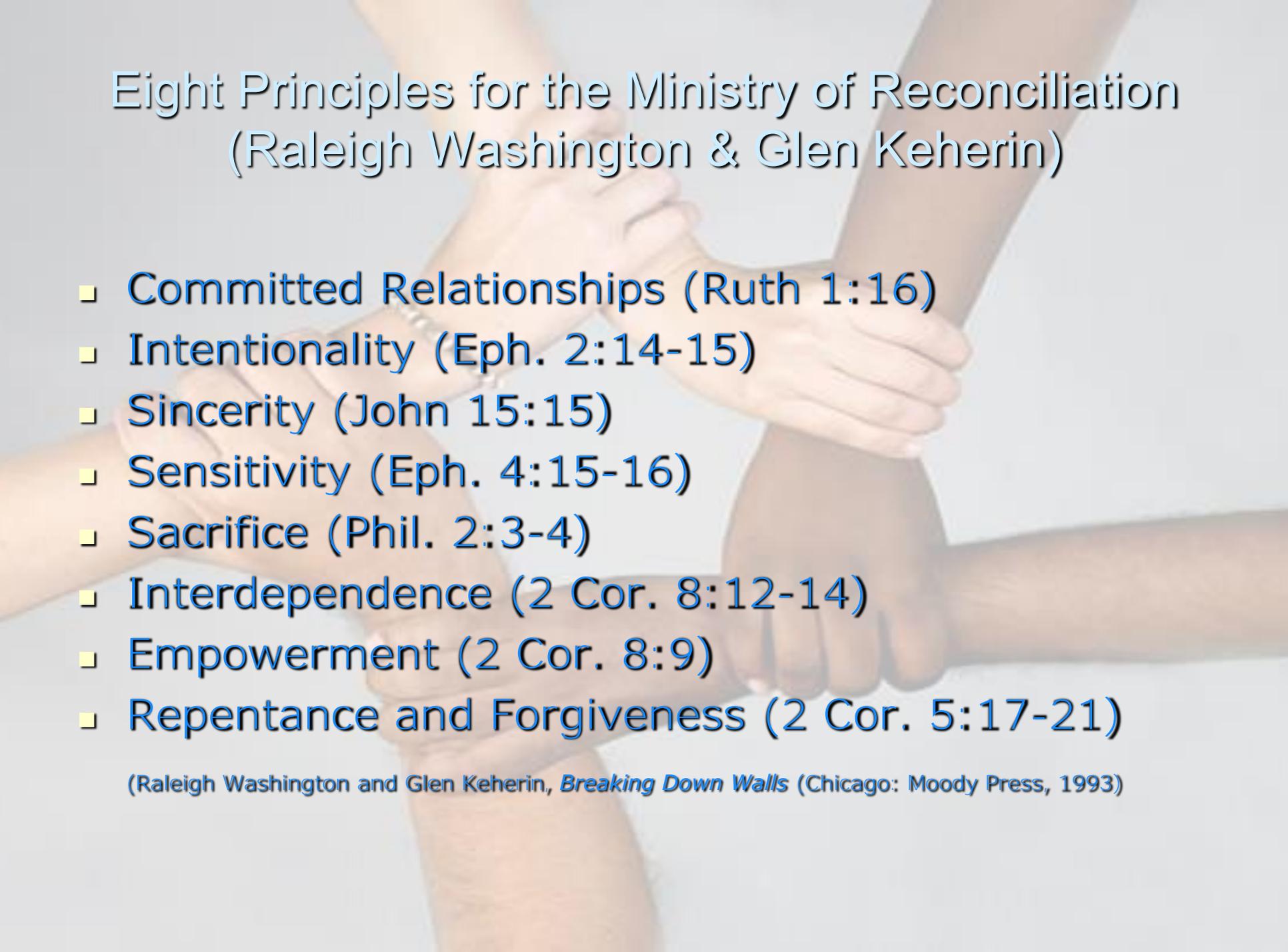
Ministry of Reconciliation

“In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.”

(2 Cor. 5:19, NRSV)

- CR-CC appointments intend to heal the wounds of separation by bearing one another in love (Eph. 4:1-16)
- Those who commit themselves to this ministry become “ambassadors for Christ” for the reconciliation of the world (2 Cor. 5:20)
- Reconciliation is the overcoming of alienation, estrangement, hostility, and enmity through the Spirit of Christ.

(Georgia Harkness, *The Ministry of Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).



Eight Principles for the Ministry of Reconciliation (Raleigh Washington & Glen Keherin)

- Committed Relationships (Ruth 1:16)
- Intentionality (Eph. 2:14-15)
- Sincerity (John 15:15)
- Sensitivity (Eph. 4:15-16)
- Sacrifice (Phil. 2:3-4)
- Interdependence (2 Cor. 8:12-14)
- Empowerment (2 Cor. 8:9)
- Repentance and Forgiveness (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

(Raleigh Washington and Glen Keherin, *Breaking Down Walls* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993))

The Biblical Model of CR-CC Appointments

The Example of Paul

“I am a debtor to those who know Greek and to those who don’t know Greek, to the educated and to the uneducated ... I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it functions as God’s instrument to rescue anyone who is committed to it – Jew first, then Gentiles.” (Romans 1:14-16, NRSV)

“To the Jews I become as a Jew, in order to win Jews ... To those outside the law (to the Gentiles) I become as one outside the law ... that I might with those outside the law.” (1 Cor. 9:20-21, NRSV)

Paul lived his life among Gentiles as a Jew. Paul was concerned about the relationship between Jewish and Gentile communities and their coexistence in the mysterious plan of God.

Uniqueness of Paul's CR-CC Ministry

- **Pursuing unity in diversity:** Paul was a person who held love as the basis for the unity of the community, "love binds together in perfect harmony." (Col. 3:14)
- **Clear communication:** Paul wrote letters to maintain clear communication and dialogue in faith.
- **Willingness to take risk and suffer:** Paul took the risk of his apostleship for the sake of Gentile salvation (Acts 15, Phil. 3:7-9, 2 Peter 3:15f).
- **Commitment to the prophetic call:** Paul was called for the specific task of CR-CC ministry and he responded faithfully with commitment (Gal. 1:13-16).

History of CR-CC Appointments in The UMC

Reflection and Action
on Open Itineracy

National Seminar on
Open Itineracy

1982

1983

1985

Center for United
Methodist Pastoral
Exchange

National Seminar
on Racial
Inclusiveness and
Ministerial
Deployment

*Witness from the
Middle: Korean-
American Pastors in
Non-Korean Local
Churches in The
United Methodist
Church*

1988

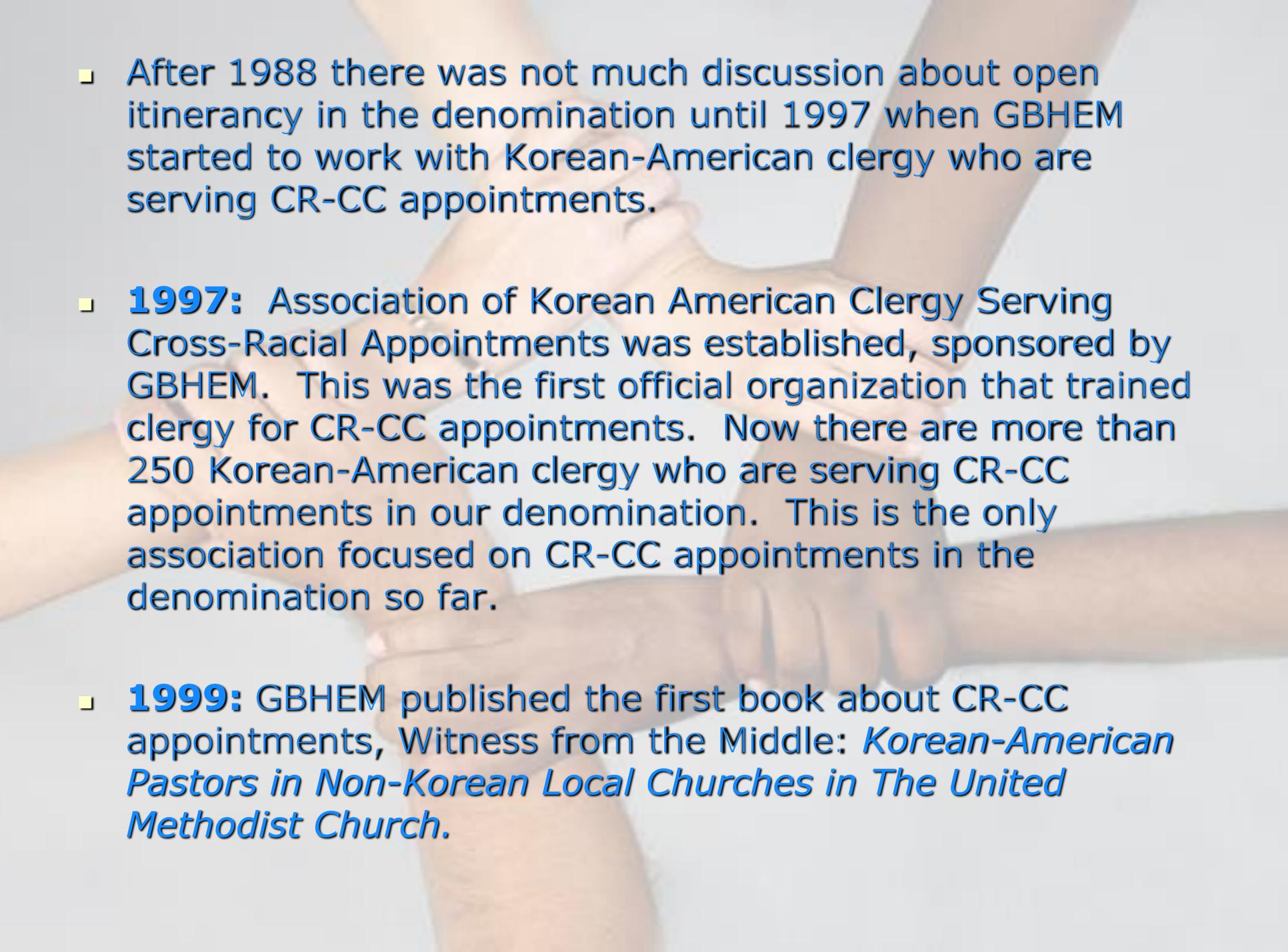
1997

1999

Association of
Korean American
Clergy Serving
Cross-Racial
Appointments

History of CR-CC Appointments in The UMC

- **1982:** The document, "Eight Principles to Undergird Serious Reflection and Action on Open Itinerancy" was created by the General Commission on Religion and Race.
- **1983:** The Council of Bishops established the Center for United Methodist Pastoral Exchange which was located at Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. Bishop L. Scott Allen who was the first African American bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction became the director.
- **1985:** A National Seminar on Open Itinerancy was held in Atlanta, Ga.
- **1988:** The National Seminar for Annual Conference leadership on Racial Inclusiveness and Ministerial Deployment was held.
- The Center for United Methodist Pastoral Exchange sponsored three national seminars to arouse the conscience of the church to actualize and concretize the concern for inclusiveness and open itinerancy. Unfortunately, it closed in 1988 as Bishop Allen left office.

- 
- After 1988 there was not much discussion about open itinerancy in the denomination until 1997 when GBHEM started to work with Korean-American clergy who are serving CR-CC appointments.
 - **1997:** Association of Korean American Clergy Serving Cross-Racial Appointments was established, sponsored by GBHEM. This was the first official organization that trained clergy for CR-CC appointments. Now there are more than 250 Korean-American clergy who are serving CR-CC appointments in our denomination. This is the only association focused on CR-CC appointments in the denomination so far.
 - **1999:** GBHEM published the first book about CR-CC appointments, *Witness from the Middle: Korean-American Pastors in Non-Korean Local Churches in The United Methodist Church*.

Preparations for CR-CC Appointments by Bishop Marcus Matthews *Know Your Target Churches*

- Theological study on CR-CC appointments
- Provide leadership training for PPRC
- Remind the congregation that through appointment making, the connectional nature of the UM system is made visible
- Listen to the congregation
- Emphasize through prayer that the success of the CR-CC appointment be achieved
- Work closely with the PPRC in terms of announcing the CR-CC appointment
- A plan for the community to welcome the pastor
- Create a mutual covenant between the congregation and the pastor



A Sample Mutual Covenant

(From the Cross-Racial Appointment Forum,
Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference, 1998)

- Each person is somewhere along the journey of learning about racism and working to dismantle it
- We are in the process of learning about the inclusive community of faith and are working to build it
 - All are learners and teachers; we trust each other
 - We need to take risks and to be bold
 - Openness, honesty and mutual caring are required
 - We seek to discern the will of God
- Our desire is to enhance the effectiveness of ministry

Support from District Superintendent and Bishop

- Stay in close touch with the clergy and the SPRC
- Be aware of family needs or concerns – culturally or racially based
- Provide resources for continuing education
- Understand that the growth of a church where it has a CR-CC appointment is slow
- Encourage self-selected mentors for newly appointed pastors: to do so, create a directory of pastors in CR-CC appointments
- Conference wide CR - CC appointments forum
- Being intentional in making these appointments
- Appoint mature pastors for CR - CC appointments
- These are not 'experimental' appointments, but affirm the matching of the gifts of the best available pastor and the congregation.
- Make sure clergy take vacation and renewal time
- Reinforce the expectation that clergy participate in clergy clusters, district and community events



Welcome Plan for the Congregation

- Set up face-to-face interaction meetings – house meeting, welcoming meal, introduction of the country or culture of the pastor
- Acquaint the pastor with the community
- Introduce the pastor to community leaders
- Support for the family – spouse and children



Have Honest Conversations around Concerns of the Congregation

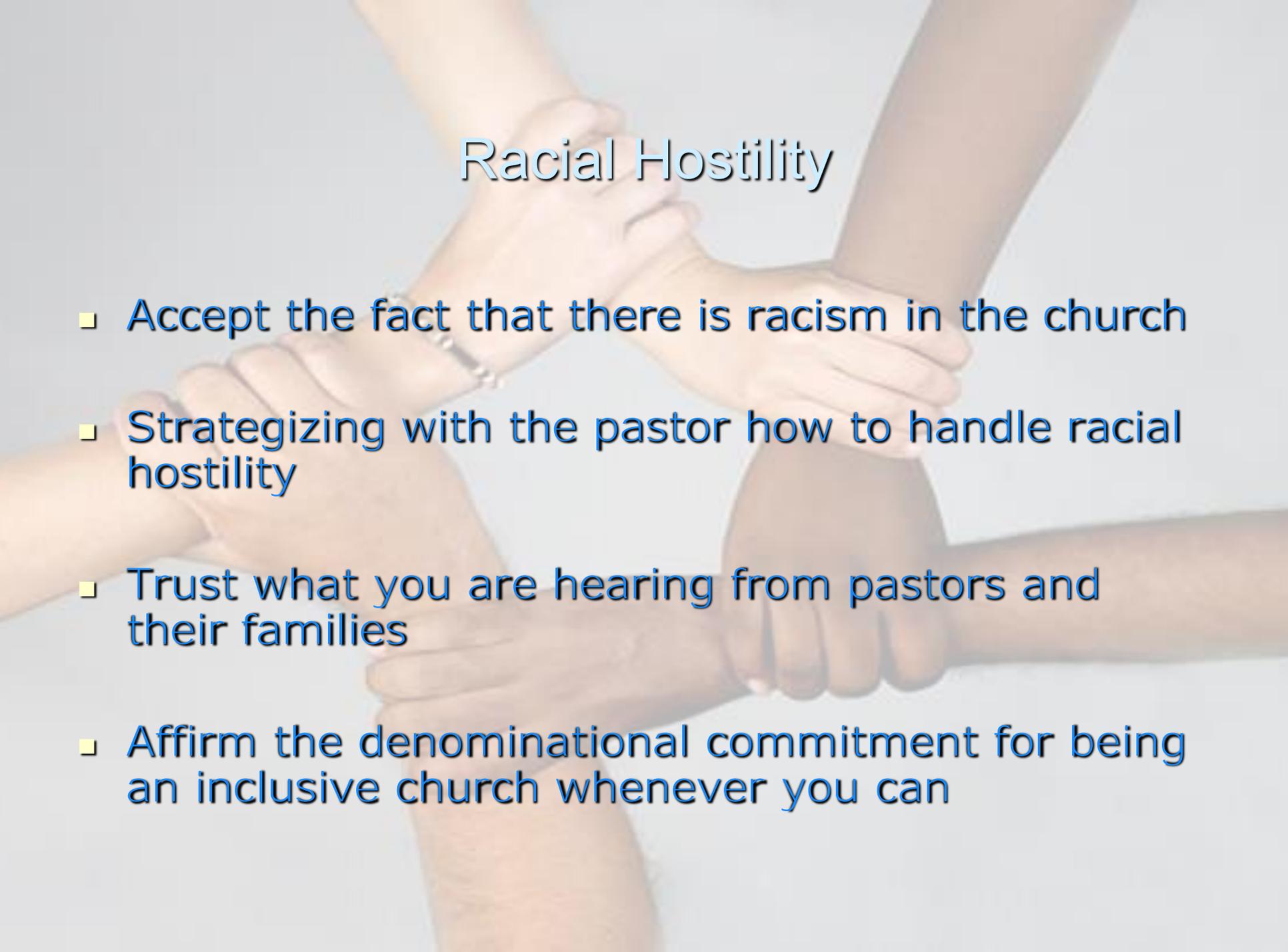
For example ...

- Lack of understanding about CR-CC appointment
- Fear of a decrease in membership
- 'Why us?' question
- Concern for miscommunication
- How would the congregation assist older members to accept change
- Lack of understanding of the pastor's culture

Issues to Consider for Successful CR-CC appointments

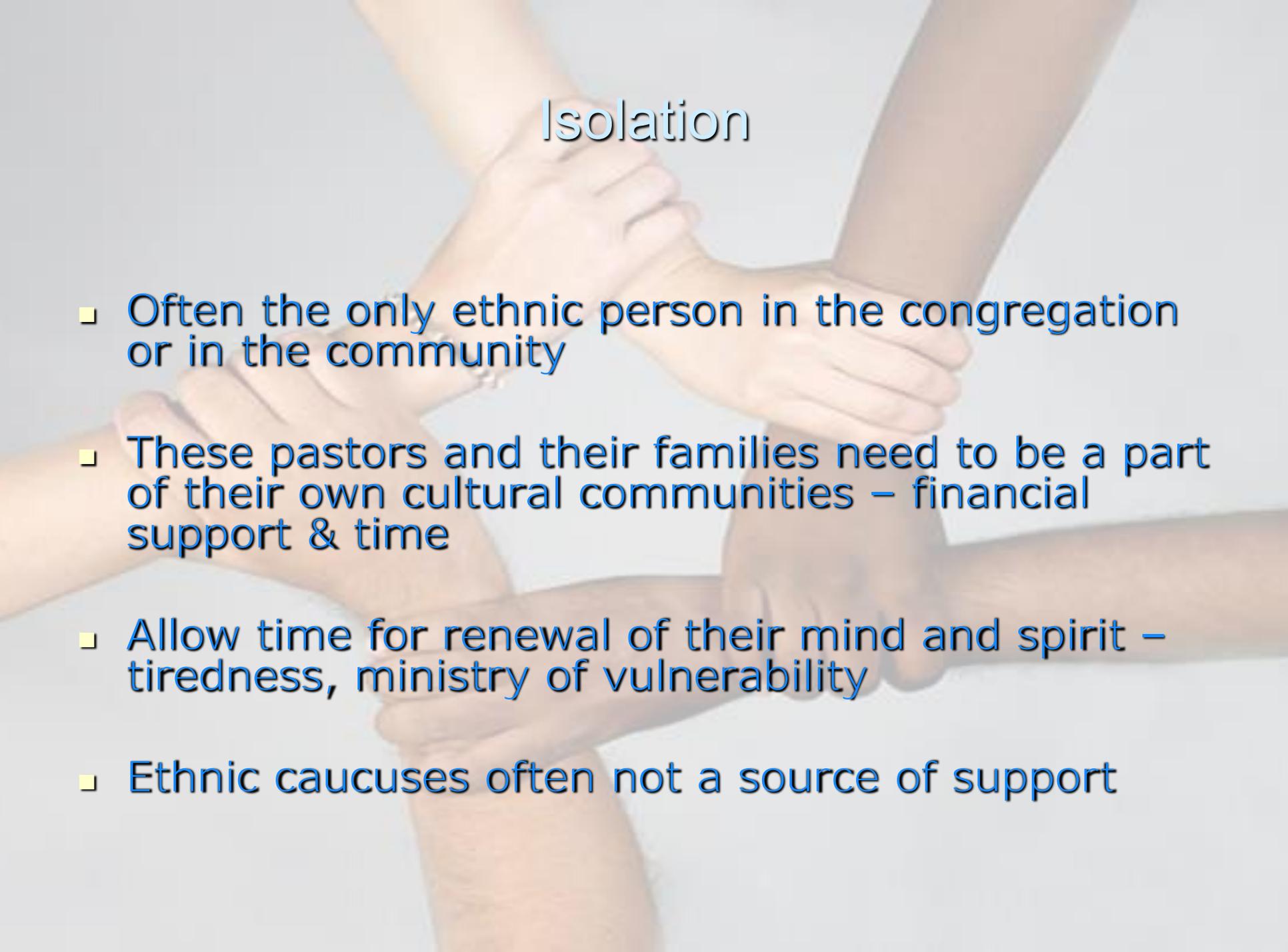
Cultural Confusions

- Provide language improvement opportunities for the pastors for whom English is a second language
- Encourage clergy to visit parishioners
- Discuss about the perception of authority with clergy and SPRC
- Discuss about different leadership styles with clergy and SPRC
- Set up clergy mentors in the community
- Respect the call of the pastor



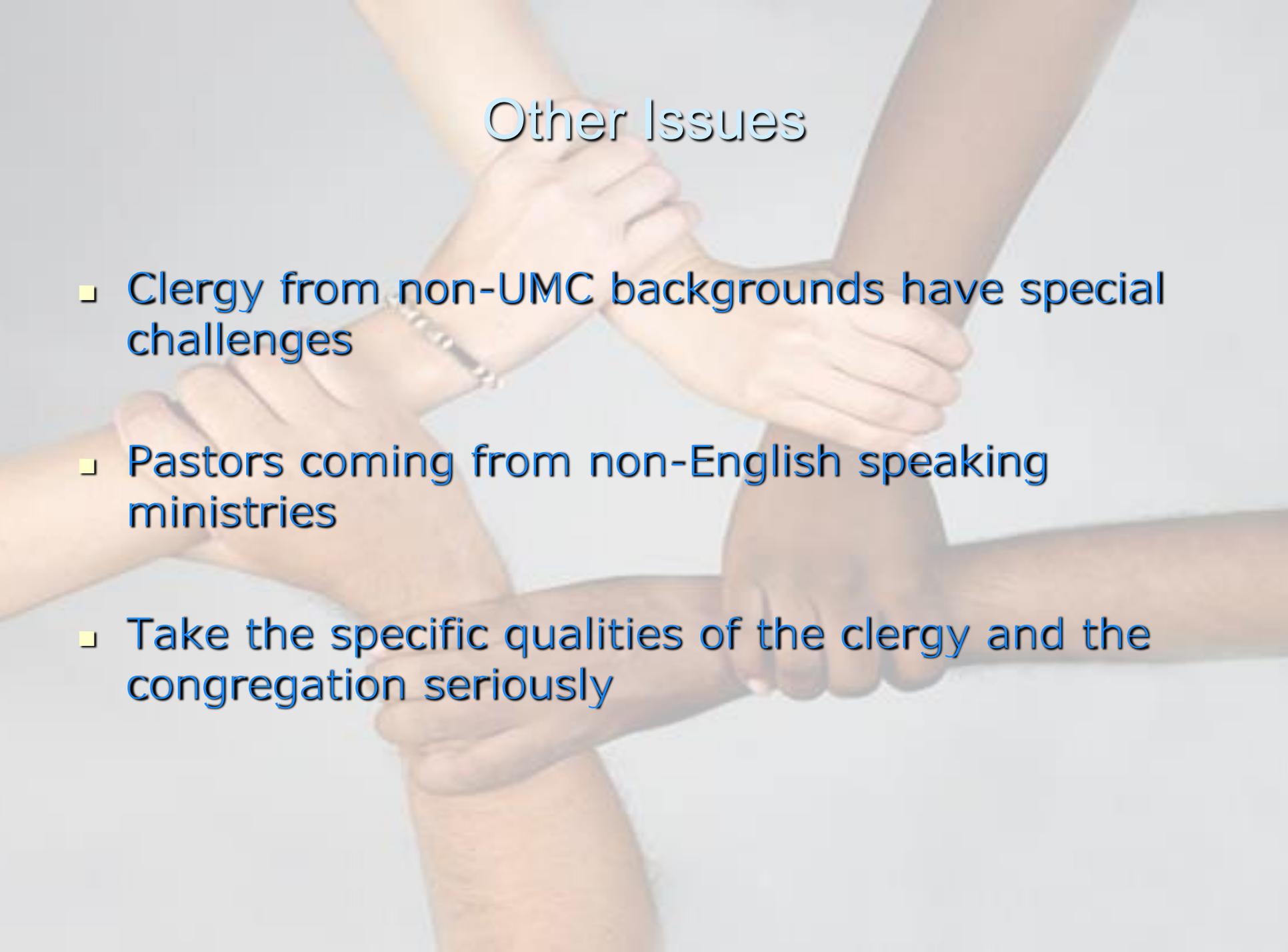
Racial Hostility

- Accept the fact that there is racism in the church
- Strategizing with the pastor how to handle racial hostility
- Trust what you are hearing from pastors and their families
- Affirm the denominational commitment for being an inclusive church whenever you can



Isolation

- Often the only ethnic person in the congregation or in the community
- These pastors and their families need to be a part of their own cultural communities – financial support & time
- Allow time for renewal of their mind and spirit – tiredness, ministry of vulnerability
- Ethnic caucuses often not a source of support



Other Issues

- Clergy from non-UMC backgrounds have special challenges
- Pastors coming from non-English speaking ministries
- Take the specific qualities of the clergy and the congregation seriously

On the Part of the Appointed Pastor

- Undergo self-examination to confirm your ethnic identity
- Share who you are as a person with your congregation
- Pastoral visits to members of the congregation are essential for a meaningful CR-CC ministry
- Be proactive in learning of a contextual and historical understanding of the dynamics of the congregation
- Meet with community leaders in different organizations
- Use sermons and studies to educate the congregation regarding the theological foundation of God's inclusive church
- Maximize the opportunities of interracial, intercultural and interethnic dialogue
- Encourage racial and cultural exchange programs with different churches

