

CHAPTER 26

Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry

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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. 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)

Denominational Commitment

The United Methodist Church will continue to face the challenges and wonderful opportunities for mission and ministry presented by a multiracial and multicultural society. In light of these challenges, The United Methodist Church promotes and holds in high esteem the opportunity to be an inclusive church with the formation of open itineracy.

The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. (¶4, Article IV)

Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. (¶338)

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)

The United Methodist Church's commitment to inclusive leadership through open itineracy includes cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.

Call for Christians

- Christians are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20).
- Building healthy relationships requires ongoing, intentional effort.
- All people are created in the image of God. Relationships with others enhance our relationship with God.

Responsibilities of the BOM

- Consider how demographic changes may affect the church's leadership needs in each annual conference.
- Examine assumptions related to racial and cultural differences that may exist in the interview processes.

Questions for examining the processes and practices of the BOM

- What assumptions and expectations may exist regarding appropriate behavior in interpersonal relationships (i.e. eye contact, relationship to elders, authority in the family, the use of power in the community, cultural boundaries, space between people, relationship to the opposite sex, etc.)?
- How do these assumptions and expectations vary from one culture to another? How does this inform the way the BOM relates to candidates?
- In what ways are the BOM's practices congruent with its intentions about developing diverse leadership?
- What practices need to change?

BOM education, training, and monitoring

- Invite trained leaders to guide the BOM in reflecting on its theology and practice in matters of race and culture.
- Implement processes for receiving feedback about the BOM's practice from a variety of sources. Consider assigning a monitor for BOM meetings - someone who will pay particular attention not only to what is said, but to what is left out of discussions in the board proceedings in regard to issues of race and culture. Allow the monitor's report to help the BOM members engage in dialogue about these issues.
- The IDI is an instrument that measures people's orientation toward cultural difference. Invite a licensed facilitator to administer and interpret the Intercultural Development Inventory to provide that inventory for BOM members.

Further questions

- How does the BOM examine its practice of ministry regarding issues of racism?
- How does it seek feedback and from whom?
- What anti-discrimination or multi-cultural training is required for BOM and dCOM members?
- Does the examination of candidates consider a person's ability to work effectively in cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments?
- What expectations exist regarding English proficiency for individuals whose first language is not English? What guides those assumptions and expectations? How are they communicated to candidates?
- Every community has unique characteristics. Does the BOM consider a candidate's ability to understand different community contexts and the implications of demographics for ministry as a part of its assessment of readiness for ordination?
- What support systems are available to help challenge and cope with the reality of racism in society and as it exists in the church? What support systems might the BOM sponsor or advocate in assisting clergy and churches to address the issues of racism?

Points to consider when working with clergy or candidates with immigration status

- Immigration status: How does the BOM check the immigration status of clergy or candidates for ordained ministry?
- Immigration law: Is the BOM ready to assist clergy or candidates with their immigration status according to current immigration law?

- Working with the cabinet: Does the BOM have an on-going consultation with the cabinet and the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees regarding clergy or candidates with immigration status needs?
- Language: Are there guidelines on English-language proficiency in the annual conference?
- Financial assistance: What are the policies for providing financial assistance for clergy or candidates who need to improve their language proficiency?
- Salary and benefits: Are all clergy receiving adequate salary, health, and pension benefits?
- Orientation program: Does the annual conference provide an orientation program for clergy or candidates who recently immigrated to the United States?
- Training opportunities: What training opportunities does the BOM provide concerning immigration and cultural diversity?

Resources and Publications

[General Commission on Religion and Race](#), The United Methodist Church. Extensive bibliography and other resources available.

[Intercultural Development Inventory](#) (IDI) - www.idiinventory.com. Licensed individuals who may be contacted to administer and interpret the IDI include the following:

- Kristina Gonzalez, kgonzalez@pnwumc.org
- Keith Andrew Hwang, revkahwang@hotmail.com
- Barbara Issacs, bissacs@gcorr.org
- Lucia Ann (Shan) McSpadden, lmcspadden@psr.edu
- Craig Parrish, cparrish@pnwumc.org

Justice for Our Neighbors - JFON is a ministry of welcome to immigrants through the provision of immigration legal assistance. Search the Internet for contact information for many different local chapters.

Lyght, Ernest S., Glory E. Dharmaraj, and Jacob S. Dharmaraj. *Many Faces One Church: A Manual for Cross-Racial and Cross Cultural Ministry*. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2006.

McSpadden, Lucia Ann. *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-Cultural-Cross-Racial Clergy Appointments*. Nashville, Tenn.: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2003.

McSpadden, Lucia Ann. *Meeting God at the Boundaries: A Manual for Church Leaders*. [Rev. ed. Nashville, Tenn.: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2006.

Park, HiRho. "Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments: Training Resource PowerPoint." [BOM Library](#). GBHEM, n.d. Web. 25 June 2012.

The Manual of Cross-Racial & Cross-Cultural Ministries for Korean-American Pastors in the United Methodist Church. Seoul, Korea: Qumran Publishing House, 2009. Print.

[The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) – www.uscis.gov

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