

## Chapter 23

## Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry

For more information, contact GBHEM's Director of Clergy Lifelong Learning at [clergy lifelonglearning@gbhem.org](mailto:clergy lifelonglearning@gbhem.org) or 615-340-7432.

*“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)*

### Christian and Denominational Commitment to Diversity

- Christians are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20).
- “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)
- Itineracy
  - “The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments. Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity.” (§338)
  - The United Methodist Church will continue to face the challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry in 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
  - “Annual conferences shall, in their training of Pastor/Staff - Parish Relations Committee, 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.” (§430.1)
  - The 2016 General Conference added requirements for the dCOM to “make reasonable accommodation for cultural and ethnic/racial realities and language translations as candidates meet the requirements for candidacy, including interviews, psychological assessments, criminal background and credit checks. (§310.2b (2) and §666.4)

### The BOM and Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Ministry

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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 process.

**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?

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Implement a process that allows and encourages feedback about the BOM's practice from a variety of sources.
- Have trained leaders guide the BOM to reflect on its theology and practice in matters of race and culture.
- Assign a monitor who can observe BOM meetings and notice what is left out of discussions regarding issues of race and culture. The monitor's report may help the BOM members to engage in a dialogue about these issues.
- Provide training to the BOM members using The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), an instrument that measures people's orientation toward cultural difference. A licensed facilitator can administer and interpret the IDI for BOM members.

**QUESTIONS FROM LEGISLATION ADDED BY 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE**

- 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? How are they communicated to the BOM and dCOM?
- 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 multicultural 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?
- 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?

**IMMIGRATION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Considerations when working with clergy or candidates who are immigrating into the United States
  - 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 Pastor/Staff-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, housing and 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

- **www.gcorr.org** – General Commission on Religion and Race of The United Methodist Church
- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) licensed individuals who may be contacted to administer and interpret the IDI include the following:
  - Kristina Gonzalez, [kgonzalez@pnwumc.org](mailto:kgonzalez@pnwumc.org)
  - Keith Andrew Hwang, [revkahwang@hotmail.com](mailto:revkahwang@hotmail.com)
  - Lucia Ann (Shan) McSpadden, [lmcspadden@psr.edu](mailto:lmcspadden@psr.edu)
  - Craig Parrish, [cparrish@pnwumc.org](mailto:cparrish@pnwumc.org)
- **www.tnjfon.org** – Justice for Our Neighbors. JFON is a ministry that provides affordable legal services to low income immigrants and their families
- **www.uscis.gov** –The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service
- 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 and 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*. Nashville, Tenn.: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2006.
- Park, HiRho, “*Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments Orientation Material*.” PowerPoint slide presentation posted at [www.bomlibrary.org](http://www.bomlibrary.org) under Candidacy and Conference Relations Resources. No date.
- Park, HiRho. “Leadership Style of UMC Racial-Ethnic Lead Pastors Who Are Serving Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Appointments.” Nashville, TN: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2015.
- The Manual of Cross-Racial & Cross-Cultural Ministries for Korean-American Pastors in the United Methodist Church. Seoul, Korea: Qumran Publishing House, 2009.