

INCLUSIVENESS IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidences of God’s grace to the unity of the Church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus’ ministry to all persons. Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the Church, the community, and the world. Thus, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.

“The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world. In The United Methodist Church, inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the requirements of The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* in the membership and leadership of the Church at any level and in every place.” (2000 *Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church*, paragraph 138)

Inclusiveness has been defined as, “the term in United Methodism that means that every level of the denomination is to be open to all people in all settings on a fully equal basis. There is no distinction made because of racial or ethnic background, national origin, gender, age, handicapping condition, or any other criteria. It is the policy of The United Methodist Church to be fully inclusive of all persons in their participation in the life and work of the church.” (A *Dictionary for United Methodists*, page 108)

The Church of Jesus Christ is the institution that God has charged with the ministry of reconciliation. There can be no reconciliation until every ethnic group’s gifts and talents are valued by the entire community of faith. The church anticipates the reign of God where the community is fully open and made whole. The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church seeks to make that a daily reality in our common life. We pray, “Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” With God’s grace, we strive to become the Beloved Community, the City of God, and The Light on a Hill. We live between what we are and what we shall become as we embrace the theme of the church for this new millennium, “*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.*”

MISSION STATEMENT

In becoming the community of wholeness to which God calls us, the North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will work intentionally towards the vision of healing, inclusiveness, reconciliation, and empowering the marginalized. We will address racism and brokenness. We will order and re-order programs and budget at every level of the church so that ethnic local churches and ministries may be strengthened for mission and witness in the twelve districts where our churches exist and for mission and witness to the whole world.

Open hearts, minds, and doors reverberates across our airwaves and television screens. This has yet to be a reality in every local church and in our shared life. Unless the ethnic local church is strengthened for this work, our United Methodist presence and outreach will be less than God intends it to be. We will act consistently within this mission to assure that ethnic presence is at the leadership tables in all aspects of the life and ministry of this conference. To God be the glory.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF INCLUSIVENESS SUMMARY

GOALS 2004

1. To the Cabinet, consider a spiritual retreat to reflect upon the theological, biblical, social understanding of inclusiveness with regard to race, ethnicity and disability.

a. Bring in leadership to lead discussion on racial justice and cultural sensitivity to racial and ethnic and persons challenge by disabilities.

b. Launch celebration of learning and awareness with a Bishop’s Day Apart. Racial reconciliation and sensitivity toward cultural diversity and persons with developmental and/or physical disabilities, are some concerns to be addressed.

2. To District Superintendents, Cabinets & Episcopal Circle, Multicultural Ministry Team will develop leadership teams to assist pastors in districts to be aware of barriers to inclusiveness and be prepared to implement Ways of reaching inclusiveness in the local church.

3. To SPRC Committees, Communication Circle and Episcopal Committee, to listen and record stories of Cross Racial Ethnic Appointments and share feedback to the Episcopal Committee.

Budget: Communication

4. To District Superintendents, Cabinet & Episcopal Circle.

a. Provide a district training event for SPRC Committee in preparation for Cross Racial /Ethnic appointments.

b. Cabinet to revise forms for SPRC Committee asking the question of the church’s openness to cross racial appointments.

c. The Cabinet will work with the Episcopal Circle.

d. Cabinet share results with multicultural ministries for follow-up.

Budget: District Work Fund

5. To Staff & Multicultural Ministries.

a. Develop a leaflet for local churches with strategies for encouraging relationship building between congregations of different Racial/ethnic backgrounds.

b. District Superintendents to appoint designated teams to implement strategies among local churches.

c. Cabinet include accounting in 2005 report to annual conference.

Budget: Plan for Inclusiveness grant.

5. To Multicultural Staff, prepare a leaflet for racial/ethnic churches on funding resources and personnel available through the local, district, conference, general and ecumenical sources.

Budget: Multicultural Ministries.

6. To Episcopal Committee, work to improve inclusiveness within the Annual Conference. Ask the Bishop to share his vision of Inclusiveness and steps taken to implement the vision.

Budget: Conference Program Committee and Episcopal Committee.

7. To Hispanic Ministry Team, take leadership, in cooperation with other immigrant groups, in setting goals and planning appropriate strategies for education and advocacy of immigration and documentation issues to local congregations. The team will then determine the feasibility of providing resources to help with the documentation process.

Budget: Mission Development Circle and emerging ministries.

2005 Goals

1. District Councils & Multicultural Ministries Team.

Lay leadership needs to be aware of barriers to inclusiveness and be prepared to implement ways of reaching inclusiveness in the local church.

a. Provide an annual leadership training event to address inclusiveness as it relates to racism, cultural diversity, and disabilities.

b. The Multicultural team will work with districts to plan event leadership and resources.

Budget: District leadership development funds and connectional ministries.

2. To Ethnic Ministry Teams of African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics.

Each Ethnic Ministry Team will be encouraged to develop a four-year Comprehensive plan by the end of the year (2005), including vision, goals, implementation strategies, evaluation and budget.

Budget: No new funding necessary.

2006 Goals

1. To Board of Ordained Ministry Recruitment Committee.

a. The Conference needs a larger pool of pastors of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, particularly among young adults.

b. The Board of Ordained Ministry is asked to initiate relationship with the teams representing diverse racial/ethnic groups and in cooperation with these teams develop and implement strategies designed to help persons be sensitive to the possibility of God's call to ordained ministry.

Budget: Board of Ordained Ministry

2. To Office of Congregational Development & Cabinet.

a. To develop new congregations intentionally serving African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics as well as intentional multicultural congregations.

b. The Cabinet and office of Congregational Development, in cooperation with the Multicultural Ministries Team, will devise strategies to strengthen and establish these congregations for long-term presence and ministry in their communities.

Budget: Office of Congregational Development.

3. To Multicultural Ministries, Cabinet Monitoring and Accountability.

a. The multicultural Ministries Team will develop an instrument to determine a local church's inclusiveness in light of the racial/ethnic composition of the community.

b. The Cabinet will include a summary of its report to the Annual Conference and submit a written report to the committee on Monitoring and Accountability.

1. To Ethnic Ministry Teams, Nominating Committee, Episcopal Circle.

a. Each Ethnic Ministry Team representing ministry with African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanic will be asked to develop a list of individuals to serve in leadership roles on district, conference, jurisdiction and general conference levels.

b. The Episcopal Circle will determine financial resources available for the needed translation services to facilitate translation services.

Budget: Nomination, Episcopal, and Annual Conference.

2. To the Bishop.

The Bishop will appoint a Task Force on Persons with Disabilities to study and make recommendations for increasing inclusiveness and sensitivity to persons challenged by developmental and/or Physical disabilities.

Budget: From emerging ministries Mission Development Circle.

2007 Goals

1. To Multicultural Ministries and Monitoring and Accountability

Evaluation of our conferences steps toward inclusiveness to be evaluated and shared with the Annual Conference.

Budget: Multicultural ministries and Monitoring and Accountability.

2. To Multicultural Ministries Team

The Multicultural Ministries team will develop next steps in new quadrennium. The document that specifies areas of continuing need as well as strategies that worked and those that did not.

Budget: Multicultural Ministries.

To read the 2003 approved Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness, go to <http://www.nccumc.org/docs/multiandsocialmins/cpisummary.doc>

*Summary of the Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness**

**North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church**



**Approved at the 2003 Annual Conference in
Fayetteville, North Carolina*

For more information about the Comprehensive Plan, contact

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