

ITEM D.206
FOR INFORMATION

**2015 NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING REGIONAL RACIAL ETHNIC
MINISTRIES**

In light of the shifting landscape of presbyteries and synod structures and programs, the 221st General Assembly 2014 called for a national consultation on developing regional racial ethnic ministries in 2015. Due to the continuous growth of the racial ethnic population in the United States, and the expected increase of new immigrant Bible study groups, fellowships, and new church developments in the PC(USA), there will be a need to maintain regional expressions of racial ethnic ministries. A ten-member planning team for the consultation was formed and met February 9-10, 2015, in Louisville, Kentucky. The consultation is tentatively scheduled for May 2015.

The General Assembly has charged the consultation with the following task: “developing a vision and structure so each ministry may create its own unique way of doing ministry.”

The national consultation on developing regional racial ethnic ministries was one of several recommendations from the National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force to the 221st General Assembly (2014). The Task Force was approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) in response to a recommendation from the General Assembly Mid Council Commission Racial Ethnic Strategy Task Force, which arose out of a concern for the future of regional racial ethnic ministries, if the number of synods was reduced.

The rationale for the recommendation from the National Racial Ethnic Ministries Task Force includes the following observations, “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has taken supportive and encouraging positions advocating inclusion and support of racial ethnic ministries. While this may be true, significant problems remain. Many of our racial ethnic congregations find themselves in presbyteries in which they are the only congregation of its kind and receive little or no assistance in the form of guidance, nurture, or resources. Some congregations and/or members of racial ethnic groups have not been fully welcomed to be present or to share their gifts in some contexts and structures. The commitment to inclusion and racial ethnic ministry has waned in recent years and other priorities have moved to the forefront in terms of resources, time and energy. In past General Assemblies, racial ethnic ministries have been highlighted, proclaimed, and met with approval through statements and strategies but have received little support or funding. As the universal church in general, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in particular, grapples with complex societal, theological, and cultural challenges, racial ethnic ministries have in many cases taken a back seat or been declared a cause from another era. Although these are significant barriers to unity in the body of Christ, we believe that through God’s Holy Spirit, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can experience a new life and vision through the witness and vision of racial ethnic members of this denomination and those who seek to claim the Reformed tradition as their home.”

The Rev. Sterling Morse, Coordinator for Intercultural Ministries, is staff supporting the 2015 National Racial Ethnic Ministries Consultation.