

ITEM C.301
ADVICE AND COUNSEL MEMORANDUM

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) advises the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board to disapprove Item ([C.106](#))

Rationale:

Similar to the Report of the Special Offerings Advisory Task Force that was brought to the 221st General Assembly (2014), the recommendations and rationale in Item C.106 from the Advisory Committee on the Allocation of Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Funds from the Christmas Joy Offering (CJO) leave ACREC with many concerns and questions.

The historic commitment of the PC(USA) to providing access to education for people of color appears to be waning. Rather than increasing support to historically Presbyterian educational institutions with proven track records in cultivating and supporting racial ethnic leaders in the PC(USA), it appears that the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) is funneling that support back to the PMA for agency discretionary distribution. ACREC is aware that the PMA is in a difficult financial situation, but we question whether this recommendation maintains deep, meaningful and accountable support for education opportunities for racial ethnic leaders in the PC(USA).

Within the rationale of Item C.106, it reads, “Our hope is to equip all church leaders, necessarily including racial ethnic persons, but not exclusive to them...” This is of concern to ACREC, given that this portion of the CJO has historically been committed specifically to the education of racial ethnic persons in the PCUSA. If this recommendation is approved, the money would be redirected to the *Racial Ethnic Leadership Development Office* for discretionary use instead. It is one thing to propose using CJO monies for alternative programs in a vein that runs parallel to the original intent of that offering; however, we are not convinced that this recommendation does that. Redirecting CJO funds in an entirely different direction as outlined and “not necessarily only for racial ethnic Presbyterians” is of great concern to ACREC.

Of further concern to ACREC is the ambiguity running through this recommendation and rationale including:

- 1) Who or what constitutes and who identifies and ultimately selects the “network of professionals engaged in the formation of church leaders across institutions of higher theological education, national ecclesial bodies, and congregational and mid-council leaders who are deliberate in their work of crossing religious and cultural boundaries” to be consulted/used to “initiate and support” this network? And what will be the source of funding for this effort?
- 2) Since the consultation proposed will be by invitation, who will determine who is invited? Who will represent the stakeholders? All control of these funds will be in the hands of PMA staff

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people. The funds from the CJO were not intended to finance the work of the agency, rather they were earmarked to fund racial ethnic ministry in the local context.

ACREC's concern is that this is, definitively, an entirely different direction than was ever intended for the portion of the CJO committed to the Historically Presbyterian Racial Ethnic Institutions (HPREIs). The [recommendation](#) that support of the HPREIs is no longer a viable option for supporting the education of leaders of color is a recommendation ACREC has [advised against](#).

We hope the PMA Board will reconsider.