

THE COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

Remarkably Jesus our Lord had us on His heart with great desire before His own suffering. Jesus' compassionate, zealous prayer to God for us believers was that we be present with Him and behold His glory which God had given Him in God's love for Jesus.

Such glorious love in Christ Jesus propels us. The Holy Spirit provides a well-spring of resources dwelling in us all with ethnic richness and diversity as God's children. The Spirit fosters, and brings out benefits from, our particular ethnic gifts and qualities. So, let us as a church family be led by God earnestly to open up to God's guidance in putting into place persons embodying racial diversity for servant-leadership. Local churches, and all ministry teams, are thanked for honoring this important work of placing diverse people in positions of service and leadership.

Religion and Race's role (2004 *Discipline*, ¶ 642) is to enable, monitor, advocate, sensitize, empower, counsel, and investigate racial concerns in the Annual Conference.

We stand in solidarity with Connectional Ministries' newly energized emphasis on working together personally on site with persons all across South Carolina in Christian ministry. Please note the names and addresses of commission members so you may call upon us to come and be personally involved with you in your location as part of Christ's Church.

Friendship Church in Nesmith suffered the desecration of church property by racial vandalism done by two individuals in February of 2007. Friendship Church members' godly grace and amazing forgiveness toward the two individuals inspires consecration of our lives. Religion and Race is blessed to have experienced fellowship and Bible study with the congregation.

Ongoing and new priorities in 2007 and beyond include:

1. Annual Conference monitoring of racial and gender participation using Jurisdictional Monitoring Forms for Religion and Race and for The Commission on the Status and Role of Women.
2. Presenting awards of The Joseph Benjamin Bethea Service Award, and The Barbara Boultinghouse Bridge Builder Award.
3. A Plan for Inclusiveness to be developed with the Bishop, cabinet, and Annual Conference.
4. Utilizing findings of the 2002 Conference Audit, and 2003 On-Site Review by the General Commission on Religion and Race.
5. Studying and sharing with the Conference a study already done on The Effects of Merger.
6. Receiving from the General Commission for implementation a protocol for responding to hate crimes.

Thanks for their commitment and creativity are expressed to all commission members and to our previous Chairperson, Ellen Younker. We rejoice over racial richness while seeking dutifully to work at fair, wise, unselfish, and exciting inclusion.

Fred McDaniel, Acting Chairperson.