

THE COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

Jesus Christ our Lord says “now” powerfully, just like He says powerfully everything else from His heart and lips. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and in Him God is glorified; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him at once. Little children...A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that also you love one another.”. (John 13)”

Like Jesus said when He accepted His cross, so the Spirit of Jesus says the same to us now. Putting confidence in the Lord, we seek to be faithful and completely obedient to Jesus in this love commandment concerning love for God and all our brothers and sisters. We affirm that the power and grace of Jesus energize us to serve. Gladly we accept the Book of Disciplines’ mandate to lift up and to monitor the blessing of racial inclusion in our South Carolina conference.

Your commission is blessed to have embodied in its willing membership ethnicities of African American, Euro American, Hispanic American, and Native American: perhaps others of which we are not aware. Good and vast inclusion begins at home, so we encourage local charge conferences and districts to be sensitized to this at nomination time.

We are excited to report that from last year’s 2007 annual conference one of our long time members who monitored stated that in terms of racial diversity it was the best she had ever witnessed. This healthy racial diversity took place especially in worship leadership and in preaching and teaching.

Five particular printed tools exist to help you and me. 1. “Conference Commission on Religion and Race Manual”, 2000, Revised. 2. “On-Site Review Report”, 2003, showing on paper the number facts of racial inclusion in South Carolina United Methodist bodies, with suggestions. 3. “The Ministry of Racial Reconciliation” booklet by former General Secretary Chester R. Jones. 4.”The Central Jurisdiction Recovery Project, Preserving our Past, Building Our Future”. 5. “The Pros and Cons of Merger (Personal Insights) A History/Listening Project”, 1992.

Within the last few years, great interest has been expressed in finding out how people feel about effectiveness of the merger of the “black” and “white” South Carolina conferences in 1972. Low and behold, such a study has been already compiled by many dedicated folk from 1990-1992. We affirm the importance and helpfulness of “The Pros and Cons” study.

God helps us realize work God has been doing in cultivating wonderful diversity in God’s people’s created and redeemed nature in this marvelous conference. At the same time, God helps us realize that we can too easily overlook appreciating and affirming others, and when that happens God’s people suffer. Let us be faithful to God, and thereby ‘right now’ let God’s Spirit lead: to learn from others of all ethnicities; to be humble before, and blessed by, the leadership of others; to boldly stand for all Christ Jesus says, not putting over until later, but now and always living in the Spirit.

Fred McDaniel, Chairperson