

*Shifting Accountability for Racial Ethnic Ministries  
in the PC(USA) from Variety to Equity*

Study Guide  
from the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

*About this Study Guide*

This study guide is meant to help Presbyterians engage in conversations to end structural racism and move toward racial equity in the church and in our society. Discussion questions are added to each section of the study guide, and a form is provided for users to fill out and return. The guide comes from an action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in response to the report of the Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism, and Ethnocentrism. That action directed the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Board of Pensions to host a series of regional conversations using the study guide.

*Introduction*

In fulfilling their mandate from the 221st General Assembly (2014) to develop a vision and structure for developing regional racial ethnic ministries that enable each such ministry to “create its own unique way of doing ministry,” the participants in the National Consultation on Regional Racial Ethnic Ministries have sought to do so:

- aware of past mandates and previous strategies (as far back as the 184th General Assembly (1972), which called for establishment of “instrumentalities for ministry among ethnic minorities” in each newly-reorganized regional synod);
- attentive to current denominational conditions and factors—some reported by the national staff who met with them and others identified by consultation participants themselves—which might affect the conceiving, establishing, and adequate resourcing of new regional entities for racial ethnic ministries;
- aligned with a future-oriented vision for a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) actively and authentically engaged in becoming part of the wider church of Jesus Christ which God is bringing into being in the changing demographics of the communities across our country in which Presbyterians have been placed.

The learnings from this tri-focal approach have led consultation participants to see discussions and decisions regarding regional structures for racial ethnic ministries to be more than merely meetings about instrumentalities and processes. Because the structures requested by the General Assembly involve relationships between and among different members and ministries serving diverse communities, discussions about ways of being in relationship are essential foundations for such structures and the attendant policies, practices, and programs that may emerge.

In addition, whether these discussions involve parties within an area served by one or more than one mid-council, taking into account the relevant history or histories of the communities and relationships involved will be also be key to honesty and wisdom in exploring and envisioning new futures and appropriate structures for such futures. Consequently, while the mandate from the

General Assembly implies the assumption that “one size does not fit all,” Consultation participants have added the assumption that it is not fitting to develop a package of models or “best practices” from which each regional entity might select a preferred approach to programmatic relationship in joint ministry.

Instead, what is offered in the sections that follow is intended to be a resource for the preliminary individual and group reflection and subsequent dialogue that enable old as well as new partners to discern and develop new racial ethnic ministry together. This resource is organized around five proposed foci for such reflection and discussion:

*Patterns*—In the light of the “history lessons” learned about interracial relationship, multiracial inclusion, cross-cultural communication, and culturally attentive governance, what unproductive and unhealthy patterns of relationship need to be broken?

*Postures*—What new postures (ways of being in relationship) and perspectives (ways of seeing one another) need to be set and cultivated in order that “inclusiveness and diversity” are experienced in new or enhanced forms of mutual respect, genuine fellowship, and meaningful representation and inclusion?

*Processes*—What new or revised approaches are needed in planning, managing, and evaluating in order for the appropriate conception, creative design, and sustained development of racial ethnic ministries?

*Practices*—What needs to be done so that culturally-different approaches to racial ethnic ministry can be understood, encouraged, interpreted, and supported as diversity-enhancing differences rather than division-causing differences?

*Positioning*—What immediate adjustments and experiments do we need so that efforts to begin new regional racial ethnic ministries not only celebrate gifts of ethnic culture but also demonstrate sensitive and innovative ecclesiastical culture?

These focal points are not multiple-choice options for consideration; they are offered as a “complete package” with the emphatic encouragement that all five areas be discussed by groups charged with overseeing the design of new ways to organize and sustain racial ethnic ministries regionally. The hope which accompanies this encouragement is that the “far sighted” presbyopia of past attempts will be avoided through painstaking attempts to not only share visions of “distant” future racial ethnic ministries possibilities, but to also be equally attentive to looking at the “up close” impediments to such ministries of the present and recent past. In the spirit of “overseeing but not overlooking,” the following sections provide details and examples of each focus for discernment and discussion.

### *Pattern Breaking*

Through our consultation, one of the key concerns as identified by the team was the practices and patterns that are currently in place. Often times these patterns exhibit the dominance of power of one sector of the church over another and condones the practices and exertion of authority, without the consultation of all stakeholders. The repeated patterns of such practices also demonstrate a lack of sensitivity and recognition of all voices and opinions as reflected within the larger church and of society. The resistance towards change also inhibits the peace, unity and purity of the church.

In order for meaningful and sustainable change to occur, we recognize that there needs to be a collaborative effort among the racial ethnic constituents, as well as the non-racial ethnic constituents and other stakeholders, including the staff leadership of the church. Racial ethnic ministry is an integral part of the PC(USA). We recognize that changes can sometimes be painful but yet they are necessary. We may or may not see the results come to full fruition, however, intentional and purposeful changes lead to lasting impact and legacy.

In order for this process to succeed, we seek and advocate that the PC(USA) be fully committed to identifying and offering the opportunities for racial ethnic individuals to serve on various committees, task forces and other entities, including in upper management positions, with equal voice, power, and vote as to the rest of their colleagues. We shall value the contributions and the gifts presented by all persons within our diverse body of Christ in the overall feasting at the table.

We have identified areas of patterns that need to be broken or must be stopped:

#### *Stop Keeping Racial Ethnic People Out of the Loop*

Transparency and open communication serve as the foundation of establishing trust. We seek to be specific and intentional about changes. Coordinate responses before acting; consensus is necessary before implementation. Keep everyone informed of what is taking place and how important decisions are derived, especially those that impact the racial ethnic constituents. Invite those racial ethnic individuals for consultation and contribution towards change and solutions.

#### *Stop Treating Racial Ethnic People as Token Members*

Racial ethnic individuals shall not be served as window dressing or to satisfy committee on representation's requirements. When racial ethnic individuals were invited to serve on committees, task forces, and other entities, they shall be valued for what gifts and contributions they bring to the conversations at the table. Their opinions shall be weighted equally and their voices, regardless of volume, fairly considered. All members shall have equal voice, vote, and power as we are all called as partners in Christ's Service.

#### *Stop Complaining about PC(USA) at Every Instance*

We are called to extend grace and the spirit of collaboration. We should extend appreciation to all those who are a part of the diverse community of faith while giving thanks for the good things that they do. Healthy conversation and dialogue towards meaningful and intentional change shall begin by expressing thanksgiving and appreciation to all. Change begins with self-reflection and evaluation of how we may be a part of process towards such change.

### *Stop the Practice of Funding to Fail and Planning Studies to Nowhere*

After we plan to address an important issue of concerns, we systematically place impediments and constraints (i.e., resources in funding, staffing, and time) that lead to greater tendency toward failures rather than successes. We seek to break the pattern of assumption for new task forces in order to develop new visions and concomitant new models or programs when the preceding/existing initiatives have not been fruitful. The problem may rest upon the genuineness of commitment, attempts to implement sustainable change and to allocate adequate resources rather than the previously ascertained vision.

### *Stop Working Alone in Our Separate Racial Ethnic Caucuses*

In order for the voices among the racial ethnic voices to be heard and for their respective ministries to flourish, we must seek to work together as one voice among all caucuses for effective and lasting change. We seek greater collaboration and solidarity among the various racial ethnic caucuses, especially when pertinent issues arise within the church that impact the welfare of the lives and ministries of those of racial ethnic caucuses. We seek to establish networks that promote racial ethnic leadership and lasting change to achieve parity and equity with the church.

### *Stop the Addiction of Total Dependence on PC(USA)*

We seek to serve the church with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. There are opportunities to be creative in relations and mission. We seek to do more with less than what we used to have. Despite the decline in membership and dwindling financial resources, we seek to fund mission through creative means via new funding sources, partnership, stewardship and volunteerism.

### *Stop Feeding into Stereotypes*

We seek to break the traditional patterns of worship; re-imagining who we worship and why we worship, while embracing different styles of worship through our diversity of cultures and traditions. We shall seek to be mindful of the cultural differences among us and be sensitive to changes regarding our church policies.

### *Stop Buying into the Current System*

The rules are cited regarding why we cannot serve as leaders with vote and limited voice. We have access to our rules; therefore, we can work within the system to choose representatives who will promote our agenda. We seek to work with the system to promote change and improve quality of life for racial ethnic membership (Board membership with voice and vote; liaisons with voice)

### *Stop Sitting at the Visitors/Kids Table*

We seek to be an integral part of the church for we are no longer guests or visitors but contributing members of the body of Christ. We seek to share our gifts with the larger community and to actively engage in the decision-making process in all levels of the church.

### *Stop Accepting the Status Quo*

We yearn for a new season of mutual trust and accountability in all levels of decision making, especially when such decisions impact the lives of many who are already marginalized. We seek to give voice to those who are voiceless.

### *Stop Microaggressive Tendencies*

These are a part of structural racism, that can be well-intended but the consequences are still the same. To refine the reference to Paul's exhortation to what Peter Gomes characterized as transformation of minds marked by "humility and modesty" (Rom. 12:1–2), we invite the mid councils to engage in self-examination, confession, and repentance for policies and practices which have resulted in Cultural Iatrogenesis (and consequent injury to racial ethnic individuals, congregations, and communities) rather than cross-cultural genesis (and racial ethnic experiences of New Creation).

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### Discussion Questions Related to Pattern Breaking

- How have you experienced efforts to break unproductive and unhealthy patterns of relationship:
    - between racial ethnic communities and majority white communities?
    - between racial ethnic communities?
    - within multi-racial communities?
  - How might you join in such ministry?
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### *Posture Setting*

Once the series of existing patterns that need to be liberated have been identified, we must then look inward and examine our own postures of how we relate with one another, especially among those who are different from who we are. This is a moment of inward reflection with an outward focus. “For there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

We believe that discussions and decisions regarding regional structures for racial ethnic ministries shall not be limited to discussions about instrumentalities and processes. The structures requested by the General Assembly (2012 and 2014) involve relationship building among different ministries serving diverse communities. This ought to be a shift from program oriented to relationship and trust based. It is not about what we do or how much we have spent but how we do and what lessons we can learn from our experience. This shall be the foundation for effective ministry (racial-ethnic or not) at all levels of our church. Discussions about ways of being in relationship are essential foundations for the structures, processes, and practices that emerge.

The patterns identified in the preceding section that need to be broken necessitate shifting the postures with which we relate to one another in spite of our differences. We must seek ways to engage with one another in more helpful and constructive ways that would impact changes to the existing patterns of operation.

We recommend that as we seek to build bridges and work together, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Office of General Assembly, mid councils, caucuses, churches, and seminaries take up these postures:

#### *Posture of Humility; Romans 12:1–2 “Humility and Modesty” (Gomes)*

We believe in the ministry of all believers, and we believe that we have much to learn from one another. We trust that we particularly learn in relationship. We commit to regularly living in humility with one another by taking the posture of learner. We seek to be informed and transformed through the diverse perspectives and experiences of our brothers and sisters in Christ (Cultural Iatrogenesis).

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#### *Posture of Confession and Self-Awareness*

We believe that self-examination leads to confession, confession leads to repentance, and repentance leads to new life. We commit to the examination of policies and practices that have caused pain, isolation, or injury to our racial ethnic brothers and sisters. We commit to practices of examination and confession that will lead to transformation in the ways we care for one another and work together.

### *Posture of Passion*

We believe the gospel is good news for ALL of God's people. We trust that if we are truly passionate about this good news, we cannot help but take risks for the sake of the gospel. We commit to spiritual practices that remind us of the good news of the gospel, and shape the way we live out the work of ministry together.

### *Posture of Prayer*

We seek discernment through prayers. Through prayers, we invite God to transform our minds and renew our spirits. We commit to practicing deep prayer in our personal and corporate lives together.

### *Posture of Partnership*

We value partnerships. We believe that we can do stronger mission by partnering with one another—across cultures, across denominations, across interest groups, across generations. We commit to pursuing partnerships that will help us more fully engage the mission to which we are called.

### *Posture of Equity*

We engage one another as equals with respect, and we pay attention to the equitable distribution of resources and power. We all work with finite resources, yet part of respect is shared access to resources and decision making. We commit to leveling the playing field so that each participates as full partners in ministry.

### *Posture of Valuing Different Ways to Engage*

We recognize and value that different ways of working come out of different values. Just because others may approach the work in different ways, it doesn't make it "wrong." We are guided in our work together by the Word of God, the *Book of Confessions*, and the *Book of Order*. How we engage that work may be informed by different cultural backgrounds. We commit to valuing different ways of working together (Ambivalence vs. Ambiguity).

### *Posture of Possibilities*

We believe that imagination and passion for ministry, animated by the Holy Spirit, is the primary driver for mission, not money. While it is tempting to focus on the limitations of financial resources, we commit to pay attention to the possibilities and opportunities that are presented before us. We believe that the primary issue does not rest upon the availability of resources, but rather the allocation and appropriation of such resources. Resources distribution needs to be addressed more fairly and on a more equitable basis among ALL of God's people, and not just a few of the elites. We seek to hold those in power and in the position of making such critical decisions to be fully accountable in addressing the needs of the whole body and not just a few of the elites.

As we have identified in the previous section, we seek to be led by the Spirit to conduct God's mission through creative means of funding programs, foster partnership with other community agencies, proper discipleship and teaching on stewardship and volunteerism.

### *Posture of Risk Taking and Experimentation*

We choose to be open to experimenting. We are inspired and encouraged as we discern together, and we discover boldness to take risks. We seek to try things and learn from our past failures and mistakes, especially in this time of rapid change. We commit to experimenting in ministry and decision-making.

### *Posture of Relational Accountability*

We believe that accountability is important, but that it is often lived out in the confines of paperwork and reports. We commit to accountability marked by the stewardship of relationship.

### *Posture of Evaluation*

We engage in evaluation that is learning based instead of achievement based. The pertinent question becomes, “*What did we learn?*” rather than “*Was it a success?*” We commit to evaluative processes that help us to continually shape and reshape ministry that is in process. We also recognize that not everything can be measured by the end-results but rather more importantly by the means of which the process is conducted.

### *Posture of Future Orientation*

We want to engage the question, “*What future is God bringing into being and how do we need to change?*” Recognizing how often our focus is on preserving the past, we commit to boldly anticipating the future.

### *Posture of Self-Reliance*

We believe that we are often held back because we are waiting for someone else (General Assemblies, synods, presbyteries, ... etc.) to do something or allocate the resources. If we are going to faithfully live into the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, we must take initiative and be creative with our resources. We commit to relying more on the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and energy that we each bring to the work.

### *Posture of a Kin-dom*

Finally, we are not called to primarily institutional survival. We are called to give the world glimpses of the kin-dom of God. We cannot lose sight of the new reality that Jesus Christ inaugurated in our world and our relationships through Christ’s ministry. We commit ourselves to this movement of God in our world that transcends any individual institution.

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### Discussion Questions Related to Posture Setting

- How have you experienced new ways of relating to one another that lead to “inclusiveness and diversity” practiced in forms of mutual respect, genuine fellowship, and meaningful representation and inclusion?
  - How might you join in such ministry?
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## *Process Changing*

Having identified the patterns that need to be broken and changed, and the postures that need to be set, we are now ready to identify the process in which sustainable changes may take shape. In order to do that we must identify the processes that exhibit and inhibit change to take place:

### *Develop a Process of Advocacy*

We believe that a process of advocacy must be developed to exhibit change. The process must be inclined to openness, power sharing and transparency that go beyond the individual churches and mid-councils.

### *Be Inclusive within the Decision Making Process*

We seek genuine collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders (i.e. doing ministry *with* peoples, not *to* peoples). Contributions, stories and spiritual practices that have an impact on people, respect cultural differences and the way ministry is done in diverse contexts must be honored.

### *Acknowledge Different Cultural Practices*

We believe that it is important to learn the varying practices such as language, music, worship, and theology, and honor the diversity and uniqueness of one another.

### *Acknowledge Different Cultural Traditions of Leaders*

We recommend a process of welcoming and acclimating for racial ethnic leaders shall be created. Further, the process should provide a safe space, language translation, a manner of worship and practice of ministry that is aligned with their culture and tradition.

### *Engage in Intentional Dialogues about Missional Perspectives*

We believe that a process of engaging in intentional dialogues regarding the missional perspective of the church in light of today's demographic changes is necessary. We recommend that racial ethnic groups be invited to be a part of the decision-making process, and that their gifts and contributions be valued and recognized within the councils.

Such intentional dialogues may include, but not limited to:

- a. Strategic missional planning for neighborhoods where significant demographic shifts have occurred over the years;
- b. Establishing missional partnerships between "tall steeple" churches and churches that are "making ends meet" but may be more equipped and motivated to conduct missional outreach to the local community.

### *Recognize Different Ministry Styles*

We believe that different styles of ministry of racial ethnic congregations must be recognized. Not all ministries are "cookie-cutting" and there is no "best" practice in ministries. The seemingly stagnant-growth or declining non-racial ethnic congregations may learn ministry strategies and

practices from those that are growing and vibrant racial ethnic congregations. We recommend that where appropriate, congregations be willing to develop a covenantal relationship in order to share and help each other grow and learn in the process. Mid councils and their leaders shall facilitate this process with congregations that are seemingly good-match missionally for such partnership.

#### *Translate and Honor Stories*

We encourage mid councils to translate and honor the stories of each population that compose the life of the presbytery, i.e. translation of the docket, cultural celebrations, inclusive worship that uplifts the ministry of racial ethnic congregations.

#### *Cultural Proficiency and Sensitivity Training*

We strongly recommend mid councils to include cultural proficiency and sensitivity training when engaging with a racial ethnic congregation that is going through a transition in their ministry.

#### *Mid Council Assurances*

We recommend that mid councils introduce and assist congregations with tools and trainings, such as PC(USA)'s *New Beginnings*, to assist congregations that may be "out-of-touch" with the changing demographic landscape of their neighborhood. These trainings afford the particular congregation a period of discernment in their missional planning and vision casting as reflected in the trends that are experiencing in their community.

We further recommend that mid councils assist congregations providing demographics statistics in order to assist the mission development process.

#### *Racial Ethnic Leadership Development*

We recommend that mid councils identify and convene all racial ethnic individuals, including young adults, who have demonstrated gifts and potentials of leadership. Empower these individuals to serve in various committees and in all levels of mid councils.

#### *Preparing for a Multicultural and Pluralistic Ministry*

In light of the rapidly changing landscape of society and of the church, we recommend mid councils explore new and creative ways by which commissioned ruling elders and teaching elders are to be prepared for multicultural and pluralistic ministry.

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#### Discussion Questions Related to Process Changing

- How have you experienced new or revised processes that enhance the appropriate conception, creative design, and sustained development of racial ethnic ministries?
  - How might you join in such ministry?
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## *Practices Suggested*

As previously mentioned, there is no proper or the “right” model of doing ministry. Every ministry is contextual and relevant to the needs of the local constituents while bearing the overarching missional theme of God’s greater salvific plan for all humankind. We confess that our mission and our faith are guided by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Over the years, the PC(USA) has demonstrated firm commitment and taken great strides in recognizing the gift of diversity within the body of Christ. Our diversity, our gifts, and our contributions, affect not only how we carry out our ministry plans but more importantly how we nurture and foster relationships with one another through our missional partnership that is built upon mutual trust and covenant. Although traditional worship has been very much influenced by the “western” theology as attributed by our Presbyterian root, some of us may worship in a slightly different style and form, due to our cultural upbringing and practices, nevertheless we recognize that it is the same God who bind us all together as God’s children, heirs according to God’s promise, and as members of the PC(USA) family.

Making changes within an established organization such as the PC(USA) may be a daunting task but it is not an impossible task. It requires much faith, intentionality, and personal sacrifice in order to plant the seeds for success and reap the harvest of one’s labor. It must be a communal effort, where everyone must buy-in and become a stakeholder of the organizational change, rather than the effort of a few who are passionate. The responsibility must not rest solely upon the leader(s) of the organization.

We recognize that most leaders tend to be abstract communicators while many team members think concretely. Concepts bore them; they want specifics. Our vision must accompany with measurable and attainable goals. Furthermore, we must realize that all change is a critique of the past. Some may feel a sense of loss towards those implemented changes, especially changes that call for lasting and systemic change in behavior. While it is important to acknowledge these, the emphasis must be made on moving forward into the future.

There is no exhaustive list that can suggest all the possible practices that mid councils shall consider in the course of developing regional models for racial ethnic ministries in the PC(USA). However, the following may serve as a launching point in addressing and restructuring racial ethnic ministries going forward. Keep in mind that each local demographic context may need to be addressed specifically:

### *Avoid Tokenism*

As referred to earlier, when considering racial ethnic persons for leadership position, tokenism must be avoided. Honor and recognize what gifts racial ethnic persons may have to offer and contribute to the needs of the organization.

### *Promote Access and Opportunities*

We recommend that mid councils promote access and opportunities to leadership trainings, internships and coaching among the racial ethnic leaders, including young adults. An effort to seek new leaders must be made, instead of constantly referring to the same leaders for ideas and consultations.

### *Encourage Horizontal Networks*

We encourage a horizontal network of racial ethnic peers and leaders to exchange and collaborate on ideas, both within mid councils and self-sufficiently finding their own way. For example, REAPS (Racial Ethnic Advanced Pastoral Skills) is a group of racial ethnic pastors from several presbyteries within the Synod of the Pacific who decided to go beyond their mid councils to collaborate and organize their own annual continuing education retreats for ongoing pastoral formation, retooling, and fellowship with funding from GA- Unassigned Restricted Funds, 70047 (Dedicated for teaching elders for teaching and preaching of the Bible for synods of the Western U.S.) and Lilly Foundation Sustaining Pastoral Excellence grants.

### *Build Genuine Relationships*

We recommend that genuine relationships and trust between racial ethnic constituents within mid council and the council be built and ignited. In the case where past relationships existed and a sense of mistrust was developed, such relationships must be rebuilt and reignited. The relationship must be reconciled before lasting and constructive changes may take into effect.

### *Listen to Racial Ethnic Constituents*

We urge the church to value the voices and opinions of the racial ethnic constituents. Practice active listening among all interested groups. Take time to listen to what racial ethnic people may have to offer to one another and to the larger church.

Further, we urge the church to increase the interest base of racial ethnic churches to the wider church. The challenges that racial ethnic churches face are not always exclusive to racial ethnic churches, and can sometimes be better reimagined with a larger more diverse group of people.

### *Seek Transparency and Build Accountability*

Seek transparency and build mutual accountabilities in all decision-making process between mid councils and racial ethnic constituents.

### *Offer Virtual Instrumentalities*

We encourage the consideration of the “virtual instrumentalities” for racial ethnic ministries, which enable organizing beyond one mid council or neighboring mid councils, thereby helping link up unique groups in that part of the country with not-so-unique groups in other parts of the country.

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### Discussion Questions Related to Practices

- How have you experienced practices that lead to racial ethnic diversity enhancing the community and its witness?
  - How might you join in such ministry?
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### *Positioning to Move Ahead*

Finally, we conclude by looking beyond and moving ahead. We must identify who we are, whose we are, and who we are called to be. We are all children of God and in life and in death we ultimately belong to God. We are called to be God's faithful witnesses and be the ambassadors and agents of God's love in this world.

As Presbyterians, we understand that our theology and polity articulate a format of mutuality—mutual accountability and responsibility that binds us together in covenant relationship.

### *Renewed Focus on Imagination*

With this in mind, we suggest that the *whole church* needs to revisit our ordination vow to “pray for, and seek to serve the people... with imagination,” with a renewed focus on “imagination.” This means governing with permission and protection, with an emphasis on being open to creative ideas. This focus says, “yes” to empower creativity and says “no” to the naysayers.

### *Mutual Relationship*

Positioning in a mutual relationship considers whom we are connected with and how we position ourselves relationally. This means that the larger racial ethnic church community is intentional about working within the larger racial ethnic church community, across specific racial ethnic groups. In doing this we are grounded in modeling the Pentecost vision for the larger church. And grounded in Ephesians 2:19, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household.”

Understanding that people of color are becoming the plural majority in the United States, as the larger racial ethnic church community we position ourselves by working, collaborating, and meeting together. By doing so, we are able to discover a common voice, learn from one another’s challenges and ministries, and seek intersectionality among racial ethnic and immigrant groups. We discover and broker our stories because people are starving for stories and ideas that generate new life, understanding that life begets life.

This can include regular communication, gatherings, and collaboration between racial ethnic caucuses and/or peoples; an annual denomination wide gathering of racial ethnic peoples; intentional connecting and meeting within mid council bodies (synods, presbyteries) to gather, share ideas and resources, as we have mentioned in the Process Changing phase of this process.

### *Cultural Sensitivity*

Within the context of mutuality, we would like to see the greater church community position themselves in a more open, contextual, and culturally sensitive way. The rationale is that those who have power and privilege, by the virtue of who they are, need to learn to listen to what the others may have to say and contribute to the table. We ask our white sisters and brothers to be reflective, sensitive, and take ownership in how they go about conducting ministry in a missional way that would edify and build up the overall body of Christ, and not just those who are already in power and authority. This includes being cognizant of funding, paternalism, imperialism, and cultural sensitivity.

On a practical level, this can include white privilege education; learning to be open and culturally sensitive in contextual and new ways (e.g. Mission Co-Working Training Model). It is then, and only then, when we can realize the fullness God's plan for all humankind.

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#### Discussion Questions Related to Positioning to Move Ahead

- How have you experienced adjustments and experiences in ministry that celebrate the gifts of ethnic culture and demonstrate sensitive and innovative ecclesiastical culture?
  - How might you join in such ministry?
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Discussion Group Report Form

Date of Discussion \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

What were some key insights from the discussion?

What questions did the discussion raise?

What next steps do participants plan to take?

Other comments

Return to Mark Koenig at [mark.koenig@pcusa.org](mailto:mark.koenig@pcusa.org) or 100 Witherspoon St., Room 3222,  
Louisville, KY 40202

This study guide is Appendix 1 in the Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentrism Report adopted by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).