

Volume 5 • Issue 2 • Summer 2015



The Racial Ethnic TORCH



GROW | TRANSFORM | EMPOWER | LEAD | DEVELOP



The Racial Ethnic TORCH

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A message from the director, **Rhashell D. Hunter**

Leadership development is a mission priority in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) today. So, what are the qualities needed for a 21st-century church leader? Some might say resilience and flexibility are needed. Some might say vision and creativity are essential qualities. To serve the PC(USA) today and in the future, a transformational leader must have these qualities and be culturally humble.

What does cultural humility mean? It is the ability to understand, appreciate, communicate with, and interact with persons from cultures, races, genders, gender identities, and belief systems different from one's own, in order to effectively engage in ministry with God's diverse people. Cultural humility is essential in building coalitions of diverse people who join together in a faith community to serve Jesus Christ in the world.

A goal in Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries is to create an awareness of institutional racism in the church and create an environment where racial ethnic, new immigrant, and women Presbyterians in congregations, mid councils, and other groups can serve fully in ministry and leadership. Awareness of privilege and practicing cultural humility will help us to reach the vision of God's beloved community.

The call to live as a beloved community is rooted in the Bible. Scripture consistently portrays God as recognizing the value and worth of human beings, affirming our inherent dignity and calling us to recognize and honor the image of God in one another. God sent Jesus to break down cultural barriers, affirm God's love for all people, forgive our sin, reconcile us to God and one another, and invite us to new and abundant life.

In the pages that follow, you will read more about cultural humility. Join with us and pray with us as we seek to serve God in the world, remembering the words of Peter, in Acts 10:34–35, "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Whoever fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God, no matter what race they belong to." Thanks be to God!



Save the Date

July 29–30, 2015, National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus Meeting

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Rev. Magdy Girgis at magdy.girgis@pcusa.org.

July 29–30, 2015, National Asian Presbyterian Council Annual Conference

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Victor Hamel at eipcusa.pastor@gmail.com.

July 30, 2015, African Leaders Consultation

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Sam Atiemo at sam.atiemo@pcusa.org.

July 30–August 1, 2015, Native American Consulting Committee Meeting

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Rev. Irv Porter at irv.porter@pcusa.org.

July 30–August 1, 2015, American Indian Youth Council Gathering

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Rev. Irv Porter at irv.porter@pcusa.org.

July 30–August 1, 2015, Big Tent

Knoxville, Tennessee
To learn more or to register, visit www.pcusa.org/bigtent.

October 22–25, 2015 Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Seminarians Conference

Children's Defense Fund, Alex Haley Farm
Clinton, Tennessee
To learn more, contact Jewel McRae at jewel.mcrae@pcusa.org.

Fast Facts

Did You Know?

In 1997, there were 972 racial ethnic congregations in the PC(USA). In 2013, there were 1,930 racial ethnic congregations in the PC(USA)—an increase of almost 100% in 17 years. Of the 10,038 PC(USA) congregations, more than 17% are racial ethnic congregations. Including new church developments and Bible study fellowships, almost 19% of Presbyterian communities of faith are racial ethnic.

The mandate of Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant

Ministries (formerly the Racial Ethnic Unit) is "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). The mandate's two interrelated focal points are **doing justice** and **strengthening congregations** (see G.A. Minutes, 1993, A. Assigned Responsibilities 35.001, boldface added).

Women's Leadership Development & Justice Ministries was developed in the reunited PC(USA) to coordinate women's programs in the church.

On the front cover of each *Racial Ethnic Torch*, you will see our mantra: *Grow, Transform, Empower, Lead, and Develop*. The core ministry and the purpose of our work in the Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Ministries office is:

- **Church Growth**, with a focus on new worshiping communities
- **Transformation** of existing congregations
- **Social Justice and Empowerment**
- **Leadership Development**, with a focus on developing racial ethnic, women, and young adult transformational leaders, and
- **Intercultural Ministries**

Thus, our mantra is: *Grow, Transform, Empower, Lead, and Develop*. The Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Ministries offices *equip, connect, and inspire* racial ethnic and new immigrant worshiping communities and develop and empower racial ethnic and new immigrant leaders. The ministry area does this through training, coaching, resource development, leadership development institutes, networking, and providing grants to congregations, racial ethnic schools and colleges, and racial ethnic and immigrant members and leaders. In Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, we engage the church in its mission to become more diverse and inclusive of racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups, and we equip women for leadership in all ministries of the church.

Why Practice Cultural Humility?

When one presbytery decided to hold a worship service on “Leading Churches in an Age of Change,” the planning team was intentionally focused on inviting new immigrants from Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations to the event because they had seen the data showing that new immigrant worshipping communities in the PC(USA) are growing.

Aware of their personal limitations—and not having the skill set to create an agenda for this event or even to know whom to invite as trainers or participants—they wisely sought the counsel of immigrant church leaders. They included immigrants from various backgrounds to serve on the planning team as equal partners with equal voices in decision making. Then these leaders invited participants to what was shaping up to be a significant and exciting event.

.....

“This insight led the group toward practicing cultural humility: listening to their constituents and creating an awareness of privilege, revising policies, and providing opportunities for diverse church leaders to fully live out their calls in the PC(USA).”

.....

The last day of the training, Paula, a young new immigrant woman from Syria, spoke up to say that the examples given and the opportunities described for church leadership seemed to favor European Americans and some second-generation (US-born) immigrants. Where were the opportunities for her—for someone who speaks with an accent, who is still becoming familiar with the ways of the culture and the church in the

United States?

After the training, the planning team evaluated the event and reflected on Paula’s concern. While they had made some culturally competent decisions, they had not yet recognized how systemic racism in North America favors some individuals and groups and devalues others, even among new immigrant populations. Paula’s questions had made them aware that coming from a different country and cultural context, that even the tone of one’s skin color impacts how successful a person may be in church leadership in the North American Presbyterian context.

This insight led the group toward practicing cultural humility: listening to their constituents and creating an awareness of privilege, revising policies, and providing opportunities for diverse church leaders to fully live out their calls in the PC(USA). For the next event, they decided to invite leaders from—and seek opportunities for—first generation and 1.5-generation leaders (those who had immigrated to the United States).

Cultural humility is the ability to understand, appreciate, communicate, and interact with persons from other cultures, races, gender identities, and belief systems different from one’s own, in order to engage effectively in ministry with God’s diverse people.

Cultural humility was first promoted in healthcare professions and offered as an alternative to cultural proficiency or cultural competency, as it is not possible to completely understand racial and cultural backgrounds different from our own. Just as there are varying beliefs about the nature of disease and the human body, cultural humility is essential for treating health concerns and preventing misdiagnoses and medical errors due to the lack of cultural

understanding.

So why is there a need for church leaders to learn and practice cultural humility? We are called to ministry in an increasingly pluralistic society. To be adaptive and transformational leaders, we will want to gain insight and understanding of cultural dynamics in diverse ministry settings. Matthew Freeman, a consultant who facilitates dialogues on race, recently said, “Diversity without authentic inclusion is harmful.”

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.....

Failed efforts at inclusion, and even many successful efforts, highlight the challenge to Presbyterians to learn how to share the gospel in an increasingly intercultural church. Cultural humility offers a greater chance of living out the biblical vision of a world where the humanity of everyone is valued and where God’s love is spread to every race and class, culture and people.

It is not possible to learn enough to fully understand racial and cultural backgrounds and experiences different from our own. Practicing cultural humility is a lifelong journey, a work in progress. Yet, those who work at appreciating diversity and eliminating systemic racism may just be the visionaries who will, with God’s help, build the beloved community of God.

The importance of inclusive and expansive language

by Rhashell D. Hunter

I visited a church one Sunday when I was in seminary and a candidate for ordination, and after worship the Pastor Nominating Committee gave a report to the congregation. I had been spending a lot of time wondering where my first call would be and who would be willing to take a chance on a minister fresh out of seminary. My heart sank when the chairperson of the search committee stood at the lectern and said, “We searched all over looking to find the best man for the job.”

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“Inclusive language can be defined as language that intentionally seeks to acknowledge the diversity of the membership of the church in such a way that each person may feel included, addressed, and equally valued before God.”

.....

Was this just an unfortunate choice of words? Did the chairperson misspeak? Was this inefficient use of language? Or was it being clearly communicated that as a woman I would never qualify or even be considered for position at this church—a congregation where I had preached, taught, prayed with its members, and served? For the sake of argument, let’s assume that the search committee knew that it is against church policy and illegal to discriminate and that they indeed had considered women, racial ethnic persons, and others in their search. If so, the chairperson seemingly negated all of this through his use of words to the congregation. I became even more aware of how gender-biased language, with a preference toward males, excludes individuals and whole groups of people.

Inclusive Language

A better way of communicating that includes the people of God is through inclusive language. In inclusive language, when people refer to other people, in general they use language that includes all of their intended audience—humankind, humanity, people. When a person refers to a particular gender (female or male), only then is the gender-specific referent used.

Inclusive language can be defined as language that intentionally seeks to acknowledge the diversity of the membership of the church in such a way that each person may feel included, addressed, and equally valued before God. “Brothers and sisters” rather than “brethren,” and “God’s children” rather than “sons of God” are inclusive.

Expansive Language

Next, a way of communicating that includes the richness of many images of God in Scripture and our theological tradition is through expansive language.

Expansive language in reference to God challenges exclusively masculine terms, images, and stereotypes in order to build gender-balanced ways of speaking.

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Expansive language may be defined as language that intentionally seeks to express the diverse ways the Bible and our theological

tradition speak about God. Rather than use only a small number of terms referring to God, such as “Savior” or “Father,” we should seek to employ the rich reservoir of imagery found in the Bible and our theological tradition.

Using Inclusive and Expansive Language

There are a couple of ways to go:

1. To counter gender-biased language, we can use gender-neutral language. We can avoid gender-specific language where possible, normally by avoiding the use of pronouns and using such non-gender-specific titles as “Sovereign” rather than “Lord.”
2. My preference is to use “expansive language” that seeks to balance gender language so that both male and female references are used.
3. In actuality, many of us choose to use a hybrid of 1 & 2. We avoid gender-specific language where possible and include female references balanced with male references in our communication.

Acknowledging that words can both affirm and express love, and wound and degrade people, many writers and speakers use inclusive and expansive language to appreciate diversity, equally value people, and expand imagery and praise of our glorious God.

Understanding Power, Privilege and Justice

by Kristena Morse

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” (John 13:34)

The call to live as a beloved community is rooted biblically, as Scripture consistently portrays God as recognizing the value and worth of human beings, affirming the inherent dignity of human beings, and calling us to recognize and honor the image of God in one another.

Incidents of racially charged violence across the country—from Ferguson to Baltimore and in too many other cities in between—and the public reaction and outcry for justice that followed each have once again brought to light underlying racial tensions that still exist in American society. While many victories have been won in terms of legislation over the past several decades, racial ethnic women and men still face obstacles of prejudice and stereotypes that have yet to be dismantled.

In an effort to begin to work toward dismantling the underlying racial tensions and systems that keep racism alive in our society, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—and more specifically the office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries—hosted conversations focused on cultural diversity and humility with various groups across the country.

“Conversations like these are a stepping stone for the church—for individuals, churches, and congregations—to begin to move toward deeper engagement. Each training is different, based on the audience, the location, etc., but the framework remains essentially the same. This allows us to create a space where conversations about tough topics like privilege can be addressed in a unique but open and honest way. It’s in the sharing of individual stories that the most impact seems to happen,” notes

Sera Chung, associate for Gender & Racial Justice in the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

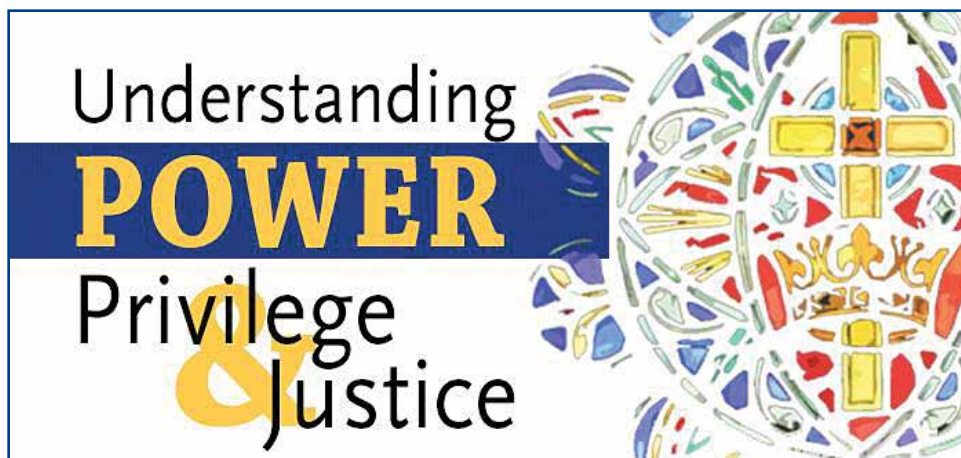
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“We recognize that the days when schools can function solely in a receptive mode are over, and [we] also understand that we can’t fully serve the church by only taking in people with a call to ministry and serving them with a classical education, that we need to be more expansive in our mission and our reach.”
.....

In our creeds and confessions, form of government, and General Assembly statements, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its predecessor denominations have long affirmed their intention to embrace the wondrous diversity God creates. We also acknowledge that while we have done well at times, too often we fall short of our intentions. While we have taken steps toward achieving God’s vision of the

beloved community, we know many more remain for us to take. We must continue to ask ourselves how we can continue to work together to move toward deeper interracial and intercultural engagement with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Education will be a key component of this effort. With that in mind, the office of Gender & Racial Justice has hosted—and will continue to host—conversations on racial and cultural diversity at seminaries and in other locations across the United States, including two recent conversations at Austin Theological Seminary.

One student participant at Austin noted that exploring the concepts and themes in the training helped her to look at “the fabric we are all woven from and some of the systemic problems that still exist in today’s society in a new way,” which helped deepen her understanding of the ways in which people of a variety of races and cultures engage with one another and the world. Another participant noted that it was eye-opening to understand that everyone we encounter “is coming from a different experience and cultural truth,” which makes



“Understanding Power Privilege, and Justice” was a two-day workshop held at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary as part of the seminary’s Education Beyond the Walls (EBW) program.

the importance of approaching intercultural engagement from a place “free from any assumptions or preconceived notions” critical.

Part of what makes Austin Seminary unique is the work that the institution is doing in the realm of cultural diversity. Through the Education Beyond the Walls program at Austin, clergy, church leaders, congregations, and communities have access to lifelong learning opportunities and fresh, innovative, and expansive theological education—including courses and trainings that focus on cultural diversity.

“We recognize that the days when schools can function solely in a receptive mode are over, and [we] also understand that we can’t fully serve the church by only taking in people with a call to ministry and serving them with a classical education, that we need to be more expansive in our mission and our reach. Through our Education Beyond the Walls program and other efforts, we seek to truly meet people called to ministry where they are, in their own journeys. Trainings like the one offered this past fall help students and staff better understand what it means to do just that as we strive to be an inclusive and expansive institution . . . a more welcoming and engaging church.”

The conversations on cultural diversity at Austin Seminary have focused on explorations of ways the church can confront racial oppression through prayer, discernment, and worship-based action and on ways we can work together as allies with those who have different experiences than we do.



Sera Chung, associate for Gender and Racial Justice, leads a 2-day workshop on “Understanding Power, Privilege, and Justice,” as part of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary’s Education Beyond the Walls (EBW) program.

.....
“Before we can begin to work to change systems of oppression and racial injustice, we must first understand both power and privilege. These two things often determine who is at the table, who has access to tools, resources, and so on, and who can and will make decisions.”
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“Before we can begin to work to change systems of oppression and racial injustice, we must first understand both power and privilege. These two things often determine who is at the table, who has access to tools,

resources, and so on, and who can and will make decisions. It is imperative that we begin these conversations and explorations by addressing these two concepts,” adds Chung.

For more information on building the beloved community, antiracism, or cultural humility training, contact the office of Gender and Racial Justice in Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, www.pcusa.org/racialjustice.

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HONORING THE PAST...

CREATING THE FUTURE

You can paint the brilliant future of a more diverse church! PC(USA) helps racial ethnic leaders down the path to get jobs, become better leaders and connect to opportunities for ground-breaking service through programs that embrace equality and our differences!

These racial ethnic leadership education programs provide unique education, coaching and mentoring. Your gift will help create programs for the future, supporting leaders so their impact on our church is bright and creates a more diverse tomorrow!



**Support the Racial Ethnic
Leadership Development Fund.**

Log on to give directly to the fund at presbyterianmission.org/donate/E051484.
Or call 502-333-8897 to discuss your gift to the fund today!

To learn more about Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, visit pcusa.org/racialethnic.

Elona Street-Stewart becomes the first American Indian to be appointed synod executive in the PC(USA)

Following her election last fall, Elona Street-Stewart was installed as the executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on April 26. She becomes the first American Indian to serve in that capacity in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The installation was culturally diverse and unique in many ways—featuring a Native American drum group, a Kenyan choir, a Pendleton blanket, and a presentation of traditional gifts.

A ruling elder and a longtime staff member who has served in the synod since 1994, Street-Stewart was elected as synod executive in October and had been serving as executive since January 1. Before taking the position she had been the synod's associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment.

The installation was held in the chapel of Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center near Farmington, Minn. After the drum called commissioners and guests to worship, the Rev. Denise Dunbar-Perkins, moderator-elect of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and a well-known speaker, teacher, and worship leader, preached on the selection of David as Israel's new king (1 Sam. 16:4–3) and the casting out of the demon from the Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt. 15:21–28), using King David's unlikely selection to point out “the Lord does not see as mortals do.”

Addressing the traditional conflict between the Israelites and Canaanites, Dunbar-Perkins said the demon could have been the outcast status of the Canaanites—“the demon of being invisible because you are the other.”

She continued by highlighting the need to address poverty, racism, intolerance, homophobia, and other “demons” of society, “We are called to address, head on, the obstacles in our way. . . . Even if we do fall off the cliff, God's going to be there to catch us.”

Issuing the charge to the synod's executive,

the Rev. David Maghakian and the Rev. Risley Prakasim, co-pastors of New Life Presbyterian Church in Roseville, Minn., offered a number of ways for Street-Stewart to engage her ministry.

Prakasim said, “May you always be the beauty of creation even though clouds are overhead.” And he called on her to “serve with energy, imagination, elegance, and love.”

Maghakian said, “What you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus—everything. Your sleeping, eating, executing, relationshiping—all that you are. Everything.”

He added, “Begin in love and end in love . . . and pray at the drop of a hat.”

Ralph Scissons, a longtime leader in the American Indian community within healthcare services and in the PC(USA), and the Rev. Irvin Porter, associate for Native American congregational support in the PC(USA), presented Street-Stewart with a Pendleton blanket—a blanket series that honors the culture and tradition of American Indians.

An active church leader at the national level since 1980, Street-Stewart chaired the Council on Church and Race, the Advocacy Committee on Racial Ethnic Concerns and was a member of the Relocation Committee of General Assembly Agencies following reunion of the northern and southern branches of what is today the PC(USA). She also received the denomination's Women of Faith Award during the 219th General Assembly in 2010.

Her other churchwide responsibilities include the national Self-Development of People Committee, Presbyterian Women, Third World Women, Committee on Representation, the Native American Consulting Committee, and the General Assembly Nominating Committee. She also has served on the executive committee of the

Minnesota Council of Churches and with the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches' Department of Indian Work.

In 2001 Street-Stewart became the first American Indian elected to serve on the board of an urban school district in Minnesota. Re-elected in 2005 and 2009, she has served as chair of the board and as a district director on the Minnesota School Boards Association, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the National School Board Associations Council on Urban Boards of Education.

She has led the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, the American Indian Family Center, the American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus of School Board Members, the Saint Paul Children's Collaborative, and The Saint Paul Foundation's anti-racism advisory committee.

Born in Philadelphia, Street-Stewart was an Upward Bound student at Swarthmore (Pa.) College and received her bachelor's degree from Occidental College in Los Angeles. She and her husband, the Rev. David Stewart, have four children and three grandchildren.



The Revs. David Maghakian, left, and Risley Prakasim, right, issued the charge to Ruling Elder Elona Street-Stewart, center, who became the first American Indian to be installed as a synod executive in the PC(USA).

Duane Sweep

Young Adults Gather at Big Tent

American Indian Youth Council at Big Tent

The American Indian Youth Council (AIYC), which is comprised of eight Native American youth and four adult advisors, will come together at the end of July for Big Tent 2015 in Knoxville, Tennessee. For the many members who have never attended a national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gathering before, this event will be an eye-opener. By attending these kinds of national gatherings, these future leaders of our Native congregations not only experience the church gathered in one place, but they also develop their leadership skills through focused training sessions.

During their time in Knoxville, the Youth Council will also meet with advisor Rev. Buddy Monahan and Rev. Irvin Porter, the PC(USA) associate for Native American Congregational Support.

The 2016 Youth Council will attend the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, which AIYC co-moderator Pierce Peterson is helping to organize as part of the production team.

The eight members of the council and

their advisors met in March 2015 at the Puyallup Tribe Youth Center in Tacoma, Washington for the first gathering of the group. Following team-building exercises and informational sessions, the group enjoyed some of Seattle's main attractions before returning home.

The youth from this group hail from Livingston (TX), Tacoma (WA), Albuquerque (NM), Gila River Indian Community (AZ), Los Angeles and Lawrence (KS). Each member adds a special gift to this wonderful ministry. With a few positions on this council yet to be filled, the class of 2017 is becoming a cohesive group that is doing their families, congregations, tribes and the PC(USA) proud.

Each American Indian Youth Council class serves for a three-year term, culminating in a triennial summer conference their final year. During the first two years, the class attends the Big Tent national gathering and the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Members plan and facilitate the AIYC conference themselves.

Rev. Buddy Monahan has been serving



as an adult advisor to this group since the Youth Council's inception, and how his son, Brandyn, who grew up attending the youth conferences, has joined him in that role. Krista Kleinman-Langley and her husband, Troy Langley, also grew up going to youth conferences and now serve as adult advisors.

The American Indian Youth Council began serving the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1994. Just over two decades ago, ideas started gathering around the framework of the Native American Consulting Committee, the national representative body for Native Americans within the PC(USA). The basic idea was to structure a council of eight youth representing eight of the 16

The American Indian Youth Council gathered for their first meeting together in Tacoma, Washington, in March.



Young men and women gathered together for fellowship and educational opportunities as part of Big Tent 2013.

synods that have Native American ministries within their bounds. Today, the AIYC receives PC(USA) support from the associate for Native American Congregational Support.

New AIYC leadership includes the following members:

- Pierce Peterson, Tacoma, Washington (Lakota/Nez Perce/Suquamish), co-moderator
- Madison McKinney, Lawrence, Kansas (Choctaw/Dakota), co-moderator
- Zohndra Hernandez, Tacoma, Washington (Comanche), secretary
- Brendan Sylestine, Livingston, Texas (Alabama-Coushatta), treasurer

At the AIYC's last conference, held July 13-17, 2014, Native American youth from Arizona, Idaho, Washington, Oklahoma, Texas, South Dakota, Kansas, Alaska and New Mexico gathered in Lawrence, Kansas, at the historic 130-year old institution now known as Haskell Indian Nations University for a week of leadership training. The triennial conference brings together the



Native youth of the PC(USA), nurturing their faith in Jesus Christ and helping them see that they are not alone in their journeys of faith. It also offers forums on many community issues that the youth deal with on their reservations or in their urban Native communities.

Intercultural Young Adult Network at Big Tent

As the face of the church continues to change, so does the way youth and young adults are engaging in fellowship and ministry with one another. In partnership with the Office of Intercultural Ministries, the Intercultural Young Adult Network

(created in the fall of 2012 as the Presbyterian Cross-Cultural Young Adult Network) continues to work to help the church achieve its vision of becoming truly intercultural and to engage with and fully appreciate the various communities and cultures that make up God's beloved community.

"We hope to continue to build connections across the church and deepen relationships that will help young adults across the PC(USA) become more involved and engaged," noted Mariko Terada, one of the members of the leadership of the Presbyterian Intercultural Young Adult Network.

Sterling Morse, coordinator for Intercultural Ministries, says he hopes that the continued partnership with the network will help the church work toward better engagement with young adults across the denomination.

To learn more about the work of the Office of Intercultural Ministries, visit pcusa.org/intercultural.



Two young women enjoy food and activities during a national youth conference.

An Artists Journey: Lucy Janjigian

by Kristena Morse



Born in Jerusalem and of Armenian descent, Lucy Janjigian spent her early years in an English mission school, where she studied English and Arabic. “I grew up in a very diverse area.

I played with Muslim, Arabic, Christian, and many other children who lived in my neighborhood. We all played together and learned together and really enjoyed the time we had together.” That all changed for Lucy in 1947 when the United Nations voted to partition Palestine. “With that division, my world completely changed. People were displaced and homes were taken and demolished.”

As violence and unrest in Palestine escalated, Lucy’s family relocated to the Transjordan region. “We spent the summer of 1948 there. When the school year was about to begin, there was no class for me where we were. I was in tenth grade, so one of the bishops in the area helped make arrangements for me to attend a boarding school in Beirut to be trained as a teacher. Nobody said, ‘Where do you want to go?’ or ‘What do you want to do?’ That just wasn’t an option at that time.”

She spent two years in boarding school in Lebanon at The British Lebanese Training College. After completing the program, Lucy went back to Jerusalem, where her mother and father were still living. “My father never actually left Jerusalem. My mother and I moved away when the violence escalated, but my father stayed behind to protect the students and the school where he taught. He was able to ensure that the school remained neutral and was protected in the midst of violence, as both armies wanted to use the school as a base. When the war quieted



down, my father became the first non-British headmaster of the school.”

Following the completion of her teaching program at 17, Lucy spent the next year working with refugees across the region. “I had to verify that the people who were looking for resources—for food, water, shelter, etc.—were, in fact, refugees. I had to verify that they had lost their jobs, their homes . . . everything. It was an incredibly painful and moving experience. Looking back, I learned a lot about myself and about others during that time. It was difficult, but moving.”

While still working with refugees across the region, Lucy received a phone call from St. Paul School, the boarding school from which she had recently graduated. The principal claimed that she still owed the

school money for the time she spent there as a boarding student and invited her to pay off that debt by serving as a teacher in Damascus. “I didn’t have the money to pay back my debt in any other way, so I went. I spent the next year teaching seventh grade.”

Shortly thereafter, her journey to the United States began to unfold, following what she calls “some sort of divine intervention.” One afternoon, her brother was walking the streets of Jerusalem where he encountered a young American man who told him that he wanted to go to Petra. Lucy notes, “At that time, Petra didn’t have hotels, and transportation was scarce. My father had traveled there before, so my brother invited this man to come back to our home to speak with my father to learn more and prepare for his trip.” During that visit, Lucy shared

her desire to go to the United States with the visitor, who was working as a missionary in Turkey at the time. “He said to me, ‘Why don’t you wait for a year? Let me go back to the United States and find a way to help get you there.’ That’s exactly what he did.”

The home where this all began to unfold wasn’t a home at all, but rather the school where her father taught. In 1947, the house that Lucy and her family had been living in became part of what was known as ‘no-man’s-land,’ and the area in front of her home became the dividing line between what is now Israel and Jordan. “One night, the apartment building behind our house, which was a Jewish apartment building, was demolished by the Jewish soldiers so they could fire against the Arabs. Our windows and all of the glassware in the house were broken. It was a terrifying, terrifying night. We left the next morning and never returned.”

After her encounter with the American man in her family’s tiny apartment at the school, Lucy found herself on a path that led her out of the violence and the chaos and to the United States. In 1952—the year she taught school in Damascus—Lucy received a scholarship to attend Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio. “Because of my teaching certificate, I received a one-year credit at Heidelberg and a three-year scholarship with an assistantship to cover the rest of my studies.” From there, she received a fellowship to attend Emory University, where she earned a degree in plant ecology. She also met her husband during her time at Emory, and the two were married in 1956. Shortly thereafter, they returned to Lebanon where Lucy worked doing soil fungus research at the American University at Beirut. About a year and a half after the couple moved to Lebanon, her husband was sent to the United States for a business trip and she tagged

along. “I had been missing the United States, so I asked him if I could go too. We were headed to New York City. On the day that we landed in the United States, marines landed in Lebanon and civil war ensued. We never returned to our home there.”

Instead, she and her husband worked to build a life for themselves in New York City. Lucy took a job at Columbia Medical Center in the dermatology department, where she worked for several years. During that time, the couple also established citizenship and eventually obtained green cards. They also began building a life for themselves in the faith community, frequently attending church services at the Armenian Church in New York City. “After we had children and moved out of the city, it became too difficult for us to attend church there. We found a lovely Presbyterian church near our home in New Jersey and began attending there. I’ve been Presbyterian ever since,” she notes.

She credits her experiences across the Middle East, as well as her Christian faith, as being incredibly influential to her work. “As my children grew and I found myself with more and more free time on my hands, I began asking God what he would have me

do, how he would have me serve. I often thought ‘I know there is more for me than this. God has a plan to use me.’” A trained biologist, Lucy began painting and taking art classes more than 40 years ago. Much of her work depicts the experiences in her life, and her work has been recognized and exhibited around the world. Her “Journey to Resurrection” series features 33 paintings that show the evolution of many years of Bible study and her personal experiences growing up in Jerusalem. Her “Uprooted” series, inspired by her parents’ story, is composed of 19 paintings that depict the plight of Armenians who were victims of genocide by Ottoman Turks between 1915 and 1918.

“I’ve been very blessed in my life and in my work. Very, very blessed, with a beautiful family and friends, a rich life, and a wonderful church.”

Lucy has been actively involved in her church as a deacon and ruling elder as well as with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on a national level for many years. Today, she still serves as a board member of the Presbyterian Hunger Program and with the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women.





BIG TENT

July 30 – August 1, 2015
University of Tennessee Campus
Knoxville, TN



Photos by Erin Dunigan

Featured Resource



Well Chosen Words

Well Chosen Words, a guide to understanding and using inclusive language, was developed by the Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries, area in consultation with the Advocacy Committee on Women's Concerns. This guide encourages language choices that proclaim the fullness of God,

outlining traditional depictions as well as newer images to describe God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries Events at the Big Tent

Friday, July 31

- Financial Stewardship with Racial Ethnic and Multiracial Communities
- Building the Beloved Community of God (Antiracism Training, Part 1 and Part 2)
- Sustaining Young Women and Women Leaders
- Intercultural Ministries: No Root to Bitterness
- Paradigm Shift in the Korean Campus Town Ministries
- African New Immigrants and Leadership Responsibilities in the PC(USA)

Saturday, August 1

- What is race? Ever Wonder?
- Native American Ministry
- Ministry with Youth: A Racial Ethnic Approach to Reaching the Next Generations
- Sharing Our Stories
- Equipping African American Congregations for Living Missionally
- Native American Storytelling Tradition: Toward a Christian Usage of Native American Culture
- Your Call: Personal Navigation for a Successful Search
- Presbyterian Intercultural Young Adult Network Post Conference

Who We Are

The Ministries of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries:

Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Congregational Support Offices

- African American Congregational Support
- African Emerging Ministries
- Asian Congregational Support
- Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational Support, including Portuguese-Language Congregational Support
- Intercultural Ministries
- Korean Emerging Ministries, Including Middle Eastern Ministries
- Native American Congregational Support

Racial Ethnic Leadership Development

- Racial Ethnic Leadership Development
- Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges

Women's Leadership Development & Justice Ministries

- Gender & Racial Justice
- Women's Leadership Development & Young Women's Ministries

And, in covenant relationship with:

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