

PART I: GETTING STARTED
CHAPTER 4
CROSS-RACIAL/CROSS-CULTURAL APPOINTMENTS
AND SHARED FACILITIES

Prepared by The Rev. Barbara Isaacs, Ph.D.
Team Leader, Program Ministries
General Commission on Religion and Race
202.495.2946, bisaacs@gcorr.org

During the past ten years GCORR's annual conference reviews mandated by *The Book of Discipline* have noted cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments and shared facilities need greater support from our annual conference leaders, clergy and laity. This chapter will note suggested ways that conference CORR can empower steps in this direction.

Strategic Partnerships

Remember your strategic partnerships and their responsibilities while taking these steps:

- The **bishop and cabinet members** are familiar with the complexity and multi-dimensional aspects of appointment making and the barriers to making effective Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural (CR/CC) appointments. They are committed to creating new and improved ways of engaging in the work of vision-oriented appointment making. Conference CORR can invite the bishop to discuss his/her strategic vision for addressing the cultural shifts and systemic changes that must be made at the annual conference level in order to increase the number of effective appointments and decrease the number of CR/CC appointments that leave pastors, their families and congregations wounded.
- The **leaders of the Board of Ordained Ministry** are committed to effective clergy ministry leadership in a variety of cultural circumstances. Remember that the executive committee of BOM and the cabinet are encouraged to meet at least once a year in joint sessions with conference CORR. You may want to CORR{ageously}! propose a 24 hour retreat for this joint session and invite select clergy and laity from CR/CC appointment sites. Consider using the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process described below for this joint session. By interfacing annual conference leaders together in a new way, you potentially create both prophetic and practical action plans to address systemic roadblocks in your annual conference. The flow of the event will position participants for new outcomes in annual conferences and local churches.

- The **Order of Elders** gatherings of your annual conference can address how all are called to see present and future appointments as cross-racial/cross-cultural in light of the demographic shifts in communities across the United States and the reality of global migration that is presenting us with new opportunities and new challenges.
- The **conference lay leader and the district lay leaders** can support strategic annual conference and district plans for assisting congregational leaders to experience cultural/racial differences as a way to be in relationship rather to be separated.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Process

You may want to consider using AI in the building of partnerships and action plans for effective CR/CC appointments in your annual conference. This process builds upon what an organization already does well. It is a positive approach. This process will be used at the Facing the Future: Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments in a Global Church conference co-sponsored by GCORR and GBHEM (May, 2011). In his article on “The Art of Appreciative Inquiry,”¹ business writer Theodore Kinni identifies AI as “a ‘soft’ strategy used in creating organizational visions, aligning groups, and building cultures.” He is convinced it can lead to measurable results in any organization.

AI uses a “4D” process that you will find formatted for a CR/CC appointment making action plan:

- **DISCOVER** the best of what can be identified in the organization: i.e., where are the best practice models for CR/CC appointments in your annual conference; what are the action plans for these “pulpit transitions”; and, in what cross-cultural competency inventories/learning tracks/seminars do the clergy and congregation participate?
- **DREAM** what might be the processes for implementing these discoveries for all CR/CC appointment making. Imagine new partnership steps between the bishop’s extended cabinet, BOM, the Order of Elders, and local church lay leaders.
- **DESIGN** what should be for all CR/CC appointments. Define the elements of effective CR/CC appointments and who can refine the identification of these elements in your annual conference. Make a priority list of these elements and tie the pieces of this particular list to appropriate leaders and/or boards/commissions of the annual conference.
- **DELIVER** an action plan for the design. This is the “what will be” outcome of the AI process.

1 “Exploit What You Do Best” Harvard Management Update 2003.

Conference action steps from across the denomination

Connect with voices throughout the denomination as soon as you begin creating your annual conference action plan to empower effective CR/CC appointments. Contact GCORR's Annual Conference Coordinator for names of CCORR chairpersons whose annual conference action plans might be best practice models.

The following action steps were recommended and/or initiated as a result of GCORR annual conference reviews. They are offered as examples. Each annual conference must take ownership of an action plan that is responsive to its strategic vision.

Bishop/Cabinet/BOM action plans:

- Significant assessment steps to identify future demographic shifts in conference districts and establishment of a strategic plan for appointments facing the greatest shifts.

Research and analysis addressing demographic shifts are available through GCFA, the Alban Institute and the Intercultural Communications Institute, to name only a few resources of the many available to denominational leadership.

- Budget lines identified to address empowerment of effective CR/CC appointment making.
- Cross-Racial/Cross-cultural awareness assessments for lay and clergy leadership at the conference and district levels.
- Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural competency training for BOM and members of the cabinet.
- The transparency of the bishop and cabinet members' intentional assessments of the significant gifts and graces offered by the racial/ethnic clergy of the conference is very important. Too often racial/ethnic clergy have felt they were appointed to a sink-or-swim CR/CC ministry site.
- Mentoring of racial/ethnic associate and local pastors to become lead pastors of multicultural and multi-congregational ministry sites.
- Racial/ethnic pastors provided cultural and spiritual coaching for new CR/CC appointments.

The vision for such coaching should arise out of careful listening by select members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and cabinet to the concerns and requests of the racial/ethnic pastors. Too often clergy have not had the opportunity to identify what types of coaching would be most helpful and transformational for them and their families.

- BOM and cabinet's gathering of racial/ethnic pastors serving in CR/CC appointments for encouragement/support.
- Listening days for the bishop, BOM and the extended cabinet to hear the concerns of racial/ethnic clergywomen.
- Local church action plan for preparing congregations for new CR/CC appointments;
- Honoring of all congregations and pastors identified as new CR/CC appointments at annual conference.

The bishop's acknowledgement that the commitment of these congregations and pastors to attain and witness cross-racial/cross-cultural competency skills does two things:

1. Establishes a new path of relevancy for our denomination's ministries in this global-is-local culture, and 2. Can be a transformative moment for the life of the annual conference.

- Establishment of a cross-racial/cross-cultural task force that includes representation from conference CORR, BOM, bishop's extended cabinet, Order of Elders, racial/ethnic caucuses, and district/local church lay leaders.

Conference CORR action plans:

- An annual conference resolution calling for the conference to address the need for strategies, processes & policies, and management of all shared facilities in the mission and ministry of the conference;

The provision of training events for pastors and lay leaders whose congregations are involved in shared building facilities can enable a mindset change from renters to shared ministry partners. Many of the bishops in the Western Jurisdiction have strategically identified the vision of Multi-Congregations/Multi-Services in all local church sites.

- Commitment to intergenerational conversations on the denomination's mandate of inclusivity for all ministry sites.

Consider days set apart at the district level to discuss racism and immigration in the local churches and in the surrounding communities.

- Communication platform to capture best practices models (i.e., shared facilities, cross-racial/cross-cultural appointment transition teams, individual and congregational cross-cultural competency learning sites and continuing education offerings).

Conference and District Lay Leaders action plans:

- Strengthening the voice and commitment of laity at the district level for empowering present and future CR/CC appointments.

Too often laity are not engaged in these visioning steps of our conferences. This is not only unfortunate but also contributes to the ineffectiveness of these ministry sites.

- White laity investment in the denominational mandate of inclusivity encouraged/nurtured through trainings & conversations held throughout the districts of the annual conference.

Sunday morning adult classes in our local churches provide opportunities to address the impact of white privilege and acts of marginalization upon the conference structure, our churches and the culture.