



# GENERAL CONFERENCE 2012 HIGHLIGHTS



**The Church must address critical questions related not only to our survival- but our renewal. The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) believes that in order to create a new Church for a new reality, we need new conversations.**



**GCORR**

General Commission on Religion and Race  
of THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



*Dear Delegate:*

*Greetings from the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). Congratulations on your election as a delegate to General Conference 2012. GCORR has produced this resource to provide you with important information regarding our work related to the General Conference. The purpose of this resource is three fold:*

- 1. To highlight GCORR sponsored legislation*
- 2. To let you know what you can expect from us prior to General Conference and how you can connect with us, and*
- 3. To introduce new language and concepts that we believe are important in the life of the church at this time.*

*This resource is one of the ways that we will become more visible and vocal on issues related to General Conference.*

***The church is facing a moment of historic transition.***

*Key proposals for change carry the possibility of significantly altering who we are, what we do and how we do it as a denomination. This moment of transition can also offer us an opportunity for renewal and grace as we seek to truly be the body of Christ, extending ourselves with greater relevance, compassion, prophetic boldness and love in a global society.*

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***To survive and to thrive the church must be relevant in an ever changing global demographic.*** Over the past few years, GCORR has focused with renewed energy on empowering church leadership to educate and equip themselves on how to create more culturally competent and equitable church communities. People of color, women and young people are no longer the “other” – a category to be accommodated through “special” programs, processes and set-asides. In order to thrive, the church must be a relevant witness to an ever changing global demographic where people of color, women and young people are central to the mission, not a tangent of the mission.

***GCORR seeks to challenge and equip the church including delegates to General Conference to engage conversations about the future that elevate our level of cultural competency and social equity as we acknowledge and embrace all of the cultural identities of all of God’s children.*** We do this as an expression of our Disciplinary mandate to challenge and equip the connectional structures of The United Methodist Church to a full and equal participation of the racial and ethnic constituency in the total life and mission of the Church.”

*It is our hope that by reading and supporting our legislation, visiting our GC2012 website, participating in one of our General Conference- related events and utilizing our printed and web-based educational and networking resources, you will be empowered to stand for equity and justice as you actively participate in holy conferencing.*

*As we travel the journey through General Conference we are reminded that we are called to be servants who embody and express God’s vision of an equitable, vibrant and global church that transforms the world.*

*Blessings to you as you live out your call to service at this crucial time,*

**Erin Hawkins**  
**General Secretary**

**Legislation Highlights:**

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) celebrates what has been done to build the beloved community. Because human efforts fall short of God's vision, GCORR stands open to a new vision, new dreams and a renewed Spirit that will further The United Methodist Church in racial equity and justice as we collectively seek to the make prophetic disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In this section, you will find highlights of the 2012 General Conference legislation drafted by the General Commission on Religion and Race and approved by the Board of Directors. The complete legislation can be downloaded on GCORR's website at [www.gcorr.org](http://www.gcorr.org). In the coming weeks the GCORR 2012 GC website will be updated with talking points and racial equity impact statements, tools for delegates to use as you assess how best to lead the Church.





### **Disciplinary Legislation Submitted**

1. **The mandates and purpose of the General Commission on Religion and Race:** Amending Discipline ¶ 2000 and 2008. The proposed mandate changes advocate for visible and prophetic leadership at every level of the Global Church, mobilizing all people for action in the Church and in the world around issues of racial justice and equity. Through clarity of purpose and ministry, GCORR seeks to resource congregations globally towards relevance and vitality in diverse communities. These mandates support connectional leaders and structures to develop and employ cultural competence and equity in process, policy and decision making. The new language also clarifies the Commission's role in resolving racially and culturally based disputes and allows GCORR to respond to salient denominational matters in order for the Church to more effectively move its mission forward in a diverse and global society.
2. **The Rights of Racial Ethnic Persons:** Adding to ¶ 162. While significant advancements in areas of racial justice have occurred within the Church and society, systemic barriers still exist. Structural racism is embedded in policies and practices which contribute to inequitable racial outcomes, legitimize racial disparities, and undermine progress toward racial equity. GCORR calls the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access.
3. **GCORR Board Membership:** Adapting ¶ 2003. In response to the current budget realities and a desire to capture expertise and passion among General Commission on Religion and Race board members, this legislation reduces the size of the board and provides flexibility in the selection process of board members.

4. Culture and Identity: Expanding ¶161 and inserting a new language that expands race and ethnicity beyond monolithic categories. Human diversity is the signature of God. While our primary identity is as children of God, multiple realities, including culture, form our identity.
5. The role of Annual Conference Commissions on Religion and Race: Clarifying and Changing Discipline ¶ 643.1-5. Annual and Central Conference Commissions on Religion and Race can be vital partners with conference structures and local churches as they seek to relevant and relate to communities in which they serve. This legislation creates a partnership between annual conferences and conference commissions to employ cultural competency and racial equity in leadership, ministry, process, policy, and decision making.
6. Eliminating Institutional Discrimination: Amend ¶ 811.1. This legislation establishes GCORR and General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as partners with General Council on Finance and Administration in determining fair and just recommendations for withholding funds from agencies and Church- related institutions that are non-compliant in creating and/or implementing their committee on institutional discrimination policies. It further ensures that policies of compliance will be submitted and evaluated through an equitable process.
7. GCORR General Secretary Election Cycle: Amend: ¶ 2006. This changes the annual election of the general secretary to a quadrennial election of the general secretary and aligns the electoral process of the GCORR general secretary with ¶ 713. It also provides for greater continuity of key leadership over the quadrennial program implementation and for contemporary formats of acceptable balloting.





## **Resolutions Submitted**

1. **Biracial and Multiracial Inclusive Language:** Affirms and expands the Church's language by offering racial identification options (biracial/multiracial) that are not limiting but embracing of persons with more than one racial or ethnic background.
2. **Cultural Competency Training and Leadership Development:** Recommends all conference leadership to participate in cultural competency training to ensure the effective and full participation of all committee members.
3. **Drop the I-Word:** Clarifies how the term "illegal" dehumanizes and divides communities. This resolution encourages United Methodists to expand awareness of the negative impacts of calling people "illegals" and instead use terms such as undocumented or non-citizen.
4. **Regarding Native American Culture and Traditions as Sacred:** Re-affirms the sacredness of Native peoples, native cultures, and gifts that native peoples share with the Church and the world.
5. **Native American Religious Freedom Act:** Affirming of Native American brothers and sisters, this resolution calls for the continued support of the rights to religious freedom for Native Americans.
6. **Racial Profiling in the U.S.A.** Expands prior General Conference actions to end racial profiling. This resolution affirms educating constituents about racial profiling, calls for supporting legislation seeking to end racial profiling, and establishes networks of cooperation with criminal justice and law enforcements agencies.
7. **Support for Multicultural and Global Churches:** Affirms the continual development and strengthening of racial/ethnic congregations and congregations that are culturally aware, modeling racial equity and becoming truly multicultural congregations. It calls for partnership with agencies and theological schools in developing resources and curriculums that incorporate cross-racial and cross-cultural competencies.

## Terms: What Matters and What to Avoid

<b>Preferred Terms to Use:</b>	<b>Avoid:</b>
<b>Persons</b> of color.	Minorities, colored people. Racial/ethnics. Note: Hispanic/Latino/Latina is an ethnic group. Its members may be white or black.
<b>Woman, Women</b>	Girls, gals, females, ladies.
<b>African Americans or Black People.</b> African American refers primarily to U.S. citizens whose heritage is linked to the historic slave trade. It can also refer to those U.S. citizens who have emigrated from other parts of the African Diaspora, i.e., white South Africans. Use country of national origin, e.g., Angolans, Jamaicans, Haitians, Liberians, South Africans, etc.	Negroes, minorities, colored people
<b>Asians or Asian Americans.</b> Or use specific ethnic group: Cambodians, Chinese, East Indians, Filipinos, Formosans (or Taiwanese), Hmongs, Indonesians, Japanese, Koreans, Laotians, Malaysians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Thais, Vietnamese, etc. Try to differentiate between foreign nationals and American-born.	Oriental, minorities. Terms create assumption that all Asian people are Chinese or Japanese
<b>Pacific Islanders</b> or Polynesians, etc. Or identify by specific island of family origin—e.g., Chamorro, Cook Islanders, Fijians, Guamanians, Hawaiians, Maoris, Marshallese, Melanesians, Micronesians, Samoans, Tahitians, Tongans.	Oriental, minorities





<p><b>Native Americans or American Indians.</b> Or use specific tribe or band name—e.g.; Choctaws, Chumash, Comanches, Lakotas, Muscogees, Navajos, Oneidas, etc. Distinguish references to Alaskan Natives and Native people indigenous to South and Central America.</p>	<p>Indians, minorities</p>
<p><b>Hispanic/Latinos/Latinas.</b> Or use just Latinos (men) and/or Latinas(women). Use Mexican Americans or Chicanos (or Chicanas) in reference to people of Mexican origin. Use Latin Americans but not in reference to Mexicans. Or use country of origin—e.g., Argentinians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, Brazilians (Note: Latina refers to women and Latino to men)</p>	<p>Spanish, Spanish-speaking, minorities</p>
<p><b>European Americans or White people.</b> For ethnic references, use country of origin—e.g., Irish Americans, Anglo Americans, Polish Americans. Avoid using Anglos since many white Americans are not of English heritage.</p>	<p>Anglos, WASPS, Caucasians (unless referring to someone from the Caucasus region. (We do not use the related anthropological terms Negro or Mongol, so why use Caucasian?))</p>
<p><b>Biracial or Multiracial.</b> We live in an ever changing global community with a diversity of multi-racial identities where racial/ethnic identification is not limited to one category and much of the world bases identity on ethnic nationality rather than racial ethnic categories. Often biracial/multiracial people have to choose between one identity or another, by identifying with only one of the six dominant racial options.</p>	<p>Mixed race, half-n-half, or Mulatto.</p>

***This resource is from WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS.*** Adapted from E-Library Publications Diversity Toolkit, 1/2012 (Revised). The glossary is offered as a vocabulary learning tool. It is not meant to be either definitive or exhaustive.

## Other terms and what they mean:

### Racial Equity

Racial equity is the condition that is achieved when a person's racial and ethnic identity is not the primary predictor (statistically) of how a person thrives or succeeds. The goal of racial equity is to dismantle the systems, structure and processes that make race a factor in the assessment of merit, or in the distribution of opportunity (adapted from The Aspen Institute, September 2009).

### Equity Impact Assessments

A Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities. (The Applied Research Center, 2012)

GCORR has produced a series of tools including equity impact assessments to measure the impact of legislation, proposals and key initiatives of the church at the conference and general church level. These assessments help leaders to consider the impact of major decision on marginalized groups in the church and ensure that justice and inclusion are key considerations in the decision making process.

### Cultural Identity and Intersectionality:

New approaches to advocacy are needed that shift the focus from singular issue based responses defined in mutually exclusive ways to organizing and interventions that are multi-layered, no longer framing group interests in exclusionary terms.

Intersectionality seeks to examine the complex ways in which various socially and culturally constructed categories interact on multiple levels to manifest themselves as inequality in society. Intersectionality holds that the classical models of oppression within society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, class, or ability do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

Cultural identity is a broader term, beyond racial and ethnic identity and formation. People from multiple ethnic backgrounds may identify as belonging to the same culture. Culture is defined by attitudes and beliefs and what a person from each culture believes is normal for that group. Often cultural identity includes shared language, history, and geography.





GCORR continues to bring together other General Agencies, racial ethnic caucuses and plans, and community groups to respond to oppression of all kinds.

#### Cultural Competency

“Cultural Competency is a process of developing proficiency in effectively responding in a cross cultural context. It is the process by which individuals, agencies, and systems integrate and transform awareness of assumptions, values, biases, and knowledge about themselves and others to respond respectfully and effectively across diverse cultures, language, socioeconomic status, race, ethnic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. Cultural competence recognizes, affirms, fosters, and values the strengths of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the worth and dignity of each.” (State of Wisconsin Mental and Physical Health Services, 2011).

Cultural competency is a leadership skill which can be learned. By committing ourselves to becoming more culturally competent, we transform our local churches and denominational initiatives into vital and effective inclusive communities in which the sacred worth and gifts of all persons are affirmed

#### Inclusive

Inclusiveness often relates to abstracts (numbers, groups, quotas), not persons and relationships. When using the term inclusive, it is imperative to move beyond assumptions or the expectation that those being “included” assimilate or take on the characteristics of the dominant group or culture.

#### Racial Justice and Diversity

Racial justice is distinct from diversity and from multiculturalism. There can be diversity without equity. A diversity focus primarily addresses the symptoms of racism—with the goal of minimizing racial tensions and maximizing people’s ability to tolerate difference and get along. A racial justice focus primarily addresses the causes of inequality and the solutions and strategies for producing equity. Racial justice is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. (adapted from Rinku Sen, in “Fund Racial Justice Strategies, Not Just Diversity”)

#### Racial Ethnic (s)

Every person has an ethnicity, not only people of color. The term racial ethnic is an abbreviation of the term racial ethnic minority which is seen by many as more pejorative than descriptive.

**You can count on GCORR for communications and resources that explore what we believe are three critical questions:**

- What does change look like when we are being honest about how we become transformational in the communities we must serve?
- In what ways do our words, beliefs and actions perpetuate our struggles as a church?
- Are we being intentional in creating a future that's distinct from the past?

**Ways to connect:**

- **Blog :** Check out [HawkinsView.org](http://HawkinsView.org) for conversation and reflections from the General Secretary
- **Facebook:** @ **General Commission on Religion and Race**
- Follow us on **Twitter** : [twitter.com/hawkinsview](http://twitter.com/hawkinsview)
- **GC2012 website** [www.gcorrgc2012.org](http://www.gcorrgc2012.org) where you can join in conversation with others and find news, resources and legislation including talking points and racial equity impact statements.
- **Jurisdictional Events**
  - Western – Jan 27, 2012 – San Diego, CA
  - South Central – Feb 18, 2012 – Dallas, TX
  - North Central – March 10, 2012 – Chicago Area
  - Southeast – TBD
  - Northeast – September 14 – Trenton, NJ





Holy and loving God, you who are known in many names and languages, reflected in the wonder of all creation, in every culture and ethnicity, in every place and time, we give you thanks for bringing us this far. You call us to build a world and live together where we see the “other” as a reflection of you and a part of our self. Forgive us when we fall short of that vision and give us your abundant grace so that we learn and grow in your goodness. As we gather for this General Conference, may the pain of the past inform of us, may the possibility of the future inspire us and may the urgency of the now compel us as individuals and a Church to seek equity and justice in matters of head and heart. Amen.

