

Structural Review of Presbyterian Women  
from an Antiracist Perspective

# Report and Recommendations

Approved by the Voting Representatives  
2003 Churchwide Business Meeting



**PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN**

PW Antiracism Committee of the Churchwide Coordinating Team  
July 2012

The voting delegates at the 2000 Business Meeting  
voted overwhelmingly to  
“declare Presbyterian Women as an antiracist organization and to continue  
to strive to eradicate racism,”  
recognizing that racism is embedded in the very structure of our society  
and thus requires a very intentional effort to eradicate it.

For PW to adopt an antiracist identity means:

1. God is the Creator of all people and all are God's children.
2. All persons are treated with respect.
3. Everyone's gifts are valued and encouraged.
4. Everyone has a right to speak and be heard for who she is.
5. PW's structure reflects commitment to antiracism.
6. Power is shared and work is done in a collegial style.
7. Each is willing to honestly examine her own cultural norms, standards, and attitudes.
8. PW intentionally works toward eliminating unequal power relations built on racism and leveling the playing field for all.
9. PW demonstrates an increased commitment to becoming an inclusive and caring community across racial differences.

—Adapted from page 55, 2003 Business Book

**Antiracism Initiative of Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**Part I**  
**Antiracism Training**  
**2000–2003**

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In response to the policy statement, “Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Community,” approved by the 212th General Assembly (1999), Presbyterian Women voting representatives at the 2000 Churchwide Business Meeting voted overwhelmingly to “declare Presbyterian Women an antiracism organization and to continue to strive to eradicate racism.” The following rationale was printed in the minutes: *Racism is embedded in the very structure of our society and thus requires a very intentional effort to eradicate it. It is God’s intention that all should live together in community and not be separated from one another. For Presbyterian Women to adopt an antiracism identity means:*

1. *All persons would be treated with respect.*
2. *All gifts would be valued and encouraged.*
3. *PW structure would reflect commitment to antiracism.*
4. *Power would be shared.*
5. *Work would be done in a collegial style.*
6. *Each would be willing to examine her own culture norms/standards.*
7. *Each one would be free to be heard for who she is.*
8. *PW would work intentionally toward elimination of hierarchical power relationships.*
9. *Commitment to the inclusive, caring community would increase.*

The voting representatives also instructed the Churchwide Coordinating Team to continue to develop antiracism training modules and to send several CCT members to antiracism training workshops to be certified to train other PW in the synods, presbyteries and congregations. The Antiracism Initiative was added to the 2000–2003 PW budget, setting aside \$100,000 to train PW antiracism facilitators and to subsidize a study of the PW organization from an antiracism perspective.

The CCT, through its Justice and Peace Committee, worked during the 2000–2003 triennium to develop and implement a PW antiracism training event. A goal of training at least four racially diverse women from each synod was set. In partnership with the PC(USA) Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area, two two-day events were presented in the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002 in Louisville, Kentucky, and Tempe, Arizona.

A total of 50 women, including five CCT members, completed the training to be antiracism facilitators. These women, along with a growing network of other facilitators across the denomination, are available to lead events from one hour to one day in length for PW groups at all levels. Five of the women trained through PW have been identified as potential national-level trainers.

PW antiracism training is designed to help participants face racism in their own lives and learn ways to combat it personally. The training sessions include exercises to develop a sensitivity to what racism is and how we see it manifested in our daily living. During the training, emphasis is placed on the individual and how one's culture and race has shaped her understanding of racism. The training is done in a nonthreatening manner and setting, which helps everyone to grow in awareness of her own prejudices and practice overcoming them.

Race, prejudice and power are pieces that form the puzzle of racism. Tolerance is an acceptable beginning point, but in working against racism, we must go beyond tolerance to the acceptance and celebration of our differences, thereby rearranging the pieces of the puzzle.

More information about antiracism can be found on the PW Web site at [http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what\\_we\\_do/build-community/antiracism/](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/antiracism/).

**Antiracism Initiative**  
**Part II**  
**Task Group for a Structural Review of Presbyterian Women**  
**from an Antiracism Perspective**

**Report and Recommendations**

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**Introduction**  
**Presbyterian Women Purpose**

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves:

- to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace, and
- to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

In living out its purpose Presbyterian Women has committed itself to ending racism in all its forms and in all places—at all levels of Presbyterian Women, within the church and in society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> In our commitment to eradicating racism, we respond to Paul's call to love one another and demonstrate the marks of a true Christian:

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers (*Romans 12:9–13*).

And elsewhere, Paul calls us to show our Christian love:

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God . . . of all, who is above all and through all and in all (*Ephesians 4:1–6*).

As a result of Presbyterian Women's commitment to ending racism, the Task Group for a Structural Review of Presbyterian Women from an Antiracism Perspective was formed.

**Background**

At its 1997 Churchwide Business Meeting, Presbyterian Women approved a resolution to seek to eradicate racism. During the 1997–2000 triennium of Presbyterian Women, the Churchwide Coordinating Team participated in antiracist awareness-raising-activities that led it to adopt an antiracist stance. An antiracist group acknowledges its

participation in racism and works to overcome it. Following the example set by the 211th General Assembly (1999), the voting representatives to the 2000 Presbyterian Women Business Meeting adopted an antiracist identity and charged the CCT to appoint a task group to critique the organization’s structure and program from an antiracism perspective. To that purpose the Task Group for a Structural Review of Presbyterian Women from an Antiracism Perspective was appointed in 2001.

The goal of the review was to examine ways to achieve Presbyterian Women’s vision of an inclusive and caring community that is representative of the diversity of the church. In creating the task group, Presbyterian Women sought to examine what impedes or prohibits the realization of this goal on the one hand, and what encourages and supports its realization on the other.

The task group drew from the leadership of PW and on the professional expertise of women in related fields. The original proposal was for a group composed of 12 women (seven women of color and five European American women). In the end, 13 women from various racial ethnic groups within Presbyterian Women served on the task group during the 2000–2003 triennium, reporting annually to the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women.

They are:

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Rosy Aja-Muñoz*  | Afaf Khoury             |
| Wilma Bennett    | Shin Kim                |
| Sallie Cuaresma  | Dora Lodwick            |
| Karen Fritsch    | Ann McFarlane           |
| Iris Gonzalez    | Marge Santos            |
| Catreliia Hunter | Alberta Williams, chair |
| Ann Beran Jones  |                         |

\* Rosy Aja-Muñoz began work with the task group and was unable to complete the term.

Throughout the process, the task group kept before it the vision of a Presbyterian Women organization where every racial ethnic group is represented and every voice is given an opportunity to be heard. The task group now brings its final report with recommendations to the voting representatives at the 2003 Business Meeting.

### Overview of the Work

At the beginning of its life together, the task group adopted the following definition of racism:

**Racism:** Power plus racial prejudice equals racism. Racism results from a merger of social power and racial prejudice to create systems that treat people differently whether intentionally or unintentionally. It shapes institutions and structures so that they provide privileges for some while oppressing others. It involves inequality and unfair access to the

distribution of such resources as money, education, information and decision-making power between dominant and dominated groups. In the United States whites hold the social power to make and enforce decisions that shape the institutions and systems of society in accordance with their values and beliefs. These institutions perpetuate racism.<sup>2</sup>

With the definition, the task group used several approaches to carefully review the Presbyterian Women organization from an antiracist perspective. It contracted with the Office of Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to conduct a mailed survey of Presbyterian Woman leaders (see pp. 69–73). Five working groups were formed, each focusing on a different aspect of the organization. The groups used the results of the mailed survey, telephone interviews with specific groups of leaders and printed resources and documents. The results of their study follow.

### **Working Groups**

At its first meeting, the task group established five aspects of PW for working groups to review—leadership structure, PW Enabler network, PW antiracism training, PW written resources, and the structural relationship with racial ethnic women’s groups.

#### **Working Group on Leadership Structure**

The Working Group on Leadership Structure

- evaluated the degree to which the PW leadership structure is inclusive
- reviewed the leadership trajectories for women of different racial ethnic backgrounds and the processes for identifying emerging leaders
- assessed procedures for orientation, mentoring and support of new leaders

To complete its task the working group

- reviewed the *Presbyterian Women Manual* and leadership brochures using the antiracism evaluation tool for literature developed by the PW Written Resources Working Group, and determined that these publications include racial ethnic references, where appropriate, and that they are free of negative portrayals of racial ethnic cultures
- conducted telephone surveys with 12 synod search committee moderators
- interviewed two past CCT Search Committee moderators
- compiled and reviewed results from the written surveys completed by synod moderators
- reviewed and helped to write results from the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership

#### **General Observations**

Analysis of the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership and telephone interviews with synod PW moderators and Search Committee moderators suggest several areas of concern

where current practices, policies and procedures related to the leadership structure of Presbyterian Women might discourage active participation of racial ethnic women or exclude racial ethnic, younger, and working women. This is particularly relevant when looking at such issues as meeting time, geographical distances and time commitment required for serving in elected positions on presbytery, synod and churchwide coordinating teams. It is important to note that while there is some participation of racial ethnic women at the leadership levels, the women who serve in roles other than member-at-large have been primarily African American. This suggests that there is a need for study and development of strategies for involving more women from the other racial ethnic groups. The following is a summary of the findings, observations and suggestions related to each of the major areas addressed by the group.

### **Inclusive Leadership**

A majority of the synod search committee moderators interviewed said that the nominees for leadership positions reflected the diversity of Presbyterian Women in their synod. However, the written survey indicates that the number of racial ethnic women holding leadership positions has decreased since 1999, with the majority of racial ethnic women serving as members-at-large. Search Committee moderators said that identifying racial ethnic women to serve in the various roles is a challenge. In some synods, language is a barrier, and in others search committees encounter women who work and do not have the time to participate in leadership.

In addition, the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership revealed a disparity between the large number of responses stating that including racial ethnic women as leaders strengthens Presbyterian Women, while a very small number said they saw working to support and include racial ethnic women as part of their responsibility.

### **Leadership Trajectory**

The working group also compared the leadership trajectory of white and racial ethnic Presbyterian Women leaders and evaluated the extent to which racial ethnic women are considered for positions other than member-at-large.

Of the sixteen synods, only one, other than Puerto Rico, had a racial ethnic Presbyterian Women moderator in 1999, 2000 or 2001. Four synods had a racial ethnic vice-moderator in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, and two had racial ethnic moderators in 2002.

Of 173 presbyteries, 18 had racial ethnic moderators in 1999, 19 in 2000, 18 in 2001 and 16 in 2002. Members-at-large increased slightly from 24 in 1999 to 26 in 2002. Unfortunately, the survey instrument did not ask for the racial ethnic background of the individual women serving. This would have given the committee more information on the participation of racial ethnic women other than African American.

### **Identification of Emerging Leaders at All Levels**

Based on the telephone surveys with former CCT Search Committee moderators, the process for identifying leaders from all racial ethnic groups at the CCT level is clearly



outlined and used. The process at the synod levels varies, with a majority indicating that their nominees reflect the diversity of Presbyterian Women within the synod. Some synods did not use written recommendation forms and some did not specifically ask for names of racial ethnic women. Some had racial ethnic women endorsed for positions other than member-at-large, but several did not. Two-thirds of the synods had racial ethnic women endorsed by European American women or women who were not a part of their racial ethnic group. Most indicated that names come before the committee from various sources and that the process is widely known. Several indicated that some members-at-large have taken on other leadership roles, but that some seem to suffer burnout after serving on CCT as a member-at-large. Half of the search committee moderators encountered women who declined to serve. Reasons given included lack of time, family health problems and retirement. The interviews and survey results suggest the need to get more racial ethnic women involved in nominations. One suggestion made was to set up talent banks, distribute nomination forms more widely and work closely with past Search Committee moderators.

### **Formal and Informal Orientation and Mentoring**

Based on the responses to questions on mentoring and orientation in the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership, 75 percent of Presbyterian Women leaders indicated that orientation is effective, while 25 percent indicated that no orientation is given. However, when reviewed according to orientation for racial ethnic women, the responses varied with less than 10 percent indicating that orientation was effective for each group.

According to survey responses to the 62 percent of respondents indicated that mentoring of newly elected leaders is effective.

### **Formal and Informal Support for Leaders**

More than 75 percent of the survey respondents indicated that former leaders share information and records to some extent, with 25 percent indicating that information is shared to a great extent. More than 90 percent indicated that leaders support each other in doing their work, with more than 75 percent indicating to a great extent. Additionally, more than 90 percent of respondents indicated that Presbyterian Women information resources are effective.

### **Acceptance and Celebration of Various Forms of Leadership Styles**

This question was addressed as a part of the inclusive caring community issue in the survey. More than 70 percent of respondents indicated that Presbyterian Women groups are flexible, and that support and encouragement are provided for leaders. This is an area that can be further addressed through cross-cultural sensitivity training.

### **Increased Racial Ethnic Participation in the Presbyterian Women Business Meeting**

Although this question was not specifically addressed in the surveys, the working group believes that greater participation of racial ethnic women in the business meeting will naturally flow when leadership at the presbytery and synod levels becomes more inclusive of racial ethnic women, and something the task group feels will happen as part of passage and implementation of the recommendations.

## **Working Group on PW Enabler Network**

This group sought to understand and document the makeup of the Presbyterian Women Enabler (PWE) network to understand how this key group of leaders can facilitate the creation of an inclusive and caring community. Specifically, the group

- analyzed the strengths and possibilities of the Presbyterian Women leadership positions—especially the PWE network—to understand their characteristics and the nature of their work
- identified good examples of “inclusive and caring community” in the regional Presbyterian Women groups, especially those drawing on PW Enabler strengths
- identified the assets that facilitate the creation of this community and the barriers that prevent its creation
- determined the usefulness of Presbyterian Women resources for the work of the PW Enablers

The working group took the following steps to complete its task:

- helped to write the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership and analyze its results
- conducted telephone interviews of synod PW Enabler coordinators and compiled the results of the telephone interviews
- had one member attend and address the Presbyterian Women Churchwide Enabler meeting in Louisville in October 2001
- reviewed the section in the *Presbyterian Women Manual* on PW Enablers using an evaluative tool
- analyzed the PW Enabler database for coverage of synods and presbyteries, and compared PW Enablers and PW moderators’ perceptions of community building

### ***Synod PW Enabler Coordinator Interviews***

Telephone interviews were conducted with 13 of the 16 synod PW Enabler coordinators in order to discuss their perceptions of how the PW Enablers operate within their synods. There was variation in how well the coordinators knew the work being done in the presbyteries.

The primary tasks PW Enablers were doing in the presbyteries included:

- annual training of PW Enablers
- helping moderators in many different ways although roles were sometimes confused and
- communicating through newsletter articles for their presbyteries

Generally the synod PW Enabler coordinators were not clear about the racial ethnic backgrounds of the PW Enablers, although three synod coordinators were very clear about the existence of racial and ethnic women in their presbyteries and of the characteristics of the PW Enablers. Most of the synod PW Enabler coordinators did not think that there were issues of inclusiveness that needed to be addressed in their synods. However, two coordinators and their synods had clearly been working on these issues.

### ***Survey of Presbyterian Women Enablers and Moderators***

A subset of 50 PW Enablers and 49 moderators from the PW leadership survey were compared with each other analyzing responses to many of the survey questions.

*Racism Perceptions*—When asked about the appropriateness of antiracism training for leaders as a concern and mission of Presbyterian Women a majority of the PW Enablers and moderators said that providing this training for leaders is appropriate, either to a very great or great extent.

Additionally, these leaders strongly supported (86%) having racial ethnic women as an integral part of Presbyterian Women. Eighty-four percent of the respondents said that when women from many racial ethnic backgrounds are included as leaders, this strengthens the Presbyterian Women community, either to a very great extent (50%) or a great extent (34%).

However, when asked how applicable antiracism training is to their current leadership position, over half (61%) of the moderators as compared to 37 percent of the PW Enablers thought an antiracism training event would be very helpful or helpful to their work. More than half (63%) of the PW Enablers indicated that the training would be minimally helpful or not at all. The moderators had only 39 percent of their responses in this category.

When the women were asked if racism exists in their Presbyterian Women's group, 67 percent of the PW Enablers, compared with a third of the moderators, reported that within Presbyterian Women, racism did not exist. Another 60 percent of the moderators said that racism existed only minimally, compared to half (29%) that many PW Enablers.

Clearly many more moderators than PW Enablers perceive the existence of racism within Presbyterian Women. This may be especially challenging when PW Enablers work with multiethnic communities. In this sample there were very few women of color in either PW Enabler or PW moderator positions.

### **Presbyterian Women Community Building Practices**

As indicated in the survey analysis, Presbyterian Women leaders were asked to what extent 16 practices help to create a more inclusive and caring community. They responded using a five-point scale from "very effective" to "not at all effective."

### **Increasing Community**

It appears that many practices of Presbyterian Women help develop community within the organization. There seems to be greater consensus among the moderators about what builds community than among the PW Enablers. The moderators were most concerned about being Christ-centered (81% compared to 68% of PW Enablers) and providing support and encouragement (70% of the moderators compared to 62% of the PW Enablers). While a sizable majority (83%) of the moderators thought that "practicing open communication" was important to building community, less than half (48%) of the PW Enablers agreed.

The moderators were more aware of the importance of demonstrating flexibility (63% moderators and 49% PW Enablers) and ability to change (59% moderators and 44% of the PW Enablers) than were the PW Enablers.

The PW Enablers saw greater importance (52%) of scholarships for leadership development than did the moderators (45%).

Moderators were also more sensitive to cross-cultural communication issues (e.g., sensitivity to unspoken communication, issues of English as a second language and multiple ways of processing ideas) than were the PW Enablers.

### **Barriers to Community**

Presbyterian Women leaders were also asked about the extent to which 14 practices inhibit or prevent the creation of an inclusive and caring community within Presbyterian Women. The top barrier to the moderators (57%) and the PW Enablers (46%) was a shortage of time. Demands on leadership appear to prevent the development of community according to 53 percent of the moderators and 43 percent of the PW Enablers.

Longevity of leaders was chosen by the PW Enablers as the second major barrier to creating community (44% PW Enablers) while only 30 percent of the moderators perceived this as a problem. More moderators identified meeting schedules, negative stereotypes about Presbyterian Women, lack of support from the pastors and shortage of money as barriers more often than did the PW Enablers.

On the other hand, PW Enablers identified lack of willingness to change, and remaining within one's racial ethnic group and not reaching across boundaries as two other important practices that create barriers to community inclusiveness.

Finally, more (20%) PW Enablers than moderators (12%) indicated that "failure to fulfill responsibilities" is another barrier to community. This may especially affect PW Enablers since very few Presbyterian Women leaders overall indicated that this is an important barrier to community.

### ***PW Enabler Material***

A review of the PW Enabler section of the *PW Manual* found that while the manual is generic, not differentiating between peoples, it is informational, clear, concise and instructional. It gives clear step-by-step instructions about processes with suggested forms to be used in accomplishing effectively the task of a PW Enabler.

### **Working Group on Presbyterian Women Written Resources—*Horizons* Magazine, Bible Study and Other Resources**

This group was charged with

- reviewing recent issues of *Horizons* magazine (1999–2002)
- critiquing a sample of recent Bible studies
- doing both of these reviews with an eye to verifying the inclusion of different racial ethnic experiences and a sensitivity to diversity

To complete its task, the working group:

- worked with the PW communications coordinator to develop an evaluative tool for written resources
- reviewed 13 issues of *Horizons* magazine between 1999 and 2002, and the *Horizons* Bible studies (in English, Arabic, Korean and Spanish) using the evaluative tool
- reviewed the policies and guidelines of the PW Communications Office and the *Horizons* Editorial Committee (HEC) minutes
- discussed issues and questions related to resources and proposed guidelines with the PW communications coordinator
- interviewed the PW associate for leadership development concerning Korean translations of the Bible studies

### ***Evaluative Tool: Antiracism Evaluation of Presbyterian Women Material***

The PW communications coordinator compiled this tool using Racial Ethnic Guidelines published by the Joint Education Development and printed by Frontier Press, Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The working group participated in its refinement. The group used the tool to analyze three *PW/Horizons* Bible studies and 13 issues of *Horizons* magazine. Two other working groups also used the tool.

### **Observations on *Horizons* Magazine Review**

In its review of 13 issues *Horizons* magazine using the evaluative tool, the working group noted a number of positive changes, as well as areas for improvement.

There has been a gradual improvement in several areas. For example, illustrations indicate a greater racial ethnic diversity, and more racial ethnic authors have appeared in recent years. Another positive is that the Presbyterian Women Purpose is evident in every issue.

While mission work and projects in non-European countries are often covered, United States racial ethnic women's experiences have been neglected. Racial ethnic diversity in the United States, if mentioned, is done in abstract rather than in concrete terms. Thus, the focus on the international scope of the church's mission excludes the positive portrayal of racial ethnic diversity and the value of that diversity in the United States. The Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership indicates that racial ethnic women feel that *Horizons* rarely covers racial ethnic issues, while European American women think that it does quite often. This may indicate that European American women tend to identify overseas mission work as racial ethnic coverage.

### **Working Group on Structural Connections of Racial Ethnic Presbyterian Women Groups**

This working group investigated how Presbyterian Women and racial ethnic Presbyterian Women's groups are structurally related to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and how

Presbyterian Women and racial ethnic Presbyterian Women's groups are structurally related to each other. Specifically, the group

- tracked the relationship between the racial ethnic Presbyterian Women groups and the racial ethnic caucuses, and, the relationship between the racial ethnic caucuses and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), looked at the relationship between the racial ethnic Presbyterian Women groups and Presbyterian Women
- evaluated the accountability relationships and how these are developed within Presbyterian Women and within the racial ethnic Presbyterian Women groups
- examined how resources flow between Presbyterian Women and racial ethnic Presbyterian Women groups

To complete their work, the group

- participated in the development of the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership
- conducted an interview with the associate for Racial Justice Policy Development, the associate director of the Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area and the director of the National Ministries Division
- received input from Women's Ministries program Area National Staff in the Synods
- interviewed the Presbyterian Women program coordinator
- drew on direct knowledge acquired from working with the PW/Racial Ethnic Dialogue (One member served as convener for the 1998–2000 triennium Dialogue the other is a member of the 2001–2003 Dialogue.)

### ***The Relationship Between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and Presbyterian Women and Racial Ethnic Women's Groups***

#### **Presbyterian Women**

Presbyterian Women's staff relate to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) PC(USA) through the Women's Ministries Program Area, lodged in the National Ministries Division.

Presbyterian Women, the organization, also relates to PC(USA) through the Women's Ministries Program Area, with an additional connection through the General Assembly Council, where the Presbyterian Women moderator sits with voice and vote.

A covenant between Presbyterian Women and the National Ministries Division outlines this relationship.

#### **Racial Ethnic Women's Groups**

There are currently five racial ethnic groups recognized by the General Assembly that have formal programs—Asian, Black and Hispanic caucuses, the Middle Eastern Presbyterian Council, and the Native American Consulting Committee. There is a sixth group, the National Korean Presbyterian Council that while officially part of the Asian caucus, for all practical purposes operates much as an individually recognized group. Since April 2002, all of these groups, together with their programs, are located in the Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area that is lodged in the National Ministries Division.

The racial ethnic women's groups are not structurally a part of the PC(USA). All but the Hispanic women's group relate to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through the racial



ethnic caucus structure (quasi-independent groups who receive some funding from the church). The Hispanic women relate through the Women's Ministries Program Area. Racial ethnic women's groups get minimal support from the caucuses, however, women are a vital part of the caucuses. The caucuses are accountable to PC(USA) through a Memo of Understanding between the Cross-caucus (chairs of each racial ethnic caucus or their designee) and Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area.

### **Observation**

While Presbyterian Women has a relatively recognizable and official structural connection to PC(USA), it is difficult to locate and nearly impossible to chart the structural relationship of the racial ethnic women's groups. As one interviewee put it, the specific concerns of women of color are not channeled through the caucuses to the national church.

### ***The Relationship Between Presbyterian Women and Racial Ethnic Women's Groups***

At the churchwide level, there are six members-at-large for racial ethnic women:

- African American
- Asian American
- Hispanic/Latin American
- Korean American
- Middle Eastern American
- Native American

These women are nominated by the Churchwide Search Committee and are elected at the triennial Churchwide Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women. According to Presbyterian Women bylaws, racial ethnic members-at-large "shall be full participants on the CCT with the responsibility of connecting with their respective racial ethnic constituents to share information, concerns and resources and to encourage participation and involvement of racial ethnic Presbyterian women in the mission of Presbyterian Women churchwide."<sup>3</sup> Also, the bylaws instruct the Search Committee to ". . . prepare a list of nominees reflecting the diversity of Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA). . ."<sup>4</sup> Further the *Presbyterian Women Manual* directs the Search Committee to "seek names of women to be considered for leadership positions from Presbyterian Women groups across the country, including the racial ethnic women's constituency groups. . ."<sup>5</sup> By tradition, not bylaws, the Churchwide Search Committee has had one racial ethnic member.

### **Observations**

At the churchwide level the racial ethnic members-at-large have defined job descriptions and are full participants on the Churchwide Coordinating Team. These elected racial ethnic members-at-large have been a positive force to call attention to the talents and gifts of racial ethnic women.

As reflected in the report of the Working Group on Leadership Structure, there are many and varied ways that the Presbyterian Women organization relates to racial ethnic women's groups at the synod and presbytery levels. Some examples: racial ethnic members-at-large and racial ethnic women in other coordinating team positions serve Presbyterian Women at this level. In some synods where there are organized racial ethnic Presbyterian women groups, the moderators of these groups serve on the Presbyterian Women synod coordinating team with voice and vote. However, there is at least one synod that does not have racial ethnic member-at-large positions nor are there any racial ethnic women currently serving on the synod coordinating team.

In collecting information on the relationship of racial ethnic women's groups with Presbyterian Women and interviewing the Women's Ministries Program Area National Staff in the Synods, a strong connection was found between the strength of each racial ethnic women's group and its relationship to Presbyterian Women. Aggressive follow-up that keeps on making contact and the presence of adequate staffing to help accomplish this are two key elements that make the difference.

### **Working Group on Antiracism Training**

The Working Group on Antiracism Training

- evaluated the antiracism training modules as to their suitability for PW settings
- reviewed strategies for involving PW leadership in the antiracism training process at the synod and presbytery levels
- monitored follow-up with participants in antiracism training modules

The group carried out its work by

- having one of its members attend the antiracism training
- working closely with General Assembly staff responsible for the antiracism training, as well as Presbyterian Women staff, to achieve the above-listed goals
- conducting, analyzing and summarizing a questionnaire sent to 50 Presbyterian Women antiracism facilitators (27 responses were received)

### ***Training Events***

The antiracism training took place in Tempe, Arizona, and in Louisville Kentucky. Each training event had two parts, one weekend in the fall of 2001, and one weekend in the spring of 2002. In the western region there were 24 participants, mostly European American women, with a small representation of Hispanic/Latin, African American and Asian American women. In the eastern region, there were 32 participants, and there were more women of color women than European American women.

The training sessions were Christ-centered and included Bible study (using Eric Law's method of mutual invitation as presented in *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*), exercises to sensitize participants about racism and an overview of literature on racism.<sup>6</sup> The second training session built on the work of the first. Each participant was given a copy of the *Facilitator's Manual* at the end of the session. A plan is in place for training an additional 20 facilitators to balance the diversity of facilitators within certain synods.



Based on 27 questionnaires returned and other information, 61 antiracism events were conducted in 2002, 20 events are scheduled for 2003. At least 13 synods are involved. Events are for both Presbyterian Women groups and other middle-governing bodies or congregational groups.

### ***The Role of Antiracism Training in Building an Inclusive Community***

When asked about Presbyterian Women's commitment to building an "inclusive and caring community," and the role of antiracism training for achieving this, 66 percent of the respondents to the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership said that providing antiracism training for Presbyterian Women leaders is an appropriate concern and mission of Presbyterian Women, either to a very great or great extent. Thirty-five percent were less enthusiastic, with about 10 percent saying that it was not or "only a little" appropriate mission.

As stated above the Presbyterian Women leaders were strongly supportive (87%) of having racial ethnic women as an integral part of Presbyterian Women and said that when women from many racial ethnic backgrounds are included as leaders within Presbyterian Women, this strengthens the Presbyterian Women community (84%).

However, the majority of these Presbyterian Women leaders think that, as part of their work in Presbyterian Women, they have only minimal or no responsibility for including and supporting all but European American women. Less than 20 percent of the Presbyterian Women leaders report that Native American women (14%), Middle Eastern American women (13%) and new immigrant women (8%) inclusion is a large part of their responsibility as leaders, even when these constituencies exist within their geographic area.

In addition, when asked how applicable antiracism training is to their current Presbyterian Women position, less than one-half of the respondents (45%) thought an antiracism training event would be very helpful or helpful. More than half (55%) indicated that the training would be minimally helpful or not at all helpful. Additionally, when the women were asked about racism and if it exists in Presbyterian Women, 41 percent of the leaders said that within their Presbyterian Women group, racism did not exist. Another 44 percent said that racism existed within their Presbyterian Women group only minimally.

When analyzed by racial ethnic groups, there was a strong split in the answers of the American Indian/Native American women,<sup>7</sup> with half saying racism exists to a great extent within Presbyterian Women and half saying not at all. About a third of the Asian American (29%) and Hispanic/Latin American (33%) leaders thought that there was quite a bit of racism in Presbyterian Women. About a quarter of the African American leaders (23%) agreed. However, only 2% of the European American leaders thought there was racism within Presbyterian Women.

### **Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership**

In May 2002, to discover the attitudes and experiences of Presbyterian Women, the task group mailed a survey to more than 600 current and past leaders at the churchwide, synod

and presbytery levels of the organization. This Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership invited feedback on what Presbyterian Women leaders saw as the organization's strengths in developing an "inclusive, caring community," called for in the Presbyterian Women Purpose, and the areas the group needs to work on in meeting this goal. The task group worked together on the survey during its second meeting, February 8–10, 2002. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Research Services was responsible for perfecting and distributing the survey, and receiving and analyzing the results. Of the 389 responses (64% response rate), 85 percent were European American women, 8 percent were African American, 2 percent were Hispanic/Latin, 1 percent were Native American, 1 percent were Asian American (not including Korean), 1 percent were Korean, 1 percent were Middle Eastern, and 4 percent listed their race/ethnicity as "other."

## **Major Findings**

### ***General Observations***

#### *Presbyterian Women Leaders' Characteristics:*

##### *Age, Racial Ethnic Backgrounds, and Leadership Time*

The survey indicates that there is some effort at bringing new people into leadership positions since more than half (51%) have held Presbyterian Women leadership positions for less than 10 years, although 22 percent have held leadership positions for over 20 years. On average, the Presbyterian Women leaders are 68 years old, ranging from 34 to 90 years. Most (43%) are 70–79 years old, and 10 percent are over 80 years of age.

This suggests that many of the "new recruits" into leadership positions may be in their late 50s or 60s. There may be a cultural belief that women should move into Presbyterian Women leadership positions when they retire.

#### *Perceptions About Racism*

The results indicate that in general all Presbyterian Women leaders value the contributions of women from many racial ethnic backgrounds, agreeing that Presbyterian Women is strengthened by this richness. Additionally, there is lack of agreement on the existence of racism.

Only 2 percent of the European American leaders agreed that racism exists to a great extent in their Presbyterian Women's groups. On the other hand, a quarter to a third of the women of color leaders agreed that racism exists to a great extent in their Presbyterian Women's groups.

### ***Presbyterian Women Community Building Practices***

The survey asked leaders about what assets they felt facilitated the creation of an inclusive and caring community, and the results indicate that there are several ways Presbyterian Women facilitate this creation.

#### *Importance of Change*

There are three ways the task group considered the importance of being able to change in order to become a caring and inclusive community—demonstrating flexibility, demonstrating the ability to innovate change and demonstrating the ability to innovate. The racial ethnic leaders, except for the European Americans, had strong support for these three practices.

The value “demonstrating flexibility” was most supported by Asian American leaders and least supported by African American leaders. Overall, 53 percent of racial ethnic women supported demonstrating flexibility to facilitate the creation of an inclusive and caring community.

### *Changes in Communication and Training*

All racial ethnic groups, except European Americans, had many leaders identify changes in communication patterns as important to creating a more inclusive and caring community. Over 50 percent of all groups identified the importance of encouraging everyone to speak. Additionally, European American leaders emphasized having many different racial ethnic groups represented in printed materials was important.

Other forms of communication, such as being sensitive to unspoken communication and to the needs of women with less English proficiency, were important to Asian American leaders. All racial ethnic leaders, except for the European American women, emphasized the importance of being sensitive to a variety of ways of processing ideas. This was particularly important to the Hispanic/Latin American leaders.

These same leaders stressed the importance of leadership development through the use of scholarships and training opportunities. Over 50 percent of all the racial ethnic leaders, except for European Americans, emphasized the importance of scholarships. These same leaders, except for European American women, also strongly supported training opportunities for leadership development.

### ***Barriers to Community Building***

Similar to examining the assets valued in the creation of the inclusive and caring community, the survey asked leaders about the barriers that prevent the creation of this community.

#### *Leadership*

More Asian American leaders identified barriers to the creation of an inclusive and caring community than did any other set of leaders. Over 50% of Native American, Asian American and European American leaders identified “general leadership demands” as a barrier.

#### *Geography, Money, Time*

Native American, European Americans and African American leaders identified geographical barriers as a challenge. They may all be spread over wide geographic areas. Only Asian American leaders reported that meeting times prevented the creation of community while both Asian American and African American leaders identified shortages of money and time. These two groups of leaders also identified the recycling of the same leaders as creating barriers to community as did some European American leaders.

#### *Internal Leadership Issues*

Asian American women identified several internal leadership issues, including lack of support from other leaders, lack of communication, high turnover in leadership and leaders who don't fulfill their responsibilities, as barriers to community. They also were the largest group of leaders to identify racism as a barrier. Some of these issues may indicate their feeling isolated from other Presbyterian Women leaders.

### *Lack of Willingness to Change*

Over 50 percent of the racial ethnic leaders, except for the European American women, identified a lack of willingness to change as barriers to inclusive and caring community. When this is examined in relation to the comments about what helps to create community, this may refer to the behavior of the European American Presbyterian Women groups.

### *External Influences*

Many Asian American leaders said that negative stereotypes of Presbyterian Women, competing women's groups, and lack of pastor support were barriers to creating an inclusive and caring community. These results indicate some areas Presbyterian Women may wish to examine further.

### *Isolation*

Many Hispanic/Latin leaders identified "remaining within one's racial ethnic group and not reaching across boundaries or barriers" as a key concern. This suggests isolation and a lack of feeling welcomed, and this could be an area for work of Presbyterian Women as a whole.

### ***Inclusion and Support of Racial Ethnic Women as Presbyterian Women Leaders***

The Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership revealed a number of important leadership issues. For example, according to the survey, more than 50 percent of the leaders believed that including racial ethnic women as leaders strengthens Presbyterian Women to a very great extent, with an additional 34 percent indicating to a great extent and 11 % to some extent. While 87 percent felt that a goal of Presbyterian Women should be to have racial ethnic women fully involved in aspects of Presbyterian Women work, few (4–12%) indicated that they were responsible for working to support and include racial ethnic women. Few also felt younger women (11%) and working women (11%) were a part of their responsibility.

## **Other Task Group Work**

In addition to the Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership sponsored by the task group as a whole, several of the individual working groups conducted interviews. Other tasks included meeting with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) staff, analysis of Presbyterian Women printed resources, review of policy guidelines of the Presbyterian Women Communications Office (Women's Ministries Program Area) and attending antiracism training workshops and other Presbyterian Women meetings.

## **Conclusion**

The Task Group on Structural Review of Presbyterian Women from an Antiracism Perspective was created to critique Presbyterian Women and make recommendations to assure the organization continues to grow as the "inclusive and caring community" and is representative of the entire church membership into the 21st century. Over the two-year study, the task group learned that the changes needed are not only a matter of outward expression, but also a change from the heart—individually, personally and organizationally. As the Gospel says, "The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good . . . for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks" (*Luke 6:45*). We are likewise instructed when Jesus responds to the lawyer concerning the first

commandment and what is required to inherit eternal life. Jesus proclaims, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (*Luke 10:27–28*). The Beatitudes tell us, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (*Matthew 5:8*). What the Task Group learned over its two-year study has potential implications for the entire church. Presbyterian Women hopes that the larger church, which is similar to Presbyterian Women demographically, will examine itself from an antiracism perspective.

In this spirit, we commend this report and recommendations to Presbyterian Women for implementation, and commend the concept PW followed to the whole church for its consideration and implementation.

### **Recommendations**

As a result of its work, the Task Group for a Structural Review of Presbyterian Women from an Antiracism Perspective makes recommendations in four categories—leadership, organization design, resources and general.

The Task Group for a Structural Review of PW from an Antiracism Perspective recommends:

#### ***Leadership***

1. That the Churchwide Coordinating Team commit itself and urge that every Presbyterian Women moderator/co-moderator, search committee moderator, PW Enabler and other coordinating team members of synod and presbytery coordinating teams assume responsibility for involving more racial ethnic women in PW and use every available avenue to achieve this goal.
2. That Presbyterian Women, as an organization, commit itself at all levels to electing and appointing more racial ethnic women in leadership, using specific means to achieve this goal.
3. That Presbyterian Women use multiple approaches, such as antiracism training and cultural proficiency training, as part of required Presbyterian Women leadership training, in order to promote inclusion of all women in Presbyterian Women and the PC(USA).
4. That PW develop leadership training opportunities and provide scholarship support to ensure participation of underrepresented groups in the different geographic areas served by Presbyterian Women by proactively seeking the participation of potential leaders representing these groups.
5. That PW leaders at all levels design outreach efforts to identify and recruit women of many racial ethnic backgrounds and ages as members and leaders of PW.

### **Organization Design**

6. That PW at the churchwide level appoint a task group to study and restructure leadership positions to include well-defined tasks involving a smaller commitment of time and scope of responsibility, including an analysis of the PW Enabler network.
7. That Presbyterian Women urge PW at synod and presbytery levels to use the Churchwide PW Racial Ethnic Dialogue model to organize and implement PW racial ethnic dialogues at those levels and provide funds to assist in the implementation.
8. That the findings of this task group in their entirety be referred to the appropriate CCT committees for study and implementation.
9. That the CCT conduct a triennial evaluation and review of progress toward addressing recommendations and implementation strategies from the Task Group for a Structural Review of PW from an Antiracism Perspective and report the results to the 2006 Churchwide Business Meeting.

### **Resources**

10. That the *PW Manual* be modified to reflect the changes developed in PW structure, policies and procedures and revised to include culturally proficient models for orientation and mentoring of women in leadership positions, a listing of all racial ethnic groups and affiliates, including emerging new immigrant groups, within the PC(USA), along with cultural characteristics found in these communities, and self-assessment tools for examining how PW groups and leaders conduct their work.
11. That PW ensure that all publications emphasize contributions and achievements of all racial ethnic persons and that PW resource production policies and guidelines be expanded to address racial ethnic concerns.
12. That when PW publishes non-English versions of the *PW/Horizons* Bible Study, the studies are interpretations within the appropriate cultural context, and not merely literal translations.
13. That PW, in partnership with Women's Ministries Program Area and Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area, study how to increase staffing services to racial ethnic Presbyterian Women's groups and develop a plan of implementation.
14. That PW Enabler training materials be updated to support changes as they occur. PW Enabler training materials should be updated to include suggested antiracism approaches for use in PW Enabler work with local PW groups, suggested ways to do outreach on cultural proficiency in PW groups and models and examples for PW Enablers and PW Moderators to follow in working together to strengthen PW programs and relationships.



## **General**

15. That this report be commended to every Presbyterian Woman to read, study and implement the recommendations in her community, an implementation involving an outward manifestation well as an expression in each women's heart.
16. That PW recommend this report to the General Assembly Council for the study and review of the entire church.

## **Notes**

1. *Minutes*, Presbyterian Women Churchwide Business Meeting, 1997.
2. The Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership used a shorter definition.

Racism: The result of a merger of social power and racial prejudice, which develops a system that treats people differently whether intentionally or unintentionally. It shapes institutions and structures so that they provide privileges for some while oppressing others.

Both definitions are taken from the *Antiracism Training Facilitators Manual* published by the National Ministries Division, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
3. Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Bylaws, Article V., Section 1.G.
4. *Ibid.*, Article VII., Section 3..
5. *Presbyterian Women Manual*, rev. 2001, p. 6–7.
6. Eric Law, Episcopal priest, multicultural advocate, and the author of *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1993), has developed a process for doing this through mutual invitation to speak.
7. The task group Survey of Presbyterian Women Leadership used the term “American Indian/Native American” for Native American women to ensure that all who filled out the survey understood that “Native American” was the category for women whose ancestors historically come from the North American continent, not for who were born here in recent generations. This language was only used in the survey, and was used to prevent skewing the survey results.