

Committee on Ministry Racial Justice Self-Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your honest and thorough answers to the following questions will help your Committee on Ministry leaders identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth as your COM genuinely provides, as the Marks for COMs states, “hospitality to all persons” without bias and with justice.

At times in this assessment you will be asked about “bias.” What do we mean by bias? For the purpose of this assessment, the term “bias” refers to a tendency or preference towards a certain group, idea, or concept that influences our judgments and decisions, either positively or negatively. Our experiences, culture, social norms, and personal beliefs often shape these biases. The way we act on these biases can be either conscious or unconscious and can lead to prejudiced or discriminatory behaviors. Everyone has biases, of course, and as COM member it is especially important that our biases be understood and, to the best of our abilities, minimized as we do this ministry together. We are called to receive and respond to all of God’s children without prejudice or discrimination. The Spirit is well equipped to guide our decisions, and we don’t want to let bias get in the way of the Spirit. Addressing and understanding bias is one part of faithful discernment and decision-making.

So let’s get started! Check the box next to the statement that best reflects your understanding of your COM’s practices of understanding and reducing racial and ethnic bias:

- I’m new and I don’t know yet...
- We have not done anything yet, or that I’m aware of.
- We have begun having conversations about ways we can reduce bias in our COM work and what we need to do to be more hospitable.
- We have had learning opportunities and as a result adjusted some of our internal policies, practices and/or values to intentionally promote racial and ethnic equity.
- It is an integral part of our internal culture, on-going education, values, practices, policies, and assessment, including in the orientation of new COM members. Every clergy and MID who we meet with is clear of our commitment providing true hospitality to persons of all races and ethnicities.

Please allow ample time to respond completely to the following questions. The more honest and complete you are in your response the more helpful this assessment will be for the growth and development of your COM. If you don’t know the answer to the question or it is something you haven’t thought about before, be honest about that. Please put your answers on an additional sheet of paper. Thank you!

Committee Recruitment, Organization and Assessment

1. When recruiting new COM members, are expectations and requirements made clear? Do COM members appear to understand the responsibility and authority of serving on a COM? How do you know?
2. How selective is your Association or Conference about who serves on a COM? Is anyone who volunteers welcome to serve or is there a screening process? Please explain your answer.

3. Does your COM assess the effectiveness and impact of its work? Who provides input? How often and in what ways is assessment done?
4. Does your COM take racial and ethnic composition of the Committee into consideration when recruiting new members? If so, how does that happen?
5. When a question of fitness is raised about a minister, does the Fitness Review Team consider racial or ethnic bias in the process? How is it assessed?

Creating and Sustaining Hospitality

6. What does your COM do to create a welcoming space for MIDs and authorized ministers, as well as COM members? Please explain your answer, using examples if possible.
7. Does your COM use cultural consultants? (It is ok to say if you don't know what a cultural consultant is). If so, has it been helpful to the MID/minister? To the COM?
8. Are the full identities of all persons (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, age, socioeconomic class, etc.) affirmed and respected in all aspects of your COM's culture? How do you know if it is or is not?
9. Does your COM communicate a commitment to justice and inclusion to those you serve? If so, how is that communicated?
10. How confident are you that your COM has the capacity to welcome all persons without bias or favor? Are there certain groups or identities of persons that you think are less welcome or more welcome? Please explain your answer.

Conflict Management and Decision-making

11. Reflect on your COM's discernment and decision-making processes. Does everyone share in deliberations? How does (or doesn't) your COM ensure that all voices are heard? Please share your observations.
12. How does your COM deal with difficult conversations and conflict? Please explain.
13. When concerns about the COM are raised by MIDs or ministers, how are these concerns addressed? Are you aware of any practices or policies for receiving and addressing concerns? How does an MID or minister know that their concerns have been carefully considered?
14. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with the treatment of an individual and/or a decision or decision-making process while you have served on the COM? Did you express your concern? To whom? Why or why not? If you did, how did it go?
15. Generally, how well do you think COM members are able to receive or offer feedback/criticism with other COM members? With defensiveness? With openness and a desire to do better? Please explain your answer.

Education

16. Are COM members encouraged and expected to learn about racism and bias as a part of serving on the COM? If so, how does this happen? Does everyone participate?
 17. Do you as a COM member educate yourself on racism and racial and ethnic bias? How important do you think this is for your work on the COM? Please explain your answer.
 18. Does your COM create opportunities to learn together about how to be intentionally welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds? If yes, how often and in what ways?
 19. Do you feel you have the skills and knowledge you need to contribute positively to making your COM hospitable to all persons? Are there particular topics or areas of learning that would help you to do a better job?
 20. What have you learned about bias, cultural diversity, discrimination or other related topics that you think would be helpful to your COM?
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Please share anything else related to racial or ethnic bias and your COM that you feel would be helpful and important for your COM leaders to know.

Are there questions we haven't asked in this assessment but should? Please share those questions and how you would answer them.

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