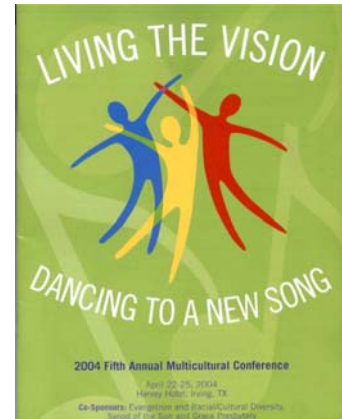


2004 Multicultural Conference: Living the Vision, Dancing to a New Song

The 2004 National Multicultural Conference continued the growing impact of multicultural ministry movement throughout the PCUSA. There were 450 registrants and a total of 500 who attended the Conference with the theme, "Living the Vision, Dancing to a New Song." There were 275 who attended the Conference last year in Seattle. Plenary speakers were Rev. Cliff Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the GA; Rev. Helen Locklear, Associate Director of the Racial Ethnic Ministries Program Area of GA; Rev. Dr. Kikanza Nuri Robins, consultant and PCUSA minister; Dr. Salatiel Palomino Lopez, pastor, professor, and associated with Austin Seminary; Rev. Steve Yamaguchi, Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of Los Ranchos.



There was a joyful celebration of various cultures in worship, workshops, community building groups, and the Saturday evening Extravaganza, where African, African American, Asian American, Native American, Hispanic American, and Euro American cultures were shared in praise to God through song, dance, and music. It had the feel of a triennial Racial Ethnic Convocation because of the diversity of cultures represented. However, the sense of it was the celebration of multiple cultures partnering together in local multicultural churches on a continual basis and the sharing of that process, not different cultural groups meeting infrequently. As stories of multicultural churches are shared, it envisions, encourages, and trains multicultural ministry to a broader base.

Inclusiveness and cooperation were paramount. There were workshop tracks for governing bodies, seminarians, and youth. Scholarships were available for racial ethnic people, seminarians, and youths. There were around twenty seminarians. The youth participated several times in worship. There were group caucuses but many more multicultural sharing activities.

There was a wonderful chord of response felt as the conferees sang, clapped, and swayed to the different cultural music. Two offerings were taken, and the total more than doubled the total of the same offerings from last year: \$40 million Mission Initiative: \$4,047 and 2005 Conference scholarship: \$2,025.

A significant event was the formation of the PCUSA Multicultural Network (PMN). It is analogous to the New Church Development and Congregational Transformation Networks. The PMN works in partnership with the GA Program Area for evangelism, envisioning, and supporting multicultural churches, congregations and the pastors who serve them. This website is a result of the PMN ministry. The PMN in partnership with the Evangelism, and Racial/Cultural Diversity office of GA, helps plan Multicultural Conferences and national and regional training, and provides a fellowship of kindred spirits in multicultural ministry.

The theme for the 2005 joint Multicultural and Congregational Transformation Conference, July 14-17, at Columbia U., Manhattan, NYC, is "Witnessing to God's Radical Hope" – Luke 24: 3-5. There will be time to explore NYC. Some nearby hotels will be used in addition to the University facilities.