

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U.S.A. REGARDING
“CREATING A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE WITHIN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)”**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We greet you in this Easter season in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

As the executives of the six General Assembly agencies, we write to assure you of our commitment to including the rich diversity of God’s people in the leadership of all of our General Assembly agencies and to ask for your assistance in this process. The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1st Corinthians 12 that we in the church are “the body of Christ.” In this body leadership of a wide diversity of people is honored so that we may more faithfully discern the will of Christ, who is the head of the body, and more effectively carry out Christ’s mission in the world.

We recognize that in the church and in our agencies we are far from where God intends us to be in honoring the gifts of women, racial ethnic persons, and people with disabilities in leadership. However, we are strongly committed to change and are grateful for the action of the 216th General Assembly (2004) in approving the report, “Creating a Climate for Change within the PCUSA,” which calls for a new churchwide commitment to inclusiveness in leadership, especially related to staff in senior positions.

We have or are in the process of taking a number of important initiatives to promote opportunities for leadership for those who have often been excluded. Among those initiatives are:

- Special mentoring programs for women and racial ethnic persons currently employed to develop skills for advancement.
- Tuition assistance grants especially focused on women, racial ethnic persons and persons with disabilities.
- Launching of cultural competence/proficiency programs in most of our agencies to create work environment that values and honors diversity.
- Targeted recruitment of women and racial ethnic persons for senior level positions.
- Rigorous monitoring and implementation of the General Assembly goals of at least 20% racial ethnic persons and 40% women in both exempt and non-exempt staff positions in our agencies.

- Special internships for racial ethnic persons.
- “Diversity in leadership programs” to give more racial ethnic persons opportunities to experience leadership at the General Assembly level.
- Partnership with the caucuses and racial ethnic colleges and seminaries in seeking leadership.
- An interagency colloquium for all staff to foster a culturally proficient workplace.
- Anti-racism programs for all of our employees.

We believe these initiatives are making a positive contribution for developing a workplace free of discrimination and in which the gifts of a wide variety of persons are honored. However, we also believe that further steps are needed both in our agencies and throughout the church. We are particularly concerned about lack of women and racial ethnic persons in the top leadership positions in our agencies and would urge the church to give priority to seeking greater diversity as it elects chief executives for the major boards and agencies of the church.

We hope this commitment to diversity in leadership will not only be one held at the General Assembly level but will also be a priority throughout our denomination. We are committed to working closely with sessions, presbyteries, and synods to build up the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a faithful reflection of the body of Christ. We welcome a partnership with all of you in this endeavor.

Yours in Christ Service,

Robert W. Maggs, President of the Board of Pensions

Robert Leech, President of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation

John Detterick, Executive Director, General Assembly Council

James Hudson, President, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program

Davis Perkins, President and Publisher of Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly