

UPCI RACIAL AND ETHNIC AFFIRMATION TIMELINE

- 1975 **Position Paper on “Unity of Oneness Believers”**: Adopted by the General Conference.
- 1975 **Multicultural Ministries (MCM)**: Established to evangelize language and ethnic groups in the US and Canada. Director was subsequently seated on Board of General Presbyters (General Board).
- 1977 **Spanish Evangelism Ministries (SEM)**: Established to promote evangelism and participation in the Spanish-speaking community. Director was subsequently seated on General Board.
- 1979 **Building the Bridge Ministries (BTB)**: Established to promote evangelism and participation in the African American community. Director was subsequently seated on General Board.
- 1998 **Global Council**: Established to coordinate the international efforts of the UPCI. (Planning meetings were held in 1998 with the first official council meeting in 2000.) As Global Missions establishes self-governing national churches in each country, leaders are elected by ministers of that country. Each organized work sends two delegates to the Global Council. In 2020, there were over 60 national superintendents outside the US and Canada.
- 2000 **Urshan Graduate School of Theology (UGST)**: Established as the first seminary serving the Apostolic movement, accredited in 2010, with African American, Hispanic, and other Apostolic organizational representation on its board of directors, faculty, staff, and student body. On the initial board was a past presiding bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW).
- 2005 **All Nations Sunday**: Established to celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of our fellowship and to encourage further diversity. Churches are urged to implement this theme annually in October.
- 2006 **Apostolic Fellowship Summit (AFS)**: Established to connect the major Apostolic Pentecostal organizations in the US and Canada. In March, Urshan Graduate School of Theology invited leaders of the seven largest Oneness Pentecostal organizations for the first meeting. The meeting featured a symposium session on racial tensions and divisions, a drama on the life of G. T. Haywood presented at a PAW church, and a footwashing ceremony of reconciliation. In October, the leaders reconvened and began an annual meeting.
- 2008 **Position Paper on “Racial and Ethnic Affirmation”**: Adopted by the General Board.
- 2010 **World Headquarters Policy**: “Diversity and Inclusion” policy included in the new Executive Policy and Procedures Manual.
- 2010 **General Conference Invitation**. Leaders of the AFS organizations were invited to attend and address the conference. Leaders have participated occasionally in subsequent years.
- 2010 **International Articles of Faith, International Transfer of Ministerial Credentials, Global Council Secretary**: Adopted by the Global Council. The position of Secretary rotates among regions of the world and is elected by the delegates.
- 2011 **Church Advancement Department**. BTB, MCM, and SEM were placed directly under the General Superintendent and Executive Board for self-governance and ministry to the whole church.
- 2012 **Urshan College (UC)**: Established as a Christian college for the Apostolic movement with the goal of regional accreditation, attaining accreditation in 2020. The UC board, faculty, staff, and student body reflects significant racial and ethnic diversity.
- 2012 **Survey of Minority Participation**: Of 55 districts in the US and Canada, 31 had minorities as department heads and 39 had minorities in some leadership position. The General Board had African American, Hispanic, and Asian members. Each of the seven general divisions (major ministries) had minority representation on its committee or board.
- 2014 **General Conference Panel Discussion on Race**: Held in September in St. Louis, following the Ferguson tragedy in August; transcript was later published in *Forward* (UPCI ministers’ magazine).
- 2015 **Public Statements**: “Diversity and Inclusion”; “Refugees”; “Immigration.”

- 2016 **Appreciation Sunday:** Initiated by Building the Bridge Ministries, to recognize the work of first responders, including law enforcement officers, and to build relationships with them.
- 2016 **Apostolic Men's Prayer Conference** (AFS event): Held at a PAW church in Ferguson, MO.
- 2016 **Public Statements:** "Human Government and Law Enforcement"; "Political Involvement"; "Shootings by Police"; "Killing of Police Officers."
- 2018 **First National Apostolic Day of Prayer** (AFS event), Washington, DC, organized by presiding bishop of PAW.
- 2018 **Survey of Minority Participation:** Of 57 districts in the US and Canada, 249 in district leadership positions were Black, Hispanic, Asian or Native American, an increase of 51 percent from 2012. District leadership included 22 district board members who were Black, 21 Hispanic, and 10 Asian or Native American; and 26 departmental directors or committee chairs who were Black, 49 Hispanic, and 18 Asian or Native American.
- 2019 **Building the Bridge Initiatives:** Sponsorships for African American pastors, evangelists, and ministerial applicants.
- 2019 **National Apostolic Day of Prayer** (AFS event), Indianapolis, IN, hosted by PAW and UPCI churches.
- 2019 **North American Youth Congress**, St. Louis, MO: 37,000 youth and their leaders gathered from across the US and Canada for a truly multiracial, multicultural event. The diversity of the crowd, singers, musicians, speakers, and leaders reflected the diversity of local congregations and districts throughout the fellowship.
- 2020 **Facebook Live Presentations:** National Apostolic Prayer on Good Friday (AFS event); BTB Discussion on "Racial Injustice"; UPCI Panel Discussion on "The Church in a Time of Racial Tension."
- 2020 **Training for Ministerial Applicants:** Video training by the General Superintendent included a segment on "Racial and Ethnic Affirmation."
- 2020 **Mosaic:** New training resource on racial and ethnic affirmation for districts and local churches, produced by MCM in consultation with BTB and SEM, will be available on Ministry Central.
- 2020 **Minority Participation:** The General Board's composition changes annually due to elections; in 2020 it had 7 Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American members. Minorities were included on each governing board or committee of the seven divisions; on the Urshan board, faculty, and staff; and among World Headquarters executives and employees.
- 2020 **General and District Constitutions:** Directors of BTB, MCM, and SEM were made full members of the General Board with vote. District Constitutions were amended to allow presbyters-at-large.
- 2022 **Constituents Worldwide:** The UPCI had 5.4 million constituents in 199 nations and 34 territories with over 42,000 churches and 41,000 ministers. The vast majority of its constituents were nonwhite. About 60 percent of the Global Council were from outside the US and Canada, including the secretary, and thirty-five members were Black.
- 2022 **Constituents, US and Canada:** The UPCI had almost 4,900 churches (including daughter works and preaching points) and over 11,000 credentialed ministers. Hispanics, African Americans or Blacks, Asian Americans, and Native Americans comprised about 38 percent of constituents, 21 percent pastors, and 8 General Board members. Major ministries (divisions): all 7 had both Black and Hispanic members on their general boards or committees. General boards or committees: 13 had Black members; most also had Hispanic or other nonwhite members. District Boards: 17 had Black members; 20 had Hispanic, Asian, or Native American members.
- 2022 **Amendment to Articles of Faith (US & Canada):** By a vote of the 2021 General Conference and ratification by the districts in 2022, the UPCI amended its core doctrinal statement to include the following:

“All people are created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, all human beings have intrinsic worth to God and should be treated accordingly with dignity. Human life is a sacred gift from God: thus we honor the sanctity of life of humans born and in the womb (Psalm 139:13–16).

“However, we live in a world affected by the Fall. In the beginning, God created man innocent, pure, and holy; but through the sin of disobedience, Adam and Eve, the first of the human race, fell from their holy state, and God banished them from Eden (Genesis 3:1–24). Hence by one man’s disobedience, sin entered into the world (Romans 3:23, 5:12).

“Sin is not only an affront to God, but it also has dire ramifications for humans. From Cain’s murder of Abel onward, the story of humanity is filled with injustice and wrongdoing. However, as redeemed people, we strive to reflect God’s love and care for all people (Matthew 5:46–48; Romans 5:5). Therefore, our treatment of each person should reflect that all humans, both males and females, have value to God regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or national origin (Galatians 3:26–28).

“It follows then that the church consists of people who have been born again and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9). The church on Earth should seek the unity and inclusion of the church in Heaven.”

2022 Amendment to the International Articles of Faith: The same amendment was adopted by the UPCI Global Council in November and will be considered in 2023 for ratification by the member national churches.