



BLACK
METHODISTS
FOR CHURCH
RENEWAL

BMCR

Our Time Under God Is Now!



BMCR



Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc.—BMCR—is the organized Black caucus of The United Methodist Church. It represents and is dedicated to more than 2,400 Black United Methodist congregations and approximately 400,000 African American members across the United States. The caucus represents persons in the general, jurisdictional and annual conferences.

Since its 1967 inception in Detroit, the caucus has consistently been the voice of Black United Methodists and an advocate for the growth and development of Black churches. It was organized as a forum for Black Methodists to define issues and develop strategies for change within The United Methodist Church. It aims to empower Black Methodists for effective witness and service; involve them in the struggle for economic justice; and expose racism at all levels in the church, its agencies and related institutions.

The caucus has made great strides in its commitment to strengthen each local church in evangelism, worship, stewardship and outreach ministries. It has encouraged the church to support and nurture the historically Black colleges and universities related to The United Methodist Church, improved educational opportunities for Black youth and young adults, and strengthened Black churches and the laity and clergy who serve those churches.

BMCR is the most logical and feasible instrument that Black United Methodists have for addressing the concerns of Black people within the church structure today. This national caucus serves to advocate and agitate for inclusiveness and justice in all general agencies, conferences, and local churches in the connection. While African Americans are a primary focus, BMCR promotes inclusiveness for all persons of color and for women.



Students at the first Thomas Shockley Youth Theological Academy examine digital photos following a presentation on church communications. Youth between ages 11 and 15 attended the academy July 1-15, 2007 in Nashville, Tennessee, aimed at cultivating strong United Methodist leaders for the future.

Our Purpose

- .To empower Black Methodists for effective witness and service among pastors, laity in local churches, conferences, schools, and the larger community.
- .To encourage and involve Black Methodists and others in the struggle for economic and social justice.
- .To expose latent and overt forms of racism in all local, regional, and general agencies, and institutions of The United Methodist Church.
- .To act as an agitating conscience on all boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church in order to keep them sensitive to the needs and expressions of a “genuinely” inclusive and relevant Church.
- .To keep before the Church the crucial issues facing us by initiating action and supporting Church agencies which realistically deal with the needs of Black people; i.e., issues spelled out in “The Findings of Black Methodists for Church Renewal” and the other occasional documents adopted by BMCR.
- .To initiate, develop, and implement strategies and instruments for the development, maintenance, and growth of strong Black local churches.
- .To provide an instrument through which we can educate and cultivate the Black constituency of our Church toward a greater knowledge of missions within the U.S., Africa, and the Caribbean.

BMCR has the cooperation and respect of leadership at all levels of The United Methodist Church. BMCR, as a caucus, provides programs and training opportunities for African American individuals and for various leaders in African American congregations. Such efforts empower persons to provide leadership to strengthen the outreach, the witness, and the growth of African American congregations.



Liturgical dancers at the opening service of the 2004 General Conference.

Testimonies

“BMCR helped shape the future of the new church. The caucus brought a spirit of renewal and transformation. . . . BMCR made racism, desegregation, justice and freedom issues for the entire church. We challenged the denomination to stretch toward its very being as God’s people. We dared to love the church enough to confront her sin and work for her sanctification. We dared to be Black and followers of Jesus and Methodists.”

—**The Rev. James M. Lawson Jr.**

Civil rights leader, United Methodist pastor, and co-founder of BMCR

“For Blacks in the church, BMCR speaks to issues in a forceful way. BMCR is needed today to build and strengthen bridges of understanding and cooperation among all races and cultures, to seek answers to the serious questions posed by a changing society, and to continue its witness for creative change.”

—**Bishop Melvin G. Talbert**

Former executive director of BMCR

“BMCR is the means by which people of color gather to explore their wants and desires. They are able to obtain their goals and bring others to Christ. I see so much potential in BMCR. God put us here. It is about people of color moving ahead and showing what we have to offer the world.”

—**Brenda Berry-Long**

a member of John Wesley United Methodist Church, Bridgeton, N.J.



Betty Henderson, Lina McCord, and Angella Current-Felder sing praises during a worship service at the 2004 Central Jurisdiction Reunion.

BMCR-Supported Programs/Institutions

The caucus effectively lobbied the new United Methodist Church in 1968 to create the Commission on Religion and Race and to desegregate the UMPH. BMCR also helped the denomination launch numerous other landmark mission initiatives, including the Black College Fund in 1970, the churchwide missional priority on Strengthening and Developing the Ethnic Minority Local Church (1976 to 1988), and Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21) in 1996. The list of ministries created and continued with the aid of BMCR includes:

- . Africa University
- . African American Methodist Heritage Center
- . BMCR National Youth Harambee
- . Black College Fund
- . Black Community Developers
- . David White Laity Academy
- . Gammon Theological Seminary
- . General Commission on Religion and Race
- . Gulfside Assembly
- . Ministerial Education Fund
- . Minority Self-Determination Fund
- . Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century

The national organization encompasses vital sub-groups operating as local, conference, jurisdictional and youth caucuses. These groups function as advocacy, ministry and leadership development organizations addressing the needs and concerns of the members they represent. For information on organizing a local or youth caucus, contact the BMCR office at the address below, or email bmcr@umpublishing.org.

Want to become a BMCR member?

The membership of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc., is composed of people who subscribe to BMCR's purposes and who comply with the provisions of the membership regulations as prescribed from by the Board of Directors. Several membership categories exist. To learn which fits you, contact the BMCR office at the address below, or visit our website—www.bmcrumc.org—and click membership.

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