

**Minute for Mission**

**Feb. 12, 2006**

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The Lord's Day

Minute for Mission: Race Relations

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This year we reflect on the significance of Race Relations Sunday by honoring the legacy of women of color in active leadership in the Presbyterian Church. We celebrate the gifts of racial ethnic women who have led the church to foster an environment of wholeness, peace, and reconciliation.

The year 2006 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ordination of women to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The earliest year recorded for a woman of color being ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament was 1959, when a woman of Cuban descent named Miriam Ortega became a leader in the Presbyterian Church. Katie Cannon became the first African American woman ordained in 1974. Rebecca Reyes, the first Hispanic American woman who served in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, was ordained in 1979. Perlo Birige Delo was the first Asian American female ordained in 1983. Jun Mai Han, a Korean American, was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1986. One year later, Holly Haille Smith became the first Native American woman welcomed to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1987.

At the Racial Ethnic Women's Consultation, held in Atlanta, Georgia in October 2004, the participants identified many issues of concern that women of color continue to face as they seek to participate fully in the life of the church and in their communities. As we celebrate fifty years of women's ordination, let us answer the call of these women for each of us to be agents of God's transforming love in the world.

Prayer: Open our ears, Lord, to the voices of justice that cry to us. Open our hearts and minds to the voices of women who have been silenced and ignored. Encourage us, Lord, to walk as those honoring and appreciating diversity, that we may experience reconciliation in this journey. Amen.