

SESSION TWO

The Five-fold Test

The Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) takes seriously both the mission of Christ and the unity of Christ's Church. These two convictions converge at the point of pressing forward in ethnic ministry and diversity.

It is a missional motivation because we seek to reach the entirety of this mission field in which we are situated. The range of population composition in the United States and Canada compels us to make sure we are able to address unique mission opportunities among multiple populations.

It is likewise motivated by our commitment to the unity of Christ's Church. The world is fractured along the lines of ethnicity, culture, language, class, and gender. However, Christ has broken down the dividing walls. We find unity in him. Likewise, the Coming Kingdom will transcend all which divides. We believe the Church here on earth is richer and stronger as it lives in the light of that future reality.

The ECC has made significant strides in the past several years. However, we believe that multi-ethnic ministry has multi-dimensional implications. Unless this dimensionality is approached with wisdom and resolve, the ECC can not expect to fare differently than other groups that have had similar intent, only to pull back.

A five-fold multi-dimensional test has therefore been adopted by the Covenant Executive Board, with the additional support of the Council of Administrators, the Council of Superintendents and ethnic leaders in the ECC. This test is not meant to be sequential, but rather with action moving forward on multiple fronts.

- 1) **Population:** Is the Covenant reaching increasing numbers of people among increasing numbers of populations?
- 2) **Participation:** Are we finding ways to engage life together through denominational, conference, and local events, service and fellowship?
- 3) **Power:** Are the positions and structures of influence (boards, committees, and positions at both the conference and denominational level) influenced by the perspective and gifts of diverse populations?
- 4) **Pace-setting:** With additional perspectives, burdens, and gifts in our midst, what new ministry opportunities is the ECC now better positioned to strengthen and initiate?
- 5) **Purposeful Narrative:** How do the stories of new backgrounds become incorporated into our overarching history? How do all of these streams flow together into one story moving forward?

While the Covenant is uniquely positioned to press forward in ethnic ministry and diversity, we must remember that we are ultimately not going to move forward structurally or mechanically. It is only as we relate to one another as sisters and brothers in Christ, spiritually earnest in our desires, and continually dependent on the Holy Spirit to be shaped as the family of God, that we have hope. Should this be an exercise in mechanics and technical adjustments, we will fare no better than other groups, secular and religious, that have embarked on similar efforts. We will emerge to our best future as we truly engage life and service together in Christ.