

Professional Church Leadership Response Group

11-14-13 4:30 pm

- We will need a new convener
- Joyce Lake (works with Transition Ministries and AB Women in Ministry)
 - She sings and has a group trying to raise money to go to Italy next year
- History overview – Transition Ministries is new for ABCUSA to be handling, and it wasn't combined with Women in Ministry before.
- We don't have a lot of training, but that's being addressed.
- The idea of 'best practices' is not necessarily one that is common in Baptist circles, but it is something we have been looking at in this group.
- We had a grant approved for 2 year Spiritual Formation Initiative
 - 4 more conferences over a 2 year period
 - taking younger American Baptists on 2 pilgrimages - Taize community, Spain/Georgia
 - network of AB spiritual directors
- It's very difficult to 'unplug' ourselves and stay unconnected even for small periods of time. How do we hear the voice of God in this environment?
 - Some leaders don't think we are furthering the Kingdom if we aren't 'doing.'
 - Some people don't even realize the need for silence, alone time with God.
 - The world can go on without us.
 - Some people fear being left out.
 - These issues tie into pastoral burnout concerns, as well.
- Groups we connect with
 - Rhythms of Spirit initiative
 - Transition Ministries
 - Theologian's Conference
 - Ministers' Conference (Emerge)
 - Orientation to ABC Life
 - Professional Ministry Team – representatives from various ABC organizations
 - Women in Ministry – 57% of seminary students, only 9.8% of senior/solo pastors
 - Beyond this, there appear to be compensation differences between the genders, too.
 - Where does this gap come from?
- Women in Ministry was one of the 10 issues addressed at the Mission Table, so there seems to be passion & movement on this issue right now.
- What can we do to enhance our leadership?
 - Facilitate conversations between regional execs and seminary presidents?
 - Create 'honor roll' for ministries that support women in leadership?
- Can the next theologians' conference address gender issues in ministry?
- Maybe organize a conversation between REMC and AB colleges & seminaries.
- We want to propose that ABCUSA organize a conversation between the REMC and AB colleges & seminaries.

11-15-13 10:30 am

- Let's draw some connections
- How do we help folks stay engaged, and how do we come alongside workers in ministry who are just stuck?
- How would we raise the awareness of the board on the whole to the needs so that they become part of ABCUSA's agenda?
- ABCOPAD has pastoral small groups.
 - We heard this before (from the executive minister), but it didn't seem to register with the members of this group until we heard it from a pastor member of one of these small groups.
- Can we incorporate spiritual practices into the work of the BGM?
- Maybe the schedule for BGM meetings needs to reflect the balance we are going for. Perhaps it could include free time, fellowship time, outside experiences, etc.
 - Let's make an action item looking into this and doing a board retreat.
 - This may need to affect the work of the board because many people would not have the time to come for an extra day.
- Given the work and discussion of the Professional Leadership Response group, we recommend that the Board of General Ministries model best practices for our professional leaders.
 - Build best practices into the agenda such as dwelling on the word, fellowship, sharing one another's stories, praying with/for one another, outside experiences, etc.
 - Perhaps building a board retreat into the meetings, ideally without taking more time from our members' lives.
 - Appoint a discernmentarian for BGM meetings.
- The ministers' council has a discernmentarian. Should the board have something like this?
 - The vice president has been given the task of being the board chaplain, and the incoming vice president is certainly a gifted woman in ministry who has gifts & talents in this area? However, are we putting too much on the vice president? What about when we get a vice president who does not necessarily have these gifts?
 - Can we ask particular board members to fill this role for specific meetings?
- **ACTION ITEMS**
 - We want to propose that ABCUSA organize a conversation between the REMC and ABC colleges & seminaries.
 - Given the work and discussion of the Professional Leadership Response group, we recommend that the Board of General Ministries continue to model best practices for our professional leaders by:
 - Building best practices into the agenda such as dwelling on the word, fellowship, sharing one another's stories, praying with/for one another, sharing outside experiences, etc.
 - Perhaps building a board retreat into the meetings, ideally without taking more time from our members' lives.
 - Appointing a discernmentarian for BGM meetings.
 - Recommend that the Theologians' Conference planning committee consider exploring theological thinking around women in ministry.