

Professional Ministries Team  
BGM Report  
June 2019

The Professional Ministries Team met on May 21, 2019 and focused on, “The Gospel in a Rapidly Changing Society,” one of the seven Mission Table priorities. Rev. Rothang Chhangte delivered an excellent presentation on the topic and a good discussion followed.

PMT participants became aware that many national and regional staff are not currently included in ABCIS. Please ensure that someone in your organization is designated to enter these persons in ABCIS.

As a result of the previous PMT meeting, the group also spent time exploring the results of a recent survey and set of interviews on bivocational pastors in the ABC. Some of the results of the survey and interviews include:

#### Survey Results

- While the most predominant second income of bivocational ministers comes from secular employment, the next most common source of additional income is self-employment as a small business owner, consultant, etc.
- Additional family income is a significant factor for over one-half of those surveyed in allowing bivocational ministers to serve in their pastoral roles.
- The respondents rated the other organizations that they serve bivocationally as more healthy and more financial stable than the congregations that they serve.
- Over one-half of the respondents said that they find it difficult to engage in pastoral visitation while serving as a bivocational minister and nearly one-half said that they find it difficult to be involved in the denomination as a bivocational minister.
- A slightly higher percentage of bivocational ministers have as their long-term goal to continue to serve as a bivocational minister rather than to serve a congregation full-time.
- Over one-half of those surveyed serve their congregations at least 25 hours or more per week.
- Over one-half of the respondents have been with their congregation for over 10 years.
- More than one-half of those surveyed have completed at least a masters degree.

#### Interview Results

- Support for bivocational ministry comes from a variety of sources including the congregation itself, family, friends, and colleagues. Support from the regions was also evident.
- The need to clarify expectations with the congregations served was a key point that surfaced during the interviews. Some, but not all, have been able to work through some of the congregational issues related to serving as a bivocational pastor. Perhaps some discussion or training materials could be developed in this area.
- While the interviewees surfaced a plethora of benefits of being a bivocational minister, most would choose to have a single job or vocation in a local church if given the opportunity. The benefits of bivocational ministry may not outweigh the burdens.
- Bivocational ministers can sometimes be made to feel “less than” by their colleagues as well as the congregations that they serve. Some wear the mantle; others cope with it. All are able to defend their role. Hosting conversations among pastors about bivocational ministry might help this issue.

The group also began a review process of the Professional Registry Guidelines.

Respectfully submitted, C. Jeff Woods