

Beloved Community Action Group Meeting – October 29, 2020

Members Present: Stephanie Commandest; Patricia Hernandez; Bruce Van Der Beek; Joyce Blandon; Marijane Kiley; Nancy Lewis; Judith Christiansen; Stephanie Salinas; Emmett Dunn; Bill Poland

The Beloved Community Action Group description was read by Chairperson Marijane Kiley:

“ABC life has welcomed and celebrated the great diversity and gifts that its members bring in the making of the whole. Statistically, ABC is more multi-ethnic than any other Protestant group in the US. While we have affirmed such God-given richness, we still have not attained the spirit of a “beloved community.” What does it mean to be the Body of Christ that values all of its members? How is power shared among its members? The composition of BGM is designed to reflect a “beloved community” in its members but how may we truly function in spirit? This Action Group will continue the ACT on this topic with the hope of identifying findings that would influence the work that BGM does such as the Biennial Mission Summit.”

Anti-Racism Task Force - Stephanie Commandest has agreed to serve on the Task Force as a representative of the Board of General Ministries. It was suggested we interact with the task force, offer to share concerns and to be a “sounding board” for the Task Force as we navigate through the action items that will be formulated. For instance, if there is a discussion that the entire board would be asked to participate in, maybe the “trial run” can start with our committee. Stephanie C. will ask if the Task Force would be willing to share what is formulated with the Beloved Community Action group.

The Task Force will hold its first meeting Tuesday November 10th. The first 3 meetings of the Task Force are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month. In preparation for the first meeting we’ve been asked to reflect on the scripture John 1: 43-50. Key verse: John 1:46.

Joint Review Committee –The purpose of the committee is to review the “diversity and reflective representation” of the national boards. To this end, the committee calls for representation from several of our national boards and caucuses and is chaired by the vice-president of ABCUSA who currently is Rev. James Wolfe. We would like to invite him to our meeting to learn more about this committee and how our Beloved Community Action Team can support and strengthen its work.

Exit interviews – Our team follows the theme of one relationship being in the body of Christ. It seems our subcommittee would be fitting facilitators for the exit interviews. We should check with the Executive Committee, Judith would like to keep us abreast. Emmett and Judith would be interested in participating. Others can email Marijane Kiley (marijanekiley@gmail.com) or Patricia Hernandez at Patricia.Hernandez@abc-usa.org

Action Items – Based on all that was discussed, we’d like to present the following items to the Board of General Ministries for action:

There are two key initiatives within the ABCUSA life upon which the Beloved Community Action Group would like to build:

First, several years ago, ABCUSA endorsed the National Institute for Civil Discourse and the work that it does to promote civil discussions within our families and communities. We invited one of the leaders of that

organization to do Board training. Since that original training, our Action Group has encouraged the continuation of the training, working on the skills learned in those original sessions. ***Today, more than ever,***

our Board needs to participate in development that will allow us to engage in difficult conversations while fully respecting each person as created in God's image.

Secondly, ABCUSA is embarking on an Anti-Racism Task Force to develop tools and resources to be used by individuals, churches and institutions as they seek to discover and root out systemic racism. The Beloved Community feels that one of the most basic tools is that of dialogue. And so, in this time of racial tensions and polarizing political landscape—and building upon the training that has already been done—we ***ask that the Executive Committee consider continuing the Board Development Training with the NICD. We recognize that this training may need to be virtual, but feel that such training is vital.***

Finally, at its November 2019 meeting, the Beloved Community Action Group affirmed ***the Golden Rule 2020 initiative***. You may have seen information about Golden Rule 2020 in recent ABCUSA newsletters or on its website. While this initiative ends this year, we believe that the principles of the initiative transcend the election year. ***We would like to invite and encourage all of the BGM Directors to sign the Golden Rule 2020 pledge.***

The pledge is simple and straightforward:

I commit to do my best to practice the Golden Rule and treat others with respect and dignity in my political discourse and behavior during the 2020 campaign season.

To sign the pledge online, go to: <https://goldenrule2020.org/>

In concluding our time together, the loss of BGM Chaplain Rev. Zina Jacque's husband Andre was shared. As a sign of our love, care and concern, we will send flowers to her on behalf of the Beloved Action Group. Marijane will send the flowers and we will all contribute as seen fit.

Closing prayer was led by Bruce Van Der Beek.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Commandest and Judith Christiansen