

## Communicating ABC Identity Action Group

### June 2023 Meeting Notes

- The group opened in prayer.
- The group reviewed last November's meeting minutes.
- **How can we use what we discussed during our last meeting in our own churches?**
  - Bonnie highlighted a comparison between a congregation not knowing fully what their pastor does and the denomination not knowing what the Office of the General Secretary does.
  - Bonnie also noted how much happens behind the scenes thanks to the staff of the office, all of whom have skills that contribute to the office.
  - John asked how others in the group include United Mission in their budget.
    - Some noted it as "missions" money, others noted it as a particular line item.
    - John noted that seeing it as "missions" takes a large amount of convincing for congregations.
    - Jan highlighted a difference in a definition of "mission" – congregations want a "mission trip" as opposed to just general "mission."
- **United Mission Toolkit Discussion**
  - John inquired of Bridget what they needed as part of their United Mission Toolkit.
    - Bridget highlighted the story collection that we discussed last time, which she would like toward the end of this Summer.
  - Jan asked what the plan was regarding creation of more videos.
    - Three videos by end of year is the goal for production. The original video was produced by someone that Robin was connected to in Nebraska.
  - Jan also asked what was in the toolkit.
    - Bridget noted that it will be a place to find anything that individuals were looking for regarding United Mission – including *what it is*.
  - Bonnie noted that it would be good to know where specifically the 65% for regions goes, as well as the 35% to the OGS.
    - Marilyn noted that in New York State, the camps and AB Women are the primary connection to ABCUSA/UM.
    - Brandon noted that the REMC should also gather stories from their regions regarding use of the 65%.
      - The local church story may not be where 65% to regions is going directly, but for regions, the 65% enables their congregations to use more of their own budget on their specific mission(s).

- John noted that having multiple stories is important, because not everyone will care about every single thing the denomination is doing.
    - Many “missions” that come from UM are not easy to see – search committee assistance, etc.
    - Daryl noted that what we do *really well* is the above: searches, helping churches close, planting, etc.
      - This only matters to those who have needed it in the past, or need it currently, though.
    - Bonnie said that we are a family, and family doesn’t let family down.
    - John noted that the OGS doesn’t do what many define as traditional “mission” – but it supports and enables churches to do what they define as “mission.”
    - The diversity of the whole family often isn’t represented in the local church, but it is at the biennial and other gatherings.
  - Bonnie inquired whether we should make a recommendation for OGS to outline, in detail, where UM funds within the OGS are distributed.
    - John noted that our goal is to determine communication to draw us together to do mission – how is the office helping our churches & partners?
    - Patrick noted that the OGS is a “great facilitator” that pulls partners, etc. together to coordinate missions.
    - Bridget noted that Robin will hear our feedback regarding needing clarity around the 35% to OGS, but we will not make a formal recommendation.
- After sharing in prayer, the group then recessed to assist the OGS staff with filling Biennial attendee bags, which was desperately needed!