

FINAL REPORT
BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES RETREAT
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES - USA
Submitted by - Erin M. Hawkins, Consultant



Dear Friends,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to thank you for the opportunity to work with you, the Board of General Ministries of the American Baptist Church.

It was wonderful to meet each of you, and to have the privilege of coming alongside you as together you embark on a bright future.

I have put together this final report of our work together. Enclosed you will find:

- A summary of our work together
- Details of the June 16 - 17 Board Retreat
- Supporting documents
 - Handouts, PowerPoints, etc.

Thank you again, and know my thoughts and prayers are with you as you continue to gather and live as the beloved community. If I can be of further assistance please let me know.

In His Name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin M. Hawkins". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Erin Hawkins

Summary

PART I – BACKGROUND

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABC-USA) is a church that celebrates racial, cultural and theological diversity making it the most racially inclusive Protestant body in the Christian church today. As the ABC-USA celebrates its diversity the denomination is also facing challenges as it lives fully into this diversity. Major leadership changes are impending as a wave of retirements among key leadership nationally and regionally are anticipated.

A defining event in the life of the Board of ABC-USA was an uncompleted search for a General Secretary in June of 2015. Gender and race were named as underlying factors in the collapse of the process. The search was suspended in order for a new search team to be named and oriented for the task. This situation led to the decision based on the recommendation of the Beloved Community Action Group to hold a Board retreat in June 16-17 to bring closure to the painful experience of the failed search, to build renewed and authentic relationships within the board that honor the leadership's commitment to diversity and equity and to create a new launching point for the future. The Executive Committee and the Beloved Community Action Group met on March 8th to solidify plans for the retreat.

PART II – THE APPROACH

Transformation comes as a result of shifting the way that people see themselves, one another and the world around them. This happens best in synergistic environments where the desired state can be experienced, not just talked about. In this case, the desired state is one in which a highly engaged community of leaders come together in relationships of mutual respect and commitment; living out the core values of the denomination and discerning the future of leadership and ministry in a context where growing diversity and complexity require new ways of thinking, being and doing.

Scope of Work

- March 9, 2016
 - 1 Day Executive Committee/Beloved Community Action Group meeting to plan retreat
- June 16-17, 2016
 - 1 Day retreat – Full Board
- Intermediate
 - Preparation of materials, feedback loops on design and content

Proposed Methodology

Phase I - Assessment

The assessment phase will include:

- a. February Interviews of a small group of leaders on the Board of Directors and Community Action Group as well as content analysis of the previous discussions and activities surrounding the subject matter to be covered in the retreat (community building, cultural competency, re-establishing trust)

Phase II – Retreat Design

- a. Following the interviews and content analysis, an outline for the retreat will be designed to address the needs identified.
- b. A variety of tools and assessments will be considered such as the Emotional Competency Inventory Assessment, Kilman Conflict Management tool, Polarity Management, The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and Appreciative Inquiry. Stress management and team development tools will also be used to provide subjective and objective measurements of progress.
- c. On March 9th an experience will be designed to solicit dialogue and feedback about the presenting issues identified as well as the suggested retreat design. The end result will be agreement about the final retreat agenda and any intermediate work that needs to be done to increase buy-in and solidify support.

Phase III – Experience/Delivery

- a. June 16-17, 2016 there was one day retreat in keeping with the agreements made at the March 6th Executive Committee Meeting.
- b. The program will include:
 - A combination of lecture, small group work, large group work, experiential learning, experience-based case studies
 - Interactive activities and simulations to enable participants to learn about and develop an appreciation for:
 - diverse cultural perspectives
 - the potential negative impact that unconscious behaviors may have on team members and others
 - building authentic community
 - Potential topics include:
 - Cultural Competency
 - Unconscious bias in decision making
 - Non-violent communication
 - Racial/Gender Equity in Institutions
 - Leading Change
 - Conflict Transformation
 - Conflict management
 - Community Building

Phase 4 – Feedback/Integrate

- a. There will be a 2-hour meeting that will take place shortly after the retreat to debrief the session and its impact.
- b. Information on what worked well in the training and recommendations for improvement will be collected.
- c. Appropriate changes to the materials and/or the process will be made during all phases to ensure collaboration from the design of the retreat to determining next steps after the retreat.

Sample Agenda*

March 9, 2016

- Executive Committee Meeting
- Introductions
- Covenant Setting - Exercise
- Scriptural Foundation
- Video "The Lunch Date"
- Why are we here? – Exercise
- Designing the June Retreat – Appreciative Inquiry
- Recap
- Closing - Exercise

*More details will be added and shared with Rev. Judy Fackenthal by March 1

About the Consultant

Erin Hawkins is a laywoman and lifelong United Methodist. She currently serves as General Secretary of The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) of The United Methodist Church. Under her leadership GCORR has deepened and expanded its anti-oppression work from a singular focus on race to one that encompasses addressing the intersecting realities of gender, age, ability, language and socio-economic status all around the world. GCORR's purpose is to build the church's capacity to live as the beloved community.

**Board of General Ministries Retreat
Agenda
June 16-17, 2016**

Thursday June 16, 2016

9:00 AM - Retreat Begins

- Opening Devotion
- Introductory Remarks – Beloved Community Action Group
- Opening Exercise and Covenant Setting
 - - *“Voices of Diversity”*
- Break

10:30 AM - Small Group Dialogue Sessions

- #1 - 10:30 AM “JOY”
- #2- 11:55 AM “GRIEF”

1:00 PM – Lunch

2:00 PM – Small Group Dialogue Sessions cont’

- #3 – 2:00 PM “HOPE”
- #4 – 3:20 PM “COMMITMENT”

4:30 PM - Break

5:00 PM - Debrief

6:00 PM Adjourn

Friday June 17, 2016

9:00 AM Opening Devotion

9:30 AM Reflections

10:00 AM Next Steps - Leading into the Future

11:00 AM Closing Ritual – Communion

Group Roster

Group 1: Facilitator-Pat Hernandez

1. John Williams (GS search)
2. Marcia Patton (GS search)
3. Doris Garcia-Rivera (GS search)
4. Camille Brown (Beloved Community)
5. Manuel Luquin
6. Paul Higgins

Theme: Joy

Group 2: Facilitator-Jeff Woods

1. Andy Arndt
2. Joyce Blandon
3. Nancy O'Neill
4. Duh Kam
5. Elmore Warren
6. Charity Matic (GS search)
7. Wesley Sun (Beloved Community)

Theme: Grief

Group 3: Facilitator-Marie Onwubuariri

1. Judy Fackenthal (GS search)
2. Robin Crouch (GS search)
3. Jose Magana
4. Beryl Hornberger
5. Bill Frederickson
6. Janice Bell
7. Tasha Wilson

Theme: Hope

Group 4: Facilitator-Karen Gyax Rodriguez

1. Wesley Roberts (GS Search)
2. Marijane Kiley
3. Stephanie Commandest
4. Tom Ross (GS search)
5. Shirley Fair (Beloved Community)
6. Felipe Candelaria

Theme: Commitment

Group 5: Facilitator-Sam Brink

1. Cathy Brubaker
2. Marilyn Tyson
3. Ken Marsenburg
4. Leo Thorne
5. Iris Cobb
6. Alan Musoke
7. Susan Gillies
8. Kathy Young (?)

Theme: Joy

Group 6: Facilitator-Brian Hastings

1. Raimundo Barreto
2. Jim Wolfe
3. Kay Farley
4. Kenneth Kho
5. Cecelia Dachtler
6. Dianne Steelman
7. Josue Gomez

Theme: Grief

Group 7 : Facilitator – Maxine Ashley

1. Don Ng (GS search)
2. June Totten
3. Jonathan Malone
4. Zina Jacque
5. Tom Roberts
6. Ashley Whitaker

Theme: Hope

JOY

By: James Hillman

It has been said that the only relevant spiritual question is, "Why aren't you dancing for joy at this very moment?" After all, your life is a gift and you are loved by the creator of all life. Theologian Martin Buber echoes this truth: "The beating heart of the universe is holy joy."

Look around and you will see how the flowers, trees, squirrels and stars all emanate delight in their being. The flowers give off a fragrance, the trees dance a samba for the breeze, the squirrels perform acrobatics and the stars twinkle with glee.

When he is about to leave his disciples Jesus tells them, "These things have I spoken to you, that my joy be in you and that your joy may be full." What a beautiful legacy- passing on joy.

Always remember, joy is not incidental to your spiritual quest. It is vital. So cultivate it.

Julian of Norwich, a fourteenth English mystic speaks across the ages: The fullness of joy is to behold God in everything." That is the secret in a nutshell. Behold Divine Joy in the good and the bad, the just and the unjust, the past and the future, the magnificent moment and the tawdry one.

Give yourself permission to be dizzy with joy and thankful for all the blessings which abound in your days.

Give yourself permission to rejoice with others. As African American spiritual writer Katherine Burrows states, "To find joy in another's joy that is the secret to happiness."

Give yourself permission to feel good about helping others and being helped by others. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta knows, "She gives most who gives with joy."

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

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NOTES FROM GROUP 1 - JOY

WHAT? - Key points/themes of Joy

- Relationships
- Recognition of gifts
- Breakthrough moments
- Seeing people blossoming
- Empowerment of Joy
- Joy comes after brokenness
- Tears of joy
- Joy beats grief
- Being part of the denomination
- Recognizes, celebrates all gifts
 - Freedom/permission to be who you are - empowerment
 - Facilitating, creating, building relations -
- Opportunities to build relationships
- Events that reach people
- Joy in giving away money
- Seeing new things come to fruition
- (Yosh) "for the first time we felt part of the portrait of ABCUSA"
- Finding voice/ helping people find their voice
- Joy that younger generation are a voice, are not ignored.

WHAT NOW?

What do we need to do for this to happen for everyone voice to be heard.

- The reorganization is one of the best in the latest years.
- Relationship is at the bottom. What do you need to know about me?
- Diversity needs to be lived upon. We are diverse but not inclusive.
- We are talking about relationship, inclusiveness, valued, perspective, voice, joy.
- If you value the decision you are making more than the people you have, don't do consensus process.
- You have to create people in the room first - bring God into the room first.
- Accompaniment - we are all part of the portrait that we need to be seen.

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NOTES FROM GROUP 2 - JOY

Question: Have you had JOY as a result of being a part of American Baptist Churches USA (ABC USA)?

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- We are like flowers in God's garden - kind of the same/different
- ABC brought Christ to my own (banner) - God's JOY is ever present - not a consequence to my event - I have a joy inside me
- In seminary was exposed to ABC life - learning about history and ABC missions - feel ABC USA is "home" for joy
- Joy of the Lord is my strength - mission work in Zambia - sharing gospel - it is a joy being an American Baptist
- Born an American Baptist and by choice - since youth felt joy and God's presence through local church
- Church during youth was no fun - as an adult found joy in ABC churches
- ABC life reminds me of my grandma who got saved through the ministry of ABC missionaries

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

Individuals took the time to welcome, mentor and instruct us during our walk

- ❖ Worshipful meetings are meaningful
- ❖ COMMUNICATE - how do we share these stories

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Continue the dialogue as individuals, as part of local churches, as a body

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NOTES FROM GROUP 3 - JOY

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Growth
 - Pruning
- The work of faithful God
- Relationships
- Mission
- Home
 - Longing
 - Belonging

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Motivation
 - Hold onto our joy/happiness
 - Working together for God
- Progress on the journey
 - Getting something done
 - Changing culture
 - Looking for relevance
 - Jigsaw puzzle

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Sharing joys & victories
 - Go and tell your story
- Intentionality of relationship building & interactions
- Opportunities for growth
- Intentional inclusion
 - Defining role and gifts
- Importance of team mentorship

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NOTES FROM GROUP 4 - JOY

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Diversity – occupations & voices in ABC
- Understand ABC
- Freedom to express own faith and ideas
- Women in ministry
- Autonomy
- Enjoy being at board meetings
- Focus on areas of agreement, not disagreement

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Communication

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Blank

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NOTES FROM GROUP 5 - JOY

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Affirmation from others that “I earned this” honor
- Joy when various individuals participate in a cooperative event/work that results in good outcome for all
- Joy in honoring work/ministry of others
- Joy in knowing that your words help another feel good in their role/ministry
- Joy when someone seems to understand you/“gets you”
- Joy in receiving affirmation for your work – value of affirming words
- Joy in personal relationship with God
- Joy in experiencing the respect of others for work of ABC and for valuing the possibilities
- Joy in seeing excitement of others for the contribution they can make by giving

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Surprise in amount of work-related joy expressed
- Obvious that there is a great deal of fulfillment in our ABC lives
- Joy brings heightened sense of who we are as individuals
- Role that others play is instrumental in our joy
- Giving joy brings us joy
- Need to share more good news that brings joy
- We need to challenge others by modeling diversity in our denominations, in our country

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Important to have key stakeholders (members of governing bodies) share stories of joy
- Possibility of meeting together more often, not necessarily face to face (use other methods – conf. calls, etc)
- Possibility of bringing BGM to Mission Center, informal conversations with staff
- Invite guests from area where meeting takes place to expand ABC connections
- Be intentional about bringing good news from Valley Forge!
- Continue, when in new building, to have new board members to Mission Center

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NOTES FROM GROUP 6 - JOY

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Diversity in ABC USA is a source of joy
- Ministry mentors and pastoral leaders opened doors and opportunities for participation in ABC life
- God's call is a source of joy and God uses people in our journey to affirm this call
- Became ABC because of importance given to soul freedom
-

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Teach about culture in our region, culture as alive, dynamic and changing
- Remember and celebrate our unity in Christ
- Create opportunities in our meetings for fellowship to deepen relationships
- Celebrate diversity and talk about ABC identity in local church
- Diversity and mission pushes us forward as a denomination

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Learned about ABC in university.
- Support university chaplains as they are the face of ABC in colleges and universities
- We learn more by listening to others who are also looking outside like us

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NOTES FROM GROUP 7 – JOY

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- We wondered what joy really means
 - o Is our 21st century understanding of joy consistent with Jesus' understanding/definition of joy?
 - o The joy Jesus speaks of in John is not "dancing joy" but a different kind of joy
- We hear as a judgmental aspect of joy – at its essence – a sense of fulfillment, right place-right time, the result of hard work that yields productive results. We hear also as an aspect of joy the presence of purpose.
- It was noted that we bring joy with us and add that joy to this work

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- If joy is deeper than happiness, when the BGM gathers the talent shows, fun gatherings, etc. may not generate joy. We, of course, can make room for enjoyment but let us not confuse joy with enjoyment

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- We want to understand what joy is and how Jesus understands it! We want to pursue joy in ways consistent with this understanding.

GRIEF

By: Sue Patton Thoele

Loss in life is unavoidable and the pain we feel when grieving over loss can feel intense. In spite of the pain, grief can also be the doorway to the rich cavern of our being, the sanctuary of our soul. Growing through loss enables us to evolve into deeper levels of confidence and maturity. When we are committed to growth, we will, step by tiny step, make the arduous climb out of the pit of loss carrying the precious jewels of strength, resilience, and a greater capacity for empathy and caring.

Loss and the grief that ensues can come in a number of different ways. Unmet expectations, broken promises, physical and emotional separation are all experiences of loss that can be met with grief. And our individual and collective grief can show up as weariness, sadness, rage, mistrust and disconnection.

For those of us who, in our grief, consciously move toward a deeper acceptance and understanding of ourselves and God, the abyss of despair can become an incubator for compassion and spiritual conviction. If we are to remain emotionally healthy, we can't avoid the fiery kiln of grief, but out of the fire can come a more beautiful and service-full vessel.

Writer Frederick Buechner invites us to be good stewards to our pain, disappointment and grief especially when we experience a loss of faith, trust, relationship and connection. He says, "Being a good steward of your pain involves being alive to your life. It involves taking the risk of being open, of reaching out, of keeping in touch with the pain as well as the joy of what unfolds because at no time more than at a painful time do we live out of the depths of who we are instead of out of the shallows."

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NOTES FROM GROUP 1 - GRIEF

- Broken relationships and broken systems
- Insensibility
- Systems over people
- Lack of training
- Lack of understanding of cultural context of the other
- Belonging and not belonging - homeless
- Discounted
- Rescued by relationship
- System also came through to support
- Unhealthy traditions
- Value people more than the decision
- Lack of trust
- Valuing every person and their feelings
- Castigate – cut off – excluded

What will it take for the Board to collectively honor the grief that has been experienced in the life of the ABCUSA? Goes back to Yosh, and all of that we have said.

- Acknowledge
- Repent
- Do better
- Restitution
- Not a one time thing, is a process.
- Need service healing

Need a ritualized expression for all dimensions – I give honor and respect to the people of this land who took care of it before we came. And thank them for the gift. I will like to see this in every session of the Biennial. Repetition that remind us that we owe this that people are valued over systems. We do not always do it right.

Remember

No staying out of the relationship – no staying out/away from the table. Every one has a responsibility to work this. (Vivan use the image of the one who goes up to the altar because it has been offended.)

We need to create ways of caring for our staff.

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NOTES FROM GROUP 2 - GRIEF

Be good stewards of pain, grief – be in touch with pain and resulting joy

WHAT? (key discussion points)

We have to grow our own churches – “we need to bring in young people” but in the process forget the old people

Lost son to lupus, same experience with Bonnie in church about needing youth

Church does not want to let go, young people give up and go, how to assimilate and see each other’s worth

Church splits, grief is a teacher – one grows through it

Advocacy for Bivona’s political situation, grieving loss of advocate with Roy’s retirement, grieving downturn of Christianity in the west, small chapels are suffering, close friend/deacon has cancer and may not recover, and grief causes anger

2015 search process – issue of race came up- lack of closure – allowed to vent, anger, guilt, surfaced during this process, it was hard to deal with

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Pray for the churches/denomination

Pray for peace

Praise and worship to deal with grief and accompanying emotions like anger

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NOTES FROM GROUP 4 - GRIEF

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Vote out pastor
- Disagreements in church
- Severed relationships
- Discerning move to other churches
- When leaving is involved

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- When pastor's serve such a short time
- Keep fellowship
- Learning growing
- Seek God's plan

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Blank

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NOTES FROM GROUP 5 - GRIEF

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Grief pokes a hole in the atmosphere of hope and faith
- Death of a loved one is hard, but especially when it seems to be “way too soon.”
- Grief can provide opportunities for growth
- The depth of friendship make grief more painful
- Grief over a loved one in prison is in some ways worse than grieving a death

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Divorce can take a long time to get past.
 - o ABC is like a family, a place to belong
- Congregations grieve over church closings
- Grieving over opposition and historically hard feelings within ABC organizations toward
- Grief is different from despair
- Sense of journey. Has a beginning and an end

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- TBYS process, atmosphere is substantially improved. Regions and boards are working together. One of a sense of one.
- The Lord provides options for us to move forward, to the point of seeing the light
- The presence of God in our lives gets us through the grief
- An ABC leader and his wife visited and ministered to the person who killed the son in a drunk driving accident, led him to Christ
- Need to deal with grief in positive ways, time of growth
- Let people know you hear them and feel their pain. Listen.
- Tearing down barriers. Thanks to Susan Gillies, we are emphasizing that we are the body.
- Reflection and prayer

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NOTES FROM GROUP 6 - GRIEF

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- General Secretary search committee, a most painful process
- In Pasadena, when a whole board got voted down
- Disbandment of search committee and process
- When RSW region left the denomination, loss was personal and relational
- When IM fired Hector and there was lack of info, no transparency in the process
- Division on issue of homosexuality was a painful thing. We need to create space to discuss issue. It polarizes the region.
- Because we don't make statements, people perceive that we stand on nothing

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Not know of anybody who is not touched or affected by these complexities
- When churches left, there was loss of connection as we care about values of connection and associational life
- There's grief when male leadership is not supportive of women in ministry

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- If we had gone on with the first search process, we would have ended up a divided denomination
- Difference between a pole cat (skunk) and a tiger...with a tiger you know who wins or loses, with the pole cat, everybody stinks.
- How do we honor grief? Give both sides a voice.
- Honoring grief is the same as honoring leaders who have worked through grief and maintained the denominational family in the midst of painful moments.
- Attended training on Native American Culture and values for non-native people. Learned that practice of grief is to walk gently
- A mechanism in honoring grief was one of the aims of our mission summit/table conversations. Topics like clergy attrition, violence and generational gaps
- Process in recovery groups

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NOTES FROM GROUP 7 – GRIEF

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- We see our polity as a strength (i.e. freedoms) and a weakness (we are so fractured we find it difficult to take a stand)

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- We have grief over our willingness to:
 - o Not take controversial stands and to appear as cowards
 - o Operate without transparency
 - o Believe we have arrived
 - o Be the beloved community in only name not action
 - o Be less than transparent
 - o To effectively tell the wounds of our history and use them as a heuristic device
 - o Be contrite
 - o Offer effective theology as a part of our orientation to ABC life
 - o To be too self-satisfied
- We have grief:
 - o Over lost/fractured relationships (specifically the former search committee)
 - o Over how little ABC USA serves the local pastor
 - o Over being embarrassed by some of the less than deep theological work offered by the denomination young pastor
 - o Over the ways in which we do not make room for a wide range of young, non-mainstream (ABC USA) voices.

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

blank

HOPE

By: Mary Ann Brussat

A teacher does her best and hopes that her enthusiasm for learning has lit a fire inside her students for reading. A woman working in a hospice hopes that the people in her care will have finely finished deaths. A human rights activist in prison hopes that he will be freed soon to resume his work.

Like us, these individuals are animated by hope, which Czechoslovakian playwright and politician Vaclav Havel maintains is “ a dimension of the Spirit. It is not outside us but within us.” This potent and positive human faculty must be distinguished from its dangerous sister, expectation which steals us from the present and pushes us down the path of disappointment when things don’t go our way.

Hope, in contrast, is patient. It is willing to stay with us in the here and now, and it assures us the future is open. Reverend William Sloane Coffin states, “Hope arouses as nothing else can- a passion for the possible.”

There is a forward thrust to bold projects and schemes begun with great commitment, ardor and idealism. Hope is the fuel which keeps them going and growing.

“What oxygen is to the lungs,” Swiss theologian Emil Bruner writes,” such is hope to the meaning of life.” No wonder Martin Luther, the leader of the Protestant Reformation, urges us to realize, “Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.” We get up, we give our finest effort, and then we hope for the best.

What is true for one is true for many. “Hope is the strongest driving force for a people. Hope which brings about change, which provides new realities, is what opens our road to freedom,” writes Oscar Arias from Latin America. For millions all over the world, hope is the daily bread that feeds the soul and breeds the courage to continue in the face of disease, poverty, unemployment and starvation.

For the refugees, the homeless, the oppressed, the prisoners of conscience, hope is a tonic that keeps them going. Or as another Latin American, Ruben Alvez, puts it: “Hope is hearing the melody of the future.”

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NOTES FROM GROUP 1 - HOPE

What would it look like for the Board to lead from a place of hope?

Sometimes courage is needed

Courage to listen, to shut up, to take a stance, stop and listen

see - Stay focused on right things – keep your eye on the doughnut and not the whole

Pay attention to the little things – writing a note, saying a word

Sometimes we miss the supernatural because we look for the spectacular.

What steps can we take to cultivate our hopes into a shared vision for our leadership?

Clarifying identity of BGM/OGS

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NOTES FROM GROUP 2 - HOPE

Hope vs. Expectation – “Future is open” – Strong driving force – Leads to change

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- “Hope Baptist Mission: - a picture of ABC missions (church has talked about possibly closing), hope for the future, and hope for eternity
- Church held 50-75% college kids on Thursday nights, “my hope is that more churches will think that way and serve the community and evolve.”
- New leadership transformed by the spirit can be exciting! We can see God working through new leadership and new spirit
- Picture of hope – very diverse Board, good change. Experienced HOPE in how her church called/voted her in. Experience with daughter – reaching out to college students
- Matthew 24:13 God gives the strength to complete plan/goals. Hope results in growth. ABC refugee churches are growing, action love based.
- Hoping churches will be more open to women – hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

We need to acknowledge the changes in our family life and take action as we are led to hope in the Lord!

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Learn from experience

Pray, praise, look ahead

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NOTES FROM GROUP 3 - HOPE

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Communication
 - We are not dying
 - We're transforming
 - New is happening
- Celebration
 - Keeps hope alive
- Collaboration
 - Maintain it
- Have fun doing the mission
- Smaller Board creates more relationships, acknowledgement, and accountability
- Change isn't always bad
- Value in hearing other's stories
- Hope energizes

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

Because we are people of faith we hear the melody of the future. It is our passion for the possible, we can renew UM

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

To struggle with "conformity" & "inclusion." Understanding the limits of our lense perception. Being aware when we make a "value judgment."

Naming the grief – finding consensus about how we move forward.

Having a level of sensibility about how we rebuild trust.

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NOTES FROM GROUP 4 - HOPE

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Personal contact/mentioned by name
 - Send birthday cards with note
- Hugs
 - Others will/can follow lead
- Members can work together in crisis
- Economy can make a difference
 - Positive or negative
- Church can function as family
- “Patience is born out of hope”

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Hope that jobs get done
- What is acceptable
 - From hope to accomplish need
- People tend not to trust process
- Communication/addressing/moving on
- Learning from past

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Communicate for prayer, support

Ask for prayers for search committee members in the realm of hope

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 5 - HOPE

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Faith is the fence around hope that leads us to prayer and out of despair
- When practical business sense says “no”
- Market downturns negative impact on ABC finance but Hope had turned things around breathing new life into mutual facility occupancy
- The GS search process and gathering here brings new hope
- Susan Gillies in key tense situations asks questions that calm, inform and creates hope to move ahead

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- ABC is one body
- Helps to learn to love one another
- Eradication of tolerance
- Takes more than beyond ourselves to create hope
- United ABC effort can bring about positive change & Holy Spirit
- God answers in ways we can't imagine

GRATITUDE?

- For empathy within ABC
- That races recognize that ABC is on the forefront of dealing with race issue
- That there's a future beyond racism

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Share the stories of Hope
- Don't be traumatized by death (church, program)
- Hope is a connector
- Take a look at ABHMS task on racism and race based violence as hopeful collaboration
- Share our stories (internments, racism, Ferguson)

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 6 - HOPE

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Doing ministry using different lenses, having a vision of how things could be, I have hope there.
- A small old church tried something new and engaged in small groups and resulted in deeper learning, deeper narrative, and created community.
- Change in funding structure for missionaries (IM) created support teams and more connection between missionaries and churches. Hope is that even if times were hard, God comes up with something
- Hope in the children's Sunday school program at a local church
- Our churches and structures need to support pastors to prevent burn-out. Clergy attrition is high.
- There's a lot of good things that are happening which are not reported
- Mission is about living out our hope
- Hope when we focus on mission and not our differences

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Transformed by the spirit gave me hope in that it led my church to focus on prayer
- Ministry challenges prevent us from experiencing hope
- Threads of hope: connectivity through disconnect; breaking down walls
- Hope requires courage. We don't do anything because we're afraid of failure

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- What steps can we take to build hope?
- Supporting young preachers, theologians' conference, Muslim-Christian dialogue

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 7 – HOPE

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Hope is confident expectation
- Hope is persistent, ephemeral, tenacious
- Christian hope is Easter/Resurrection
- Power of hope is in God's power, not ours
 - o How do I point others towards that hope
- In worship and hearing the word, God works in and through us. God is present
 - o Hope in God's presence and existence
- Would anyone know if this church vanished?
 - o Yes=hope
- God places people in our lives to foment hope
 - o Hope is found where we least expect it

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Our polity (mutual ministry despite theological disagreement) is possible
 - o This brings people hope
- Power of relationship to create hope, as hope
 - o Remembering what hope actually is vs. pithy pop culture
 - o Faith and hope are inexorably intertwined
 - o Affirmation of a living God, active in our midst =hope
 - o God acts through structures, meetings, boards, etc.
 - Hope for our organizations
- We find hope in people actually being the hands and feet of Christ
 - o In addition to Christ himself who is incarnate hope
- We were created Imago Dei so our hope/discontent is Godly to in in relationship with God as God created us
- Vision of hope- trusting that God is present, especially even in the mess of our polity, tradition and life
 - o Clifford – living men differ, dead men agree
- We do what we can and trust that's enough as coworkers with God

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Hope requires discontent to show itself
 - o Longing, a lack, a not yet
- Even our faith is an act of hope, we have confidence but not assurance
- Listening to and following the Holy Spirit is an act of hope.

"God is love, therefore we love God is hope, therefore we hope"

COMMITMENT

BY: Peter Block

Commitment and accountability are forever paired, for they do not exist without each other. Accountability is the willingness to care for the wellbeing of the whole; commitment is the willingness to make a promise with no expectation of return.

What community requires is a promise devoid of barter and not conditional on another's action. Without that, we are constantly in the position of reacting to the choices of others. Which means that our commitment is conditional. This is a barter not commitment.

The cost of constantly reacting to the choices of others is increased cynicism and helplessness. The ultimate cost of cynicism and helplessness is that we resort to the use of force. In this way the barter mentality that dominates our culture helps create a proliferation of force. Not necessarily violence, but the belief that for anything to change, we must mandate or use coercion.

Unconditional commitment is the antithesis of entitlement and barter. Unconditional commitment with no thought to "What's in it for me?" is the emotional and relational essence of community. It is what some call integrity; others "honoring your word."

Wholehearted commitment makes a promise to those we serve about how we will work toward the success of the whole. Nothing kills commitment faster than lip service. Lip service is an agreement or promise made standing next to the exit door. What promises are you willing to make for the sake of mission and community? What promises are we prepared to make and keep?

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NOTES FROM GROUP 1 – COMMITMENT

What now – commitment

Story of the paralytic friends carrying him to Jesus. To be able to lift up the other. We have to look for the opportunity to be with the other – enable, encourage, etc.

- Listen
- Be aware of those times when I might be able to say something for the other – when the other can't say it.
- Commitment begets commitment
- Courage to make decisions, to make changes
- Stand with
- Voice – be a voice
- Encourage
- Carry
- Theme player – not to bring your personal agenda
- The whole
- Open to being changed

Tell of a time you were most committed to denomination

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 2 – COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

Crisis makes me step up to the plate – splits, pastor leaving

New level of preaching – God calls who He wants to call – bringing the topic of women in the pulpit to the forefront

When things are bad people show up, are committed, when exposed to inspiring worship services, commitment is greater, and commitment goes up through struggles. Mission conferences – inspire commitment which comes and goes.

More committed when I feel valued or listened to when there is something of value.

Struggle of commitment to the Lord's ministry. It is not easy to be committed but when God calls – there is no avoidance – when he grew our convention, my commitment grew

Commitment to serve Him, need to stop to listen to all He has to say

Commitment came out of growth as a Christian. "Giving back." Commitment to help people know more about God and for God to help His people be glorified.

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

Have God grow our joy, hope and commitment. Allow people's grief, it is a healthy process

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

Grow where we are

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 3 - COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Stick-to-it-ism > perseverance
- Service without limelight
- Teamwork
- Blessing
- Sacrifice
- Feet of hope
 - What puts hope into action
- Vision
 - People, mission, identity
- Step by step, inch by inch, pilgrimage

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Hands and feet
- Lived action of our faith
- Remembering
- Practical theology

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Model prayer
- Commitment with transparency
- Modeling integrity
 - Clarity of expectations of being a director
 - Written/verbal
- Respectful communication
 - "God's tapestry"
- Actually modeling a tough conversation
 - Not just talking about it
- Pursuing resolution
 - Taking action & owning responsibility

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NOTES FROM GROUP 4 - COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- "Give them the flowers while they can still smell them"
- "Commitment is earned"
- Need to ask for support
- Committed because of board work
- "Make a commitment to Christ"
- Lift up positives of past
- Commitment to beliefs ABC stands for
- We can best advance the Kingdom of God together
- "People do not have commitment to denomination"

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Local churches want to see more or something from ABC other than just ask for money
- "Commitment requires example"
- "Gave up differences to be committed"
- What is moving us?"
- Lip service is opposite than commitment
- Serve and come together

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Keep having conversations – sit with differences, concentrate on what is in common
- Remember history
- Build credibility
- Communicate with rest of board- plans, process, success
- Need to find way to build up denomination-need to revitalize churches-need to help churches come alive or as God wants them to be
- Do we need to speak our voice louder?
- Need process that local churches buy into
- Need to put face with...

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 5 - COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Commitment to sticking to personal integrity when someone suggests compromising
- Commitment to people not paper
- Commitment to be a help to supervisor
- Commitment to serve where God calls-not one's personal choice
- Commitment of entire department to serve well

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- BGM needs to hear how committed staff (not just highest level) at Valley Forge are
- Personal investment and responsibility important
- Accountability – doing what you need to do regardless of who's watching
- Personal accountability to Christ

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

See previous question

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 6 - COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Need church to understand when pastors go to denominational meetings and therefore away from church work
- Committed to ABC because ABC had a part in theological formation through scholarship money
- Committed because of being ABC by birth and choice
- TBYS is very uplifting. ABC journey has had its peaks and valleys
- Commitment started when going to the board before ordination and received criticisms. Need to be committed with love.
- Commitment means being part of community and family, commitment results in responsibility
- Our choices are a result of a commitment we've made
- We've committed to represent our region

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

- Make it a point not to ask people to serve without letting them understand what they're going into
- Discernments in things: ask people to do things that has a sense and value

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Historical society interviewing aging leaders and documenting their stories

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

NOTES FROM GROUP 7 - COMMITMENT

WHAT? (key discussion points)

- Lessee – steadfast love of God
 - Commitment as actively relational
 - Commitment to serve God as God calls
 - All other things are ordered along our commitment to God
- Relationship between commitment and covenant
 - Commitment to ministry as cost of discipleship
 - Different levels of commitment
 - Kinds of
 - Purpose for
 - Commitment holds one another accountable

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

Nothing

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/next steps for action)

- Commitment to safe, civil, respectful conversations lacking conflict has gone underground
- Try 5 years of total openness
 - Setting biases, convictions at door in BGM or another group commissioned
- “you don’t have to buy it, but you have to rent it”
- One thing to say “this is who I am” another thing to say “this is how all should be”, but I may be wrong (Campolo)

Group #_____ Notes on _____
(Joy, Grief, Hope, Commitment)

WHAT? (key discussion points)

SO WHAT? (why is this relevant/important to BGM)

NOW WHAT? (recommendations/ next steps for action)



Board of General Ministries Retreat

June 16-17, 2016

Please sit at table as assigned.
A list is on each table.



Devotion

“One Body, Many Parts”
1 Corinthians 12:12-27



Getting to Know You...

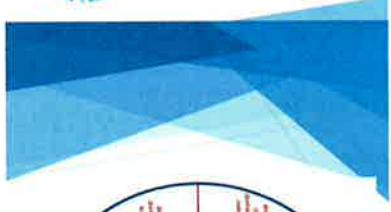


TERMS

Diversity - The presence of difference

Culture - The unwritten rules of a group connected by a particular identity trait, shared experience or affiliation.

Inclusion - The intentional act of embracing differences and creating conditions by which the value differences is maximized.



EXERCISE

Name...
Where I'm from...
What I do (professionally)...
What I like to do (personally)...
What I'd like you to know about me...
The voice of diversity I bring to BGM is... Because...



SMALL GROUPS

- Group 1 - Boehr
- Group 2 - Cary
- Group 3 - Stansbury
- Group 4 - Brayton Case B
- Group 5 - Brayton Case A
- Group 6 - Johnson
- Group 7 - Hanson (?)



Board of General Ministries Retreat

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Devotion

“JOY, GRIEF, HOPE,
COMMITMENT”





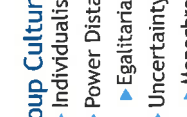
Remarks
Judy Fackenthal



VIDEO
"The Lunch Date"



WHAT?
SO WHAT?
NOW WHAT?



- Group Cultural Dimensions**
- ▶ Individualism - Collectivism
 - ▶ Power Distance
 - ▶ Egalitarian - Hierarchical
 - ▶ Uncertainty Avoidance
 - ▶ Monochronic - Polychronic
 - ▶ Long Term- Short Term Orientation
 - ▶ Indulgence - Restraint
 - ▶ Low Context/High Content - High Context/Low Content
 - ▶ Task Focused - Relationship Focused
 - ▶ Surfacing Differences - Maintaining Harmony



CLOSING
"One Word"
Judy Fackenthal



COMMUNION



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCH - USA

Retreat Planning Meeting
March 9, 2016

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- R** - Accept **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others.
- E** - Listen with an **EMPATHETIC** heart.
- S** - Be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communication styles.
- P** - **PONDER** on what you hear and feel before you speak.
- E** - **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions.
- C** - Keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**.
- T** - **TRUST** that we are coming with good intentions.

Source: Eric Law
Kaleidoscope Institute



WHAT IS APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY?

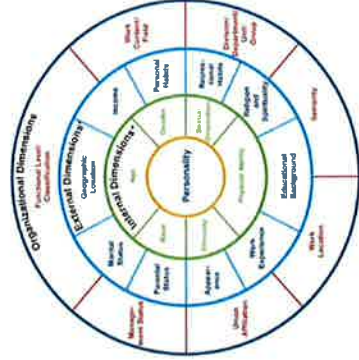
Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach to systems change that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. The basic tenet of AI is that an organization will grow in whichever direction that people in the organization focus their attention.

-David Cooperrider



EXERCISE: MY CULTURAL IDENTITY

1. Name 4 cultural groups that you belong to that influence who you are.
2. Rank the 4 groups according to level of influence (1 = strongest 4 = weakest)
3. For each group list 2 cultural attributes that hold true for you.
(i.e. shared attitudes, values, goals, customs/practices, ways of being, etc)



THEMES

- Authority ————— Accountability
- Confidentiality ————— Transparency
- Diversity** ————— Bias / lack of intentionality
- Past ————— Future
- Ethical Leadership (trust) ————— Self Serving/ divided loyalties



RETREAT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Board Retreat is to :

Practice being Beloved Community in order to lead the ABC in being Beloved Community

- Understanding and Embracing our Cultural Diversity
- Building Relationships of Trust and Accountability
- Maximizing our effectiveness as a Board responsible for ethical leadership decisions in the denomination



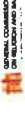
CULTURE IS...

Culture is the unwritten rules of a group connected by a particular identity trait, shared experience or affiliation.

—Edward Hall



The behavioral interpretation of how a group lives out its values in order to survive and thrive.



METAPHORS FOR CULTURE



1. How does this image represent culture?
2. What examples can you site that illustrate this metaphor?

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

Intercultural Competency (effectiveness, agility):

The ability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior and/or serve as a bridge when difference is present.

-Mitchell Hammer

GROUP CULTURE

Individualistic.....	Collectivistic
Low Context/ High Context.....	High Context/ Low Context
Monochronic.....	Polychronic
Egalitarian.....	Hierarchical
Task Focused.....	Relationship Focused
Surfacing Differences.....	Maintaining Harmony

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

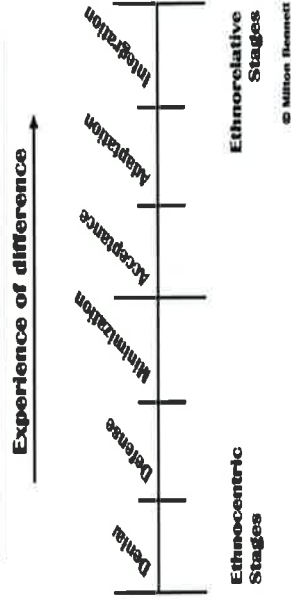
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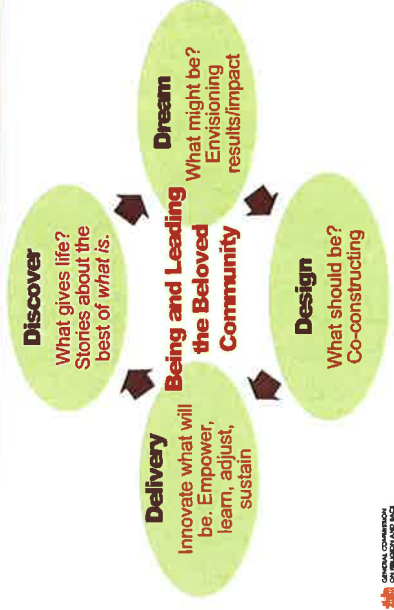
-Mitchell Hammer

DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY (DMIS)

Development of Intercultural Sensitivity



THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS



QUESTIONS

1. What are the things that most excite you about what is happening in the ABC-USA?
2. What type of leaders are most needed at this time in the life of the church? What leadership attributes, characteristics, gifts and skills should they possess?
3. If this group were to assemble 10 years from now and review the state of the church relative to decisions made/outcomes of the June Board retreat, what would you hope to find in your review? Be Specific. Write them as if they were headlines in a newspaper.

DREAM PHASE

- Desired
- Bold, provocative
- Affirmative
- Grounded
- Spark learning
- Energizing
- Bring opposites together
- Add strategic value
- Generative potential

DESIGN IDEAS FOR THE RETREAT

- What strategy and actions would help is move closer to the dream?
- What will need to happen immediately, in the near future, and "at some point"?
- What will need to change – from what to what?



ACTION PLANNING: QUESTION TO DISCUSS

- **Who?** – Is involved and in what capacity? Is served?
- **What?** – Is the goal? The specific work to be done? Are the measures of success/impact?
- **When?** – Will the work start? Be completed? Be communicated?
- **Where?** – Will this take place?
- **Why?** – Is this task necessary and important? Is this what we are choosing to do?
- **How?** – Will we measure? Hold accountable? Function in collaboration with others?

THE OLD SAYING GOES “WE BELIEVE WHAT WE SEE” BUT ACTUALLY...

We See What
We Believe



WHAT DO YOU SEE?



DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Diversity

The presence of difference

THE WHO

Assessed by Representation



Inclusion

Vision and Goals for maximizing diversity

THE WHAT

Assessed by Outcomes



Intercultural Competency

Greater understanding and effective action in order to realize inclusion

THE HOW

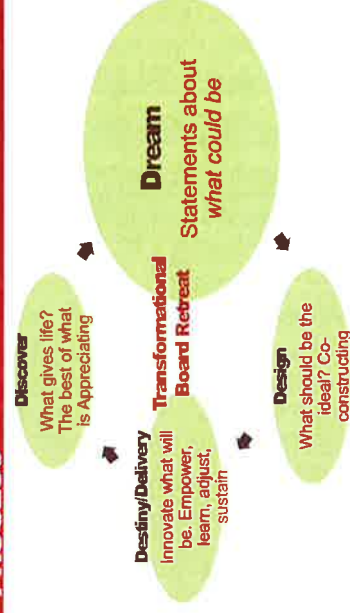
Assessed by Leadership Capacity

INTERVIEWS

SHARING

- Each person share highlights from questions 1-3 of the interview. Share at least one of the best stories, quotes, memorable ideas told by your interview partner from these questions.
- The group members should listen and take notes on patterns, themes and insights.
- Agree on and select 3-5 themes that you think are the most compelling and important.

THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS



DISCOVERY REPORT OUT



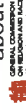
THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

- Trust has been lost
- Unethical leadership
- Lack of accountability
- Narrow vision about diversity
- Concern for the future
- Transparency/clear understanding of processes and policies



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “DESIGN” ?

- Both a product and a process
- As a verb... **“to design”** ...is to invent, to innovate, to conceive and to make choices - about the purpose, principles, roles, processes, practices and structures which will house, support and give life to the organizations and the dream they have created.
- As a noun, **“the organization design”** ...is the set of choices we have made about the above.



ACTION PLAN REPORT OUT



DREAM DISCUSSION

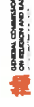


DESIGN IDEAS REPORT OUT



SUMMARY/CLOSING

THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS



THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS:

