

RENEWING CONGREGATIONS ACTION GROUP MINUTES

Board of General Ministries

June 17, 2016

Stansbury Room – Kern Lodge

Green Lake Conference Center

Directors: Wesley Roberts, Chair, Joyce Blandon, Cecelia Dachtler, Judy Fackenthal, Kay Farley, Manuel Luquin, Manuel Magana, Nancy O’Neill, Tom Roberts,
Staff: C. Jeff Woods, Marilyn Tyson

Wesley Roberts, chair, opened the meeting with prayer.

The Renewing Congregations Action Group will no longer meet following this board meeting since congregational renewal is being addressed in several other ways as a result of the Mission Summit Conversations and the Mission Table. The group spent some time reflecting on the accomplishments of the group using the document “Some Highlights regarding the History of the Congregational Renewal Team”. The life cycle of congregations, church renewal strategies, church growth research, and Transformed by the Spirit resources were all part of the work of the committee. Time has also been spent in gathering stories of renewal to be shared on the ABC website. In reflecting on this past work, it was noted that people support what they have a part in creating; developing a national resource doesn’t work if the congregation did not participate in the creation of the resource. It was noted that renewal seems to be happening when someone helps a congregation complete an assessment. What works is what’s contextual. The concern was expressed that pastors are not being trained in ministry strategies to deal with churches in decline. Some seminaries are in conversation regarding this need. It was observed that in some cases a new congregation results following a church closure. In other situations a congregation is able to survive even though it may remain small for a very long time. The question was raised about how “renewal” is defined. While there are several sets of factors which may help to define this, worship and focus are two of the primary factors in renewal. Worship connects people to God and people “being on the same page” is important in focus. It was also noted that prayer is a major factor.

The group also shared remembrances of personal transformation along with a scripture which spoke to the situation.

Each committee member shared a brief prayer of thanksgiving. The meeting was adjourned with the singing of the doxology.