Governing Board Meeting Minutes 12 September 2016

Attended: Rev Elder Darlene Garner, Rev. Joe Cobb, Rev. Dr. Stephanie Burns, Rev. Dr. William

Knight, Rev. Jakob Hero, Sara Jane Ramage, Kimberly Brown, Mark Dalgleish

Absent: Angel Collie

William opened the meeting with prayer

Darlene was a guest to the GB meeting to discuss A Conversation on Diversity. She sent an email with OEM's Overview of the MCC Diversity and Inclusion Program (document attached to end of notes)

MCC is committed to Diversity

Diversity Inclusion is only part of OEM's responsibilities

Staff had two members – Vickey Gibbs's position was eliminated due to budget constraints Darlene then gave an overview of how her organization works with diversity inclusion (see attached document)

Questions from the discussion:

William - asked about the age groups, 18-35 and over 50 and wondered about 35-50 year olds

Groups were created on the basis of need

Need for intentional focus for young adults

Multi-generational focus for leadership

Over 50 group – empowering our churches to be aware of needs of older LGBT population

Not a particular need for the 35 – 50 group

Joe – recommendations by working groups not implemented?

Need for cultural changes in MCC (see page 12 of doc)

MCC is culturally western white male

William – what would policy or procedures from the GB look like?

Complex – look at each of GB's policies which have disparate impact

Actively consult with diversity team before making changes to policy – this is seldom followed

Address systemic changes needed to change culture

Kimberly – turf war mentality in terms of leadership, GB made policy without consulting?

Darlene that this was true in the past

Need to find ways to work more collaboratively

Kim said that leadership needs to be more like the body

Darlene is still hopeful because the GB does not have old practices and is now

intentional in ways to be more collaborative in doing work

The how things are done is when change happens

William – we can't address things that happened in the past

Actively request input from groups that are impacted

Darlene – GB members don't know what groups may be impacted and suggested working through OEM, specifically Darlene who has a keen sense of who might be impacted

Copy her to request who might be impacted

Mark – inviting people we think will be impacted is another way to come at it

COE adopted policy of first and second reading process

Send to people inviting feedback

When ready to go do first and second reading

Western white make culture?

US is not only one – Western Europe, Canada, Australia, part of South Africa

Non-western – Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East have different cultural constraints

Western cultural values – getting things done expediently is not part of other cultures

Stephanie – where would you like to expand to?

Working groups take class into consideration

Task force will present recommendations for strategy at F2F

Don't have capacity to do all that needs to be done

Program would not do MCC well to take on too much

Hold public conversations – schedule webinars at different times (3 or 4 live conversations)

Offer different languages

Work takes place in a global context

Think globally as you act globally

F2F meeting is critical

Conversation will continue at a later time



OVERVIEW OF THE MCC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

Office of Emerging Ministries
Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, Director

The MCC Diversity and Inclusion Program is rooted in MCC's historical and contemporary expressions of commitment to inclusion. An historical expression is found in the UFMCC Bylaws:

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). **All members** of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

UFMCC decrees that **all people** shall have equality of access and opportunity which is **free from discrimination** on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status **in terms of: (1) Employment and personnel procedures and (2) Service delivery -- all that we do.** (emphasis added)

Preamble to UFMCC Bylaws Article IV: Ministry

A contemporary expression is reflected throughout the MCC Core Values:

MCC CORE VALUES

☐ Inclusion - Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to continue to be conduits of faith where everyone is included in the family of God and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God's table.

☐ Community - Offering a safe and open community for people to worship, learn, and grow in their faith is our deep desire. We are committed to equipping ourselves and each other to do the work that God has called us to do in the world.

□ Spiritual Transformation - Providing a message of liberation from the oppressive religious environment of our day or to those experiencing God for the first time is what guides our ministry. We believe that when people are invited to experience God through the life and ministry of Christ, lives will be transformed.

☐ Justice - Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being quided always by our commitment to Global Human Rights.

MCC has long had intentional efforts to address various aspects of diversity. These have included The Department of Racism/Third World Ministries in the 1970s; the HIV/AIDS program, Department of People of Color, and White People Healing Racism in the 1980s; a focus on international access to and physical accessibility during General Conference in the 1980s and 1990s; Garner convened the first biennial (triennial since 2010) MCC Conference for People of African Descent in 1998; and gatherings for women and a focus on the uplift of young adults were introduced in the first decade of the 2000s.

As wonderful as the previous efforts had been, an ongoing challenge was that the various aspects of diversity were considered independently from one another; there was no point of collaboration among them and a sense of competition between them; and no MCC volunteer or staff member had been given the responsibility to plan, coordinate, or monitor MCC's diversity efforts.

This situation changed with the introduction of program offices that went into effect in mid-2010. At that time, the MCC Office of Emerging Ministries was created. Among other things, OEM was charged with (1) concerns related to diversity and inclusion within MCC and (2) increasing MCC's cross-cultural competencies so that our churches and global movement can be better equipped to minister in a culturally-diverse world. In response, Garner developed the current MCC Diversity & Inclusion Program. Rev. Vickey Gibbs was Program Coordinator from September 2010 until September 2015, when the position was eliminated for budgetary reasons. Since then, Garner has fulfilled both program leadership and program management functions.

Working through the collaborative efforts of over 100 volunteers, the Diversity & Inclusion Program focuses on the following elements:

- 1. For the sake of international inclusion & cross-cultural competency within the UFMCC system, focus on the development of MCC in specific global areas and strengthening of relationships between MCC in each global area with the broader MCC (especially MCC in the US). The specific global areas we work with are:
 - a. Africa (as of July 2016)
 - **b.** Asia (since July 2010)
 - c. Australia/New Zealand (since July 2010)
 - d. Europe (since July 2010)
 - e. Latin America (with support from Hector Gutierrez since 2003)
- Research, support, and advocacy for non-dominant communities within MCC, offered through Working Groups that are led by volunteer Program Officers (since 2012)
 - a. Older Adults (Dr. Imani Woody)
 - **b.** Young Adults (Rev. Brian Hutchison)
 - c. People of African Descent (Rev. Candy Holmes)
 - d. Racial Reconciliation/No2 Racism (Rev. Dr. Elijah Nealy)
 - e. Heterosexual Inclusion (Rev. Mary Cantrell)
 - f. Women (Rev. Jackie Carter)
 - g. Trans*/Gender Non-Conforming (Angel Collie)
 - h. Health & Wellness (Dr. David Williams, Coordinator)
 - i. Accessibility (Rev. Mel Martinez)
 - ii. HIV/AIDS (Dr. David Williams)
 - iii. Women's Health (Dr. Lorane/Lori Dick)
 - iv. Mental Health (Rev. Maxwell Reay and Rev. Doretha Williams-Flournoy)
 - v. Trans* Health (coming in 2017)

Taking an intersectional approach, Advisory Councils (now known as Working Groups) were formed in 2012 to give voice and visibility to the particular concerns, perspectives, and needs that are shared by certain non-dominant groups within MCC. Each Advisory Council is led by a volunteer program officer. Advisory Councils/Working Groups do not have legal or fiduciary obligations, yet their advisory role is an

integral function that can add great value to our movement as a whole. The Advisory Councils/Working Groups function as "internal think-tanks." They are not activist, support, or advocacy groups. The primary focus of their attention is on "getting our own MCC house in order."

The Working Groups:

- Serve as resources for the Senior Leadership Team, Council of Elders, and Governing Board on the potential impact of MCC programs, polices, and practices on non-dominant groups within MCC;
- Recommend and create resources and programming to build the capacity of our churches to become not only more diverse but also more inclusive communities; and
- Propose strategies that might lead to greater diversity and inclusivity in our churches and among MCC leadership.

3. Sponsor events

- **a.** MCC Conference for People of African Descent, Friends, Families, and Advocates (offered the year after General Conference; 1998 onward))
- **b.** Young Adult Gathering (offered in non-General Conference years; 2012 onward)
- c. Affinity group gatherings during General Conference (2013 and 2016)
- d. Transformative Institute on Diversity (General Conference 2016)

4. Provide awareness, education, and training

- a. Virtual Prayer Vigil for Justice (January 2015)
- b. Conversation on the Charleston Massacre (July 2015)
- c. Beyond Binaries: Bisexuality Awareness (September 2015)
- d. MCC Reads series on race
- e. Prayer Vigil after the Orlando Massacre (June 2016)
- f. Transformation: D&I Newsletter

5. Nurture community among under-represented MCC communities

- a. Social media (Facebook)
- **b.** Affinity groups at General Conference
- c. Mentoring

6. Resource local churches

- a. Transformative Ministry: Trans*/GNC Certification Program
- b. Liturgical and educational resources for cultural holidays and special occasions
- c. On-site Workshops
- d. Inclusive language, including and beyond God language
- e. Consultations, as requested

7. Provide MCC presence at relevant social justice events and conferences

- a. Creating Change Conference (multiple)
- **b.** Facing Race Conference (2014)
- c. Black Lives Matter events (2014 through 2016)
- **d.** Marriage Equality events (2009 through 2016)

- e. White House briefing on Bisexuality (2014)
- f. White House briefing for African-American Emerging Leaders (2014)
- g. National (U.S.) Black Justice Coalition Out-on-the-Hill lobbying days (2013-2015)
- h. Human Rights Campaign Clergy Call (2008-2015)

8. Offer support for MCC leadership

- **a.** Compile and maintain diversity metrics of MCC leaders, staff, and appointed and elected positions; the metrics of MCC leaders, clergy, and pastors is found at Addendum 1.
- **b.** Submit D&I recommendations to the Governing Board, Senior Leadership Team, and Council of Elders in 2014 (Addendum 2).
- **c.** Recruit geographically and demographically diverse candidates for possible appointments to boards, committees, and task forces.
- **d.** Provide feedback on proposed policies, procedures, and practices.
- e. Recruit for demographically diverse representation in MCC images.
- **f.** Establish Task Forces, as needed, to address particular concerns. The current Task Force is preparing recommendations for leadership on Race and Gender.

With regard to the 2014 D&I recommendations to leadership (item 8b above), very few of the recommendations have yet been implemented. Given the complexity of issues that arose during the 2016 General Conference, it is hoped that the Governing Board, Council of Elders, and Senior Leadership Team can now more fully recognize the importance of the Diversity and Inclusion Program, allocate appropriate financial resources that are needed to support the work, and also finally implement the recommended actions.

Demographic Profile of MCC Leadership

Governing Board (n=9)	July 2010	July 2015	July 2016
Global Area of Residence			
Africa	0	0	0
Asia	0	0	0
Australia/New Zealand	0	0	1 (11%)
Canada	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	0
Europe	0	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
Latin America	0	0	0
United States	8 (89%)	7 (78%)	7 (78%)
Ethnicity			
African Descent	3 (33%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)
European Descent	2 (22%)	6 (67%)	8 (89%)
Latin American Descent	0	0	0
Asian Descent	0	0	0
First Nations Descent	0	0	0
Gender Identity ¹			
Male	4 (44%)	3 (33%)	4 (44%)
Female	5 (56%)	6 (67%)	4 (44%)
Trans*/Gender Non-conforming	0	0	2 (22%)
Heterosexual identified	0	1 (11%)	1 (11%)
Accessibility concerns	0	0	0
Ministry role			
Laity	4 (44%)	4 (44%)	4 (44%)
Clergy	5 (56%)	5 (56%)	5 (56%)
Age ²			
Under 35 years of age	0	0	2 (22%)
Over 50 years of age	7 (78%)	7 (78%)	3 (33%)

¹ The numbers reflected in Gender Identity exceeds the actual number of members. Members who are trans* are included in the male/female binary and also included in trans*/gender non-conforming.

² Actual age of some individual members is not known; the age of those members is not included here as a young adult (under 35) or as an older adult (over 50).

Council of Elders	July 2009 ³	July 2012 ⁴	July 2016 ⁵
	n=5	n=5	n=11
Global Area of Residence			
Africa	0	0	0
Asia	0	0	0
Australia/New Zealand	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0
Europe	0	0	1 (9%)
Latin America	0	1 (20%)	2 (18%)
United States	5 (100%)	4 (80%)	8 (73%)
Ethnicity			
African Descent	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (18%)
European Descent	3 (60%)	3 (60%)	8 (73%)
Latin American Descent	0	1 (20%)	2 (18%)
Asian Descent	0	0	0
First Nations Descent	1 (20%)	0	0
Gender Identity			
Male	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	4 (36%)
Female	4 (80%)	3 (60%)	7 (64%)
Trans*/Gender Non-conforming	0	0	1 (9%)
Heterosexual identified	0	0	0
Accessibility concerns	0	0	0
Ministry role			
Laity	0	0	1 (9%)
Clergy	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	10 (91%)
Age			
Under 35 years of age	0		0
Over 50 years of age	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	9 (82%)

³ In 2009, all members of the Council of Elders were full-time staff, with all except the Moderator serving as a Regional Elder. The position of Regional Elder was eliminated, with full effect in January 2010.

⁴ By July 2012, though all Elders were also full-time staff, service on the Council of Elders was considered a volunteer function.

⁵ The Council of Elders was expanded in 2015.

Senior Leadership Team	July 2010	July 2012	July 2016
	n=6	n=6	n=8
Global Area of Residence			
Africa	0	0	0
Asia	0	0	0
Australia/New Zealand	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0
Europe	0	0	0
Latin America	0	1 (17%)	1 (13%)
United States	6 (100%)	5 (83%)	7 (88%)
Ethnicity			
African Descent	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	1 (13%)
European Descent	5 (83%)	4 (67%)	6 (75%)
Latin American Descent	0	1 (17%)	1 (13%)
Asian Descent	0	0	0
First Nations Descent	0	0	0
Gender Identity			
Male	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	2 (25%)
Female	5 (83%)	4 (67%)	6 (75%)
Trans*/Gender Non-conforming	0	0	0
Heterosexual identified	0	0	1
Accessibility concerns	0	0	0
Ministry role			
Laity	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	3 (38%)
Clergy	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	5 (63%)
Age			
Under 35 years of age	0	0	0
Over 50 years of age	6 (100%)	6 (100%	7 (88%)

Composition of SLT in 2010

Moderator 2 Co-Directors of OCLH Director of OEM Director of OFLD

Director of Operations

Composition of SLT in 2012

Moderator Director of OCLH

Director of OEM Associate Director of OEM Director of OFLD Director of Operations

Composition of SLT in 2016

Moderator Director of OCLH

Director of OEM Associate Director of OEM Director of OFLD Director of Operations

Director of Development Associate Director for Communications

Combined MCC Leadership Bodies	September 2016
(26 Positions filled by 22 individuals)	n = 22
Clabel Avec of Decidence	
Global Area of Residence	•
Africa	0
Asia	0
Australia/New Zealand	1 (5%)
Canada	0
Europe	2 (9%)
Latin America	2 (9%)
United States	17 (77%)
Ethnicity	
African Descent	3 (14%)
European Descent	18 (82%)
Latin American Descent	2 (9%)
Asian Descent	0
First Nations Descent	0
Gender Identity	
Male	8 (36%)
Female	13 (59%)
Trans*/Gender Non-conforming	3 (14%)
Heterosexual identified	2 (9%)
Accessibility concerns	0
Ministry role	
Laity	8 (36%)
Clergy	14 (64%)
Age	
Under 35 years of age	2 (9%)
Over 50 years of age	13 (59%)

Clergy and Pastors	All Clergy	Pastors
As of December 2015	n = 292	n=189
Global Area of Residence		
Africa	4 (1%)	6 (3%)
Asia	3 (1%)	5 (3%)
Australia/New Zealand	8 (3%)	6 (3%)
Canada	7 (2%)	3 (2%)
Europe	13 (4%)	20 (11%)
Latin America	7 (2%)	36 (19%0
United States	250 (86%)	113 (60%)
Ethnicity (U.S. Only)	As % of	As % of
	Clergy in U.S.	Pastors in U.S.
African Descent	30 (12%)	14 (12%)
European Descent	206 (82%)	95 (84%)
Latin American Descent	8 (3%)	2 (2%)
Asian Descent	2 (1%)	0
First Nations Descent	4 (2%)	3 (3%)
Gender Identity		
Male	113 (45%)	54 (48%)
Female	137 (55%)	59 (52%)
Trans*/Gender Non-conforming	13 (5%)	7 (6%)

Quick Demographic Facts: Race and Hispanic Origin - United States (as of July 2015)

Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00

Population estimate	321,418,820
Male	49.2%
Female	50.8%
White alone ⁶	77.1%
Black/African-American alone	13.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.2%
Asian alone	5.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%
Two or More Races	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino ⁷	17.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	61.6%

⁶ The term "alone" Includes persons reporting only one race.

⁷ Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

2014 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS TO MCC LEADERSHIP July 2014

In 2013, the Office of Emerging Ministries created eight (8) Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Councils to advise on and give voice and visibility to the particular concerns, perspectives, and needs that are shared by certain non-dominant groups within MCC. The intention of the Advisory Council program is to help MCC at the denominational and local church level to increase its capacity to minister effectively with:

- Young Adults (under 35 years of age) led by Rev. Katie Hotze-Wilton
- Older Adults (over 50 years of age) led by Dr. Imani Woody-Macko
- People of African Descent led by Rev. Candy Holmes
- People with and Affected by HIV/AIDS led by Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas
- People with Accessibility Challenges led by Rev. Mel Martinez
- Trans* and Gender Non-Conforming People led by Angel Collie
- Women led by Rev. Jackie Carter
- Heterosexuals led by Rev. Colleen Foley

During the first year of their work, each of the Advisory Councils identified potential obstacles to full inclusion within our local churches and among our clergy, MCC staff, and MCC leadership. They then considered what might be needed in order to overcome the identified obstacles. The recommendations that follow are submitted for consideration by the Office of the Moderator, Council of Elders, Governing Board, and each MCC program office reflect the collective wisdom and expertise of the Advisory Councils.

In considering the following recommendations, it is important to be aware that in April 2014 the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discussed a White Paper entitled "Conversation on Racism in MCC: A Discussion Document for the Senior Leadership Team," written by the Director of the Office of Emerging Ministries (see Attachment 1). Following the April conversation and in anticipation of receiving specific recommendations from the Advisory Councils, the SLT created an Inter-Office Diversity & Inclusion Team. This staff team is charged with the task of developing and coordinating implementation of a comprehensive plan that will support the intention of addressing racism and increasing diversity in MCC (see Attachment 2).

Recommendations referred to the Office of the Moderator for consideration

- 1. At a minimum, we need to build strong and active alliances with other organizations (especially those that are not LGBT) that are engaged in issues of concern to the communities represented by the advisory councils.
- 2. Members of the Council of Elders, Governing Board, and Senior Leadership Team should seek ways to have personal experiences both inside and beyond MCC with Trans*/GNC and other communities that are under-represented in MCC.
- 3. Locally and globally, MCC should continue and expand upon its pioneering work to offer its expertise, experience, and voice to the ongoing vision of being sex-positive in and through the holy integration of sexuality and spirituality.
- 4. Throughout MCC (among staff, leadership, clergy, and churches), raise the awareness of racism.

- 5. More fully and consistently integrate consultation with the Diversity & Inclusion Program into the decision-making processes of MCC leadership.
- 6. Increase the number of diverse faces, bodies, and voices in visible denominational leadership and representational roles to reflect to the internal and to the wider community that diversity is as critical to transforming the world as is addressing issues of spiritual violence inflicted because of sexual orientation.

Recommendations regarding General Conference; referred to the Office of the Moderator and Office of Operations for consideration

- Continue the practice of offering gender non-specific restrooms and changing spaces at MCC events.
- 2. Provide the Accessibility Guide to those who participate in an MCC-sponsored event and ensure that the venue is accessible to people with disabilities and meets the basic legal requirements of the land.
- 3. Recommended Minimum Requirements of General Conference Hotel
 - More than 30% guest rooms fully accessible for hearing, mobility AND vision.
 - Elevators with approved capacity minimum of 4,500 pounds. This will ensure that a capacity
 of 15 people averaging 200 lbs. each will not overload the elevators and result in additional
 maintenance during the conference week.
 - Negotiated contract to include a rider for use of service elevators by those with mobility equipment such as scooters, wheelchairs, crutches, casts, strollers, etc.
 - Negotiated hotel personnel to work directly with Accessibility Coordinator to handle issues
 of access immediately, as needed.
 - Negotiated provision of appropriate sound systems in all meeting rooms to be made available for connection to portable FM transmitters.
- 4. Recommendations for Hearing Assistive Devices
 - Invest in purchasing an FM expandable transmitter/receiver system that plug directly into the sound board for hearing assistive devices; such a system would cost between \$400 and \$1,500 to purchase, compared to \$700 for each 3-day usage.
 - Invest in purchasing a hearing induction loop system that plugs directly into the sound board. The cost range begins at \$300 to several thousand dollars, depending upon the size of the loop needed to go around the perimeter of a meeting room.
 - Use a combination of both FM and loop systems in ALL meeting rooms to make it possible
 for individuals to hear during workshops as well as at all-conference gatherings (plenaries,
 worship, etc.). A budget of \$10,000 over the next three years in preparation for the 2016
 General Conference would allow for the acquisition of appropriate equipment. A budget of
 \$5,000 over the next three years would allow for the acquisition of appropriate equipment
 to serve only all-conference events.
- 5. Provide HIV/AIDS training and conversation at General Conference.
- 6. Provide programming on diversity and inclusion at General Conference.
- 7. Provide space in programming for gatherings of affinity groups earlier than the usual 9 or 10:00 pm timeslot.

Recommendations referred to the Council of Elders for consideration

1. Consider modifying the requirement in the Clergy Manual that establishes CPE as a requirement for ordination; seeking acceptance into a CPE program often presents a particular barrier for Trans* and Gender Non-Conforming ordination candidates.

- 2. Members of the Council of Elders, Governing Board, and Senior Leadership Team should seek ways to have personal experiences both inside and beyond MCC with Trans*/GNC and other communities that are under-represented in MCC.
- 3. Develop a policy to require protection of clergy, lay leaders, and congregants undergoing a transition of gender identity.
- 4. Develop a comprehensive "inclusivity statement" that includes matters of policy, education, and support of all those who face marginalization within our denomination and the world.

Recommendations referred to the Governing Board for consideration

- We urge our internal structures to understand how our silence will adversely affect our policies
 and practices toward those living with HIV/AIDS. Silence can often be translated as lack of
 intention and denial of the "AIDS years" which has resulted in many living with HIV in our
 congregations toward fear and shame, failing to come out of the closet about their HIV status
 and an internalized "sex-negative" theology which is contrary to the founding narrative, vision
 and mission of Metropolitan Community Churches.
- 2. MCC will not become more diverse or inclusive until cultural changes are made. Services provided must be re-focused and more broadly oriented to focus on providing ministry that extends well beyond "LGBT issues" of the dominant group. There need to be much greater efforts aimed at intersectional issues such as immigration reform, human rights beyond "LGBT equality," transgender children and their families, employment for all, accessibility, racism, sexism, reproductive rights, aging, gender identity, sexuality beyond lesbian and gay, and other social issues that impact a broader range of humanity.
- 3. MCC will have to constantly rethink who we are, where we are going, and what we need to change in order to grow.
- 4. Publicly recognize those congregations and leaders that are "excelling in diversity and inclusion."
- 5. Encourage the Moderators Nominating Committee and the Governing Board Nominating Committee to consult with the Advisory Councils.
- 6. Modify nomination and appointment practices so that those in MCC leadership positions will include an increased number of capable people who reflect a fuller range of the diversity that we value.
- 7. Modify the current strategic plan so as to incorporate explicit breakthrough objectives regarding diversity and inclusion.
- 8. More fully and consistently integrate consultation with the Diversity & Inclusion Program into the decision-making processes of MCC leadership.
- 9. Consider creating and/or supporting in tangible ways the creation of communal living/housing projects for Older Adults.
- 10. Adopt a policy that MCC will not hold any event in a venue with known barriers that would exclude people with disabilities from attending and participation.
- 11. Develop a comprehensive HIV/AIDS program (as a pilot project) that will encourage and equip our leaders and congregations to engage in the work of HIV/AIDS and will empower our congregations to create fear-free "safe space" for those living with HIV/AIDS and to establish local HIV/AIDS ministries and programs. The program must also address the intersections between drug use, poverty, immigration, class, racism, sexism, and other "isms" that contribute to new diagnosis; and that address such things as "survival guilt", shame, etc.

Recommendations referred to Office of Formation & Leadership Development for consideration

1. Provide content for clergy and lay leadership development programs (REVM, Leadership Mentoring Retreat, Young Adults Mentoring Retreat, etc.) to equip participants to speak about

- and advocate for matters related to diversity and inclusion, including the specific spiritual and emotional needs of Trans*/GNC people
- 2. Establish an intentionally multi-generation mentoring program as a way to support the development of leaders who are part of under-represented groups in MCC.
- 3. Directly recruit people from marginalized communities to participate in denomination-level programming, including REVM, Leadership Mentoring Retreat, Young Adult Leadership Mentoring Retreat, Creating a Life that Matters Train-the-Trainer, Network Gatherings, etc., rather than only providing a general announcement that "everybody is welcome, encouraged, or expected to attend."
- 4. Develop intentional recruitment, retention, and support efforts that are aimed at heterosexual men and women, transmen and transwomen, and people of African descent to serve as church leaders, clergy, and in senior leadership.

Recommendations referred to Office of Church Life & Health for consideration

- 1. Create cohorts/groups for pastors from under-represented groups for the purpose of peer-support and sharing about their unique issues and challenges as well as their successes.
- 2. Because of the disproportionate number of female pastors in our smaller churches, we recommend that an open-source resource sharing portal be constructed to assist in resourcing our smaller churches.
- 3. Actively encourage churches to hire and support pastors from under-represented groups to serve as senior/solo pastor and/or staff clergy.
- 4. Train to the Diversity & Inclusion Guidelines and Best Practices for Churches.

Recommendations referred to the Office of Operations for consideration

- 1. Expand the catalog of MCC branded materials to include inclusive marketing materials that can be used by churches to help change the perception of MCC from being "just an LGBT" church to that of "a church for all people."
- 2. To speak to the straight community, we will need to speak a 'straight' language, present a face that straight people can identify with and accept, and provide programs that straight people need not simply as "our allies" but as "us."
- 3. The public MCC image and branding of MCC must be diverse and inclusive across the board. If the image we portray is of a homogenous church that is merely opening its doors to say "Oh yes, we accept you, too," it will not work.
- 4. MCC marketing materials and images, including the web site, need to reflect more fully the diversity that we value.
- 5. The MCC web page, Headline News, and social media must move away from a strictly LGBT focus and become more inclusive, especially highlighting/featuring the truly inclusive programs and activities that reflect our commitment to diversity and are happening within MCC worldwide.
- 6. Modify the content of the website so that MCC would be included among the results from a Google search of "open and affirming church," as it is currently included when one searches for "gay church."
- 7. Create online content on the main MCC website that focuses on the various "affinity areas" (e.g., HIV/AIDS page, young adult page, older adult page, PAD page, etc.).
- 8. Communicate through HLN with articles on young adults (as well as on other areas of diversity) around the globe, featuring individuals or groups, discussing young adult-related questions, showcasing how churches are implementing young adult programming, etc.

- 9. Discontinue use of the rainbow flag except when a particular event or information is intentionally targeted only to lesbian and gay people.
- 10. Modify all MCC forms to remove references to binary gender identity and/or roles.
- 11. Ensure that all MCC-sponsored events are held in venues that are accessible to people with disabilities and meet the basic legal requirements of the land.

Recommendations adopted by Office of Emerging Ministries

- 1. Develop resources and guidance that congregations can access to engage with local social justice issues.
- 2. Develop resources that congregations can access so they are better equipped to minister among those who are from under-represented groups in MCC.
- 3. Recruit, train, and deploy a Diversity Training Team (as a pilot project) to provide training on such topics as inclusive language, gender diversity, racial equality, ageism, sexism, transgender acceptance, accessibility, and heterosexual inclusion.
- 4. Training materials, resources, and guidance that are provided to Emerging Churches should directly address the expectation that new churches will have diversity and inclusion as a part of their DNA.
- 5. Build global community and connection between those who are part of under-represented groups in MCC, including through social media, newsletters, virtual gatherings, and affinity groups.
- 6. Develop brochure(s) about the Diversity & Inclusion Program, including outreach materials targeted to those who are members of under-represented groups in MCC for use by congregations.
- 7. Collect and post links to local church ministries that reflect the church's focus on diversity.
- 8. Develop Diversity & Inclusion Guidelines for Local Churches that include best practices and resource-sharing.
- 9. Assess the realities and perceived needs of MCC congregations in regard to diversity.
- 10. Observe and provide resources about holidays and special occasions that are significant to under-represented groups within MCC.
- 11. Continue the Advisory Council structure.

Submitted by:

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