

General Commission on Religion and Race The United Methodist Church

Presenting an Inclusiveness Monitoring Report to Your Annual Conference

When presenting a monitoring report—whether for a full day’s session or a part thereof—it is important to be calm, encouraging, affable and brief. It’s also good to be creative.

You can present the report individually or as a team. Try different presentation ideas to find ones that work for you: a dialogue format, a role-play skit, or a TV news report or game-show scenario. Try using PowerPoint visuals to illustrate your report if time permits. Interpret the importance of inclusiveness by using Scripture, a song or poem, wisdom sayings, or a reflection on your annual conference theme. But always remember to focus on the report and to be brief.

Below is a sample script for a monitoring report.

Hello. My name is _____, and I am one of five Inclusiveness Monitors for this year’s annual conference. I have been asked to present the monitoring report from today’s session to this body of conference members.

Speaking of the body, 1st Corinthians, 12th chapter, tells us that we are all members of one body—this body of Christ, this body of the _____ Annual Conference—and that every part of the body is equally important, interdependent and vital to its proper functioning. If any part is small or large, prominent or not as noticeable, great or few in number, it doesn’t matter because ... Well, actually, it does matter, because those parts, or members, of the body that are small, not as visible and few in number should receive extra attention and special honor—especially if they have been neglected because they are in the minority. Verse 25 tells us that God has arranged us in this way, “that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.”

We have a blessed and inspired gathering here, where various members of our body are present and participating in the ministry, fellowship and business of this annual conference. These monitoring reports help us stay on track and become more sensitive to our need for racial/ethnic and gender diversity so that we can try to become more inclusive in every aspect of our conference’s life and ministry together.

This day’s session included an inspiring worship service that reflected some measure of our conference’s diversity through the participation of two African-American, one Korean, two Hispanic/Latino and four white persons as worship leaders, liturgists, music director, soloists and preacher. Five of the nine persons were female; the others, male. Two were youth. We also had a racially integrated choir.

Twelve people—six male, six female—gave reports today, representing staff and elected leadership of the conference. Four were people of color—African American, Native American and Asian/Pacific American. There was much discussion about several reports and recommendations, giving conference members a chance to express their views and concerns. Most of the speakers were white men, but we also heard from at least five African American, three Hispanic/Latino, two Asian/Pacific Americans and one Native American. About one-third of the speakers were women, and one was a youth.

The presiding bishop appears to be calling upon a diversity of speakers to address issues from the floor, and several of them have raised concerns affecting racial/ethnic clergy and

congregations. Also, the bishop twice offered affirmative statements about the importance of inclusiveness just before the body voted for delegates to the 2008 General and Jurisdictional conferences. Of the eight clergy and lay delegates chosen, two are African American, one is Korean, three are white, one is Hispanic/Latino and one is Native American. Four are women, two clergy and two lay. Unfortunately, none are youth, but two are young adults

While we celebrate the participation of youth and young adults in our conference, overall, our membership body is aging, as all bodies do; but it is aging gracefully, with God's abundant grace. And we are paying more attention to more parts of the body, as they make their presence known. That, too, is a reality of aging. This is a blessing, because as we pay attention to parts of the body that we may have neglected before, we learn more about them—and about ourselves—and we give them the respect they are due. If we can do that, then we can become a healthier, more whole and more vital body of Christ, in whom we live and move and have our being. Amen.

Thank you for your time and attention.

—John Coleman, 5/18/07