

GCORR MONITORING REPORT

No. 2

We gather in this place after five years apart. Across these years we have carried the impacts of decisions made in 2019 that deeply harmed some, exhilarated others, and led to the exit of many from our denomination. We have lived with heartbreak, pain, fear, separation, uncertainty, questions of belonging, and longing to belong, to be seen, and to be heard. Now we gather again: daring to hope, daring to share our gifts, daring to trust each other, and work together as the children of God to open our hearts, minds, and souls to the movement of the Holy Spirit among us.

Yesterday afternoon we heard from General Secretaries Giovanni Arroyo (GCORR) and Dawn Wiggins Hare (GCSRW) that The Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force, which consists of members from across the General Agencies and annual conferences, created a Code of Conduct with the following guiding principles for use in holy conferencing:

Image



A United Methodist Code of Conduct (resourceumc.org)

As we participate in plenary sessions and prepare to move into legislative committee meetings, General Secretary Wiggins Hare alerted us to mindfulness of the tone, content, and intent of the language that we use. She invited all to be conscious of inferred power dynamics, such as consistency in

the use of titles so as not to elevate one group over another. And, she reminded all that violent language, threats, gestures, harassment, and sexualized language are never allowable and will not be tolerated.

General Secretary Arroyo reminded us that as a diverse body of individuals from around the world, we are called to honor each other's personal space (much as we did with "social distancing" during the COVID-19 pandemic) to respect each other's senses of safety and well-being. Issues of sexual and/or racial harassment occur when boundaries are crossed. Respecting the dignity of others means to respect the other's self-defined space. Mindfulness of both speech and body actions are important.

Efforts to organize a global gathering of this size will inevitably encounter consequential delays in transportation reservations, housing assignments, securing letters of invitation that allow visa applications to move forward, and translation of materials. Each of these things impact delegate and participant preparations in advance of their arrival in Charlotte.

Through an equity lens, delegates and participants from outside of the United States have experienced such barriers and disadvantages for many years. Yet, delegates from the United States have seldom been burdened with some of these challenges. We are all called to increase our awareness and examine who is invited to the table of planning, and how and where we prepare and meet for General Conferences of our United Methodist Church.

John Wesley said that Christian conferencing is a means of grace, for it puts us in the position to grow in spiritual maturity. For us to effectively participate in holy conferencing, we must practice our faith in ways that challenge us spiritually and relationally. To love God and our neighbor requires nothing less. May we remind ourselves that differences of perspectives and opinions require our respect even when we disagree. In the words of John Wesley, that is the time to "think and let think."

During our opening worship the choir sang with gentle passion and yearning:

"For all who share life, a place at the table, revising the roles, deciding the share,

with wisdom and grace, dividing the power, for all who share life, a system that's fair." *

Oh God, of justice and love, may it be so.

· * Shirley Erena Murray, 1988

A Place at the Table.