



### Monitoring for Inclusiveness – A Brief Overview

*The “reward” for working in inclusive committees, classrooms and work groups is nothing less than experiencing the Kin-dom of God. We reap the blessings of better decisions, calmer and wiser deliberations, and a binding respect for the power of our diverse cultures, languages, perspectives and experiences.*

#### The foundational givens/beliefs:

- All persons are understood to be equal creations of God, made in God’s image and worthy of God’s blessing.
- Experiences of all persons are included in all facets of the life of the church.
- When expert advice is needed, experts are sought from diverse backgrounds based on their education, talents, and experience rather than on stereotypical images.
- All members have opportunities to serve in various aspects.
- Usage of inclusive language for people and God.
- Leadership comes in all forms and skills – we should not limit people’s role by stereotypes.

#### Who/what is monitored?

- Individual behaviors
- Corporate behaviors

#### Individual behaviors

- Iceberg
- Monitoring brings the subconscious to the consciousness
- Intentionality on behavior

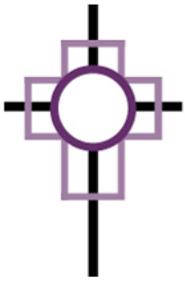
In this section, a summary of questions to consider for monitors will be offered. Talking points about what to look for and guiding principles

#### A few guidelines...

- Behaviors are based in attitudes, opinions, beliefs and values that are learned.
- Changing deep-seated beliefs and values is difficult.
- Giving immediate feedback on actual behavior in a situation is an effective strategy for changing exclusive behaviors (*action research*)
- Immediate suggestions of inclusive alternatives are a strong healing strategy.
- More effective and respectful functioning of groups is a good motivator.

#### What is action research?

*Action research* is defined as a process in which participants examine their own practices based on the following assumptions:



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- Leaders work best on problems they have identified for themselves.
- Leaders become more effective when they are encouraged to examine and assess their own work and consider ways of working differently.
- Leaders work collaboratively.
- Action research is essential for leadership development.<sup>1</sup>

A few major areas of disparity and exclusion...

### *Opportunities to serve in positions of leadership, authority, and visibility*

*Who is elected as leaders of the committee? Does the chair “share” presiding time with other officers (especially if they are women or racial/ethnic persons? Does the chair of the committee provide opportunities at the podium in plenary to some subcommittee chairs and not others?*

### *Opportunities to participate and give feedback on the participation*

*Who is recognized to speak, present or participate in group process? Who is not?* We look closely at the behavior of those in authority in the group, usually the officers (especially the person “chairing” or presiding), other officers, subcommittee chairs and officers, parliamentarians and sometimes even pages.

#### *What do we look for?*

Who is recognized to speak?

Who takes the opportunity to speak by talking without being recognized?

Are people in some part of the room not noticed or recognized to speak?

Is the speed of the process too fast to allow for sufficient interpretation so all delegates can follow with enough time to comment to the group?

Are some given feedback on their comments by the presiding officer and others are not? Are some “scolded” or “discounted” and others are not for similar comments?

Are “time limits” imposed to curtail some delegates’ participation and not others?

Are some delegates allowed to “go on and on” and others not?

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<sup>1</sup> H. Watts. ‘When teachers are researchers, teaching improves.’ *Journal of Staff Development*, 6 (2), 118-127.



When a question is posed to the chair for advice on how to proceed, are some Delegates taken seriously and others' requests are not?

*Exclusive Language*

Do those in authority in the group use “inclusive language” for persons in group, for humankind? Is “people first” language used for those with disabilities? Are females addressed with informality or familiarity and males with “titles”?

*Invisibility or Selectivity*

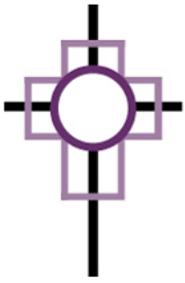
Are delegates who use language interpretation (or English as a second language) somehow “discounted” as not integral to the process? Do chairpersons or delegates complain about the need to allow sufficient time for translation and participation of delegates? Are some delegates frequently “ignored” when trying to be recognized?

*Stereotyping*

Are persons recommended for roles based on their gender, race, culture, national origin or language? Are persons clearly or subtly excluded because of perceived abilities, language facility, gender, race or culture?

*Is there disparity based on race, gender or other characteristics?*

Often we can let the notes from our coding speak for themselves... Often we don't have to make judgments because a presiding officer will see what we have seen for themselves. We literally count the incidences of disparate behaviors and who is impacted by them. This is what equity educators call “action research,” and we can feed it back to the presiding officer after the end of the session, in a special conversation later, or in a daily column in a newsletter. We examine the data we collect for general patterns of disparity, remembering these patterns can be the result of learned yet unconscious bias.



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Some Guiding Principles...

What exactly do we watch/listen for when monitoring for the quality of inclusiveness in group interaction/decision making?

Start with a few principles and guides...  
living hospitality and affirmation.

1. Comparable treatment of persons of both genders, all racial/ethnic groups, and all diverse abilities and status.
2. Comparable standards of evaluation used in analysis or judgment...absence of double/varying standards depending on those involved.
3. Parallel construction (“men and women” vs “men and ladies”) and comparable word order.
4. Information about gender, ethnicity, national origin, and ability are used only when necessary (“An unemployed Latino construction worker called about his power being shut off.”).
5. Absence of direct or implied “discounts” or devaluation through use of pejorative nicknames, slang or other comments.
6. Use of language or behaviors that are recommended by individuals most affected (for example, “people first” language promoted by advocates for persons with disabilities).
7. Respectful behaviors demonstrated toward all persons; willingness to alter routines in order to accommodate persons with special needs (translation, accessibility, technologies to enhance communications, etc.)
8. Focus on the individual or the situation at hand without basing judgment on generalizations.
9. Decision making that includes the facts and the feelings of those involved after consulting with those directly impacted. Relying on consultation and inquiry rather than perceptions, appearances or assumptions (respect for person’s or group’s self-identification is key).



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*Diversity is not to be “tolerated” but sought, affirmed, and developed as a benefit to the whole group. It is not about “political correctness” but about justice and the Reign of God.*

*Parity* – participation comparable to representation in the group as a whole. For example, the rate of participation of female delegates is comparable (within 5-6%) to their presence in the group as a whole.

*Parallelism* – treatment of diverse persons or groups in comparable and equivalent ways. For example, members of General Conference from the U.S. are called “delegates” and members from Central Conferences are called “guests from other countries.” Women are called “ladies” or “girls” and men are called “men” or by their titles.

*Balance* – in attention, weighing importance, time, and support.

*Recognizing evidence/indicators of bias.* Reflect the evidence or indicators back to those directly involved, and let the power of raising this to conscious awareness begin the practice of inclusive alternatives.

*Parity, parallelism and the absence of bias are not enough.* They are the beginning of realizing a just and inclusive community that affirms the breadth, depth and richness of our powerful diverse Kin-dom of God.