

Facilitation Team Framework

Inviting Conversation About Faith & Human Sexuality

Background

In April 2013, delegates of Atlantic Coast Conference extended associate membership to Frazer Mennonite Church. In the process preceding this decision, delegates reflected on the wide diversity of perspectives within ACC. We all bring slightly different understandings of how our identity, our theology, and our polity should shape our response to questions of human sexuality. As delegates extended associate membership to Frazer, they requested that our conference invest energy in continued discernment and dialogue about these questions. This facilitation team will provide structure for these conversations.

Desired Outcome

That delegates can arrive at Fall Assembly 2014 with confidence that their perspective on faith and human sexuality has been heard by others, with the ability to verbalize the viewpoints of others, and with faith that God is speaking to and through the delegates of Atlantic Coast Conference

Process

The team will develop and execute opportunities for discernment and dialogue throughout ACC. Using a variety of methods (such as small group gatherings, regional gatherings, forums, printed materials, resource lists, etc.), these conversations will invite reflection and an honest exchange of perspectives in three core areas:

Scripture — How do we read, understand, and apply scripture to questions of human sexuality? How do we live together under Biblical authority?

Stories — What personal or congregational stories have shaped our understanding of faith and human sexuality?

Structure — How do we relate together as an affiliation of churches? What's the significance of interpreting scripture together as a community?

Scope

This facilitation team will not be responsible for creating statements, position papers, or resolutions. We're not being asked to articulate "What ACC Says About Homosexuality." Instead, we're asked to help delegates better understand their own perspective and the perspective of sisters and brothers throughout conference. We will invite delegates and leaders to practice communal discernment, listening for God's voice together.

Covenant of Understanding

Team members will commit to:

- Praying for the conference and for this process
- Being available for monthly face-to-face meetings for the next 12 to 18 months
- Participating in other forms of conversation (email, teleconferences, etc.) as needed
- Speaking honestly
- Listening openly
- Respecting the perspectives of others