

## **Ohio (and beyond!) Visioning Team Listening Session**

### **Saturday, March 10, 2018**

- Goal is for one judicatory: any preconceived concept of what that looks like?
  - We hope to look like...?
- Lots of work at the Association level. Many functions for a limited area, how does one keep up with larger area? NWOA 76 congregations.
  - Regional division exists somewhere
  - Standing is at association level, where does standing go?
  - What does the geography of this look like? Meeting space, divisional lines, etc.
  - Does this necessitate the use of technology in order to gather?
- Is there another model by which we would shape ourselves?
  - There is potential that a model already exists, perhaps even outside of the UCC???
- If there is one entity, who would have time to do all of the work?
  - Larger bodies perhaps gravitate better than smaller outliers. How do they all remain connected to one another and how is the work divided.
- UCC all my life, not sure how any of the other associations are organized. How do we decide this without seeing what other models are out there?
  - Each setting designs a model that works for them in that setting, so possibilities are challenging to envision.
- How can the community of the UCC in this area better do its ministry? What are the things we need to think about doing those ministries faithfully and responsibly?
  - Can we combine our efforts in some areas? Are there ways in which we can respond with greater affect?
  - What structure helps us best do our job?
- Perhaps having higher levels of standardization with certain processes. Example: Discernment.
  - How is everyone else doing this?
- To change our mindset for a broader community is challenging as we tend to think of ourselves as being the community of focus. A change of mindset will be necessary for such change. What is our community?
- Within our structure Associations and Conferences exist. Some Associations are Conferences (smaller).
  - In Ohio our geography is challenging.
    - ⅔ Associations in Ohio are larger than 10 other conferences in the UCC.
- Even some of the smaller associations in other states are merging in an effort to better work together.
- Right now there are 5 different ways to do everything in the Ohio Conference. Are there ways in which we can do some of these tasks together? (budget, oversight, etc.)

- Leadership styles can differ, however in NWOA we've been blessed to have a minister who has been hands on and in our local churches. This benefits our Association by providing a personal connection to the broader church. Visibility.
- Whatever does come from this, needs to be flexible (nimble) and adaptable in such a way as to meet the needs of the Church as it changes.
  - Recognition of flexibility is good because as things evolve and change, adaptations and course corrections can be made efficiently.
- Can't sacrifice local church involvement with middle judicatory. That body needs to serve the local church first. As well as connect rest of judicatory.