**TABLE RESPONSES TO SURVEY**

**Western District Conference Reference Council**

**November 15, 2014**

1. **What strikes you most from the survey and what you heard this morning?**
2. **What surprises are there from the survey results?**
3. **What questions do you have about the survey results?**
4. **How do you see the survey results guiding WDC for the future?**

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**Top Five Strengths of Congregationalism:**

1. The more local the decision-making body, the more likely the decision “fits” the congregation.
2. Diversity among congregations is to be preferred rather than any kind of imposed uniformity.
3. The congregation has more flexibility in responding to God’s activity in their setting. This is a more missional posture as it facilitates congruence between the congregation and its community.
4. Congregationalism invites, perhaps requires, the local congregation as the Body of Christ, to engage in discussion, study of scripture and other materials, to discern the path of faithfulness to Christ.
5. The accountability congregationalism provides to one another in the congregation has a “flesh and blood” reality in personal relationships.

**Top Five Hazards of Congregationalism:**

1. A congregation by itself often lacks the resources it needs to fully carry out its mission, including (but not limited to) such tasks as engaging in theological reflection, calling new pastoral leadership or dealing with conflict within the congregation.
2. Congregationalism may allow the abuse of power from local leaders.
3. Congregations lack the wisdom of the whole church, beyond themselves.
4. Congregationalism can lack intellectual and spiritual “checks and balances” producing an insular or myopic view of issues, practices, and understanding of the Gospel.
5. Congregationalism can produce so much variety that commonly-held goals are difficult to agree upon, or carry out among churches, resulting in a lack of “brand” clarity to those outside the conference and denomination.

Developed by the Discernment Task Force and the Western District Conference Executive Committee on October 11, 2014, out of dozens of possibilities generated by the Survey and Task Force members.

**Straw Poll: Congregationalism Statements**

**Western District Conference Reference Council**

**November 15, 2014**

For the three statements below, indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each one using the following choices on a scale of 1 - 10 **(circle only one number between 1 - 10):**

* + 1. I fully support this statement.
    2. I can live with this statement. It’s OK with me.
    3. I am lukewarm about this statement, but I can go along with it.
    4. I think there are major problems with the statement, but I won’t oppose it.
    5. It may be best not to take the direction of the statement, but I will reluctantly do so if others want to.
    6. It may be best to take the direction of the statement, but I will reluctantly refuse to do so even if others want to.
    7. I think there are some good things about the statement, but I won’t support it.
    8. I am lukewarm about opposing this statement, but I still cannot go along with it.
    9. I cannot live with this statement. It’s not OK with me.
    10. I fully oppose this statement.

**Statement #1: Each WDC congregation has the unrestricted privilege of local discernment regardless of previous understandings or decisions by the congregation or conference.**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**Statement #2:** **The WDC delegate body may ask a congregation to practice consultation (to be defined by the leadership of WDC) when a congregation is making a decision that affects others.**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**Statement #3:** **The WDC delegate body may name certain issues about which they do not recognize the privilege of congregations to make decisions on their own.**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**