

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM MONITORING AT THE 2016 SEJ CONFERENCE

We are grateful to all of you who embraced and participated in our first attempt at electronic monitoring during our 2016 SEJ Conference. The monitoring questions as well as the bar graphs and percentage charts are being posted for you to review at your leisure. In addition, below are some possible conclusions that can be drawn from the data, along with some suggestions for increasing your individual cultural proficiency. If you have questions or want more information, you may contact Jennifer Davis, Assistant Secretary for Monitoring for the 2016 SEJ Conference, at jennifer@jpdavisonline.com.

RESULTS

Participants seem to:

- Embrace this form of monitoring;
- Feel comfortable approaching others who look different/have different opinions than they do;
- Be intentional in seeking opportunities to engage with those who are different;
- Have taken the opportunity to engage with others and will continue to do so; and
- Have noticed the intentionality of the SEJ Conference to embrace our diversity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASING OUR INDIVIDUAL CULTURAL PROFICIENCY AND EMBRACING OUR DIVERSITY:

- Use the monitoring questions that have been provided in your cultural settings: church, work, or organizations with which you are involved; or create a series of your own questions relevant to your setting.
- Invite others to participate in this journey to improve personal and group relationships.
- Advocate for small group discussions. Tell your story and invite and encourage others to tell theirs. Be willing to be vulnerable.
- Make it a point to help others be comfortable with your differences. Ask and answer questions.
- Invite people you trust to hold you accountable for your comments and/or actions. Do the same for others.
- Challenge your assumptions about others; pay attention to your thoughts and feelings about them; ask yourself “what was I thinking and why?” and then evaluate your motives.
- Ask yourself, “Do I have any implicit biases that affect how I treat others?” (We all have some implicit biases. We must be intentional about raising our awareness of what they are and determining what, if anything, we should do about them.)
- Invest in your own personal development by reading a book or attending an event that helps you learn more about others, their background, history, and beliefs.
- Always seek to be kind to others. Be patient with yourself.
- Pray without ceasing. Spend time with God. Always choose Hope. It will not disappoint.