

TASK FORCE ON WOMEN, TRUTH & RECONCILIATION
MINUTES
November 12-14, 2018
Maritime Institute of Technology, Linthicum Heights, Maryland

Attendance: Ms. Alexizendra Link (Chair), The Rt. Rev. Susan Goff (Vice-Chair), Mr. Neel Lane (Secretary); The Rev. Laurie Brock, The Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe, Ms. Julia Harris, The Very Rev. Craig Loya, The Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Mr. Alan Murray, The Rev. Kurt Weisner, The Rev. Dcn. Carolyn Woodall; Mr. Christopher Hayes (Representative of the House of Deputies); The Rev. Geoffrey Smith and Ms. Robin Hammeal-Urban

Absent: Dr. Damaris De Jesus, Ms. Robin Hammeal-Urban

Monday Sessions

The Task Force convened on November 12, 2018 at 10:30 am.

Chairperson Link opened the meeting. The meeting began with a 30-minute orientation session.

The participants began by introducing themselves, describing their relevant experience and background, and speaking about the work of the task force. The personal introductions generated a broad discussion of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

The Task Force reconvened at 1:30 pm. The meeting began with a 30-minute orientation session.

Rev. Laurie Brock led a discussion of the background to formulation of the Task Force, including the drafting of Resolution D016 of the 79th General Convention. A driving force behind the resolution was to seek and share the truth and propose a just outcome. A key consideration was to ask “what does justice look like” to the women who have experienced inequality, harassment, and other forms of oppression based on gender. One possible area for consideration by the Task Force is pay equity, for which the Church Pension Fund would likely have data. Rev Brock recognized and brought to the attention of the Task Force the work of Rt. Rev. Jennifer Anne Reddall, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona.

The Task Force reviewed and discussed Resolution D016 in detail.

The Task Force discussed the Report on Sexual Misconduct in the United Methodist Church, and the survey that was the basis for its reported findings. The Task Force discussed how we might conduct a similar survey. Mr. Lane expressed concern that the Task Force should reach and capture the experience of those who may have left the Episcopal Church as a result of their experience of sexual misconduct. Ms. Harris discussed the need to establish a structure for intake of relevant experiences. Mr. Murray discussed the question of how the survey and audit would relate to each other, and which would occur first.

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Rev. Dcn. Woodall volunteered to serve as the Task Force's liaison for technical support. Very Rev. Loya agreed to serve as the back-up technical support liaison if Rev. Dcn. Woodall is unavailable.

Chair Link suggested that, for purposes of developing a survey, the Task Force contact Prof. Gail Murphy-Geiss, Ph.D., of Colorado College, who developed the United Methodist Church survey. It was the sense of the Task Force that we should contact and obtain a proposal for work from Prof. Murphy-Geiss.

Rev. Dcn. Woodall discussed her experience conducting a survey of experience for the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin that was conducted after Bishop John-David Schofield left that diocese in 2007 to join the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone. Rev. Dcn. Woodall described painful experiences as a member of the pre-schism diocese, due to prevailing attitudes, and the manner in which she and others sought reconciliation afterward. A paper survey was distributed, responses were anonymous, and the response rate was good. The survey surveyed responses based on several major classes, including gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and disability. A report was produced that included statistics, including graphic depictions, and stories of the respondents.

Chair Link expressed concern that the United Methodist survey was too narrow in scope, failing to address experience based on gender identity, sexual orientation, or other categories. Rt. Rev. Douglas observed that the United Methodist survey addressed sexual misconduct irrespective of gender.

Rt. Rev. Douglas observed that D016 essentially includes three mandates: (1) conduct a survey; (2) create a truth and reconciliation process; and (3) conduct a comprehensive audit of the culture within church-wide structures. Rt. Rev. Goff observed that the survey was a big part of our task, since it would permit truth-telling, and we need to consider how we move to the place of reconciliation. Rt. Rev. Douglas observed that it is not enough just to conduct "another survey." Rt. Rev. Dr. Duncan-Probe observed that "people want to be heard." Rev. Brock observed that there is currently no structure to hear stories of victims of sexual misconduct without triggering an Article IV duty to report.

Upon reflection, it was the sense of the Task Force members that part of the mandate of Resolution D016 may be beyond the capacity and budget of the Task Force to accomplish in time to report on all elements to the 80th General Convention; specifically, the mandate to "oversee an audit done by an outside auditor of the culture within church-wide structures" for the purposes described in the sixth bullet point under the third *Resolved* paragraph of Resolution D016.

Resolved: That the Task Force will set aside for the current triennium the mandate to "oversee an audit done by an outside auditor of the culture within church-wide structures" for the purposes described in the sixth bullet point under the third *Resolved* paragraph of Resolution D016 of the 79th General Convention.

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**Action: Moved by Ms. Harris and Seconded by Rev. Brock.
Approved unanimously.**

Rev. Kurt Weisner suggested that the Task Force review a list of all interim bodies for this triennium to determine the extent to which there may be overlapping mandates, in order to avoid duplication and waste of resources. Ms. Harris detailed numerous interim bodies whose mandates implicate issues within the scope of the Task Force.

The Task Force considered possible dates for a follow-up in-person meeting. The Task Force was provided the following dates in 2019 during which interim bodies will be convening: January 25-29, March 19-23, and October 23-27.

It was the consensus of the Task Force that the survey should be distributed on or about Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019. Upon consideration, none of the proffered dates would work for a second in-person meeting. The January dates were deemed to be too soon, the March dates would take place before survey results are received, and the October dates conflict with several annual diocesan conventions that Task Force members need to attend. There was discussion of conducting the second in-person meeting in January 2020. The scheduling issue was tabled for later consideration.

The Task Force engaged in reflections and discussion of the task ahead. Rt. Rev. Douglas observed that there are four levels of reconciliation: (1) personal, (2) relational, (3) cultural, and (4) institutional. Rev. Brock observed that it is not enough for the Church to “be a safe place, it must be one of the safest places.” Rev. Dr. Duncan-Probe observed that she would like to see the Task Force both honor the sacredness of hearing each other and create better tools for reconciliation.

Rt. Rev. Douglas closed the session with a prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Tuesday Sessions

The Task Force reconvened 10:30 am on November 13, 2018. The meeting began with a 30-minute orientation session.

The Task Force began the session by reflecting on Monday’s work and the task ahead.

For purposes of the comprehensive audit and analysis of internal church-wide structures, members discussed how we might find participants in each church entity. Rt. Rev. Douglas suggested that he might serve on the audit subcommittee to help with this effort.

Mr. Lane discussed the goal of providing training for facilitators of parish-level discussions of the results of the survey. Rev. Brock suggested that we look to how the United Methodist Church approached disseminating and discussing their survey results. Chairperson Link expressed concern that we avoid an approach that will engender a “check the box” attitude about the process.

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Rev. Dr. MacVean-Brown discussed how Womanist (as distinct from Feminist) Theory might inform our approach. She expressed her concern that our work will not be complete unless women can come together to talk, heal, and become restored. Rev. Dr. Duncan-Probe cautioned about being too “binary” in our thinking, such that we might exclude members of the trans community.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

The Task Force reconvened at 1:00 pm. (Mr. Lane was not present, and Chairperson Link assumed the duties of Secretary for the remaining sessions.)

The Reverend Canon Michael Barlowe, Madam President of the House of Deputies Gay Jennings, and The Presiding Bishop Michael E. Curry were all visitors at different times to the meeting and served as both a resource and sounding board for the interim body. Each of the distinguished members of leadership attended independently from one another which varied between 30 minutes to 1 ½ hours. As a result, the task force members were able to gain valuable support and wisdom regarding Canons, Title V, and the state of the church. Dialogue with leadership also included review of the previous days’ session and ideas for moving forward.

There was a 30-minute orientation session on church procedures and expenses for meetings from church staff member, Patrick Haziel

Prior to forming the 3 subcommittees of 1. Systematic review/audit, 2. Survey and 3. Truth Reconciliation/Process the interim body dialogue included anticipating challenges, creating a mechanism for regular status updates, reviewing process and procedures, identifying stakeholders and allies to engage for future and communication,

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

The meeting reconvened at 7:30 pm for subcommittee work and adjourned at different times depending when the subcommittees ended their work.

Wednesday Session

The Task Force reconvened at 8:30 am on November 14, 2018.

Since this was a travel day subcommittees meet independently again either online or in person.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Neel Lane", is written in a cursive style.

Neel Lane
Secretary

/S/

Alexizendra Link
Chair and Acting Secretary