

Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work
September 26, 2019
Zoom meeting

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: Eugene Sutton; David Simmons; Jaime Briceño; Sharon Alexander; Walter Baer; Kate Bellam; Luz Montes; Bill Franklin, chair; Denise Yarbrough, Vice Chair; Lucinda Mosher, Technology Officer; Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Secretary; Margaret Rose

MEMBERS AND STAFF ABSENT: Scott Hayashi; Richard Mammana; Chuck Robertson

OPENING: The meeting was opened in a prayer at 10:02 with the following:

Almighty God, you gave your servant Lancelot Andrewes the gift of your Holy Spirit and made him a man of prayer and a faithful pastor of your people: Perfect in us what is lacking in your gifts, of faith, to increase it, of hope, to establish it, of love, to kindle it, that we may live in the life of your grace and glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

CHECK IN: Each person present did a quick check in, including the location from which they were calling.

MINUTES: The May 14, 2019, minutes were approved as submitted by a unanimous vote.

REPORTS:

House of Bishops/Eugene Sutton and Bill Franklin

Big issue under discussion was the upcoming Lambeth gathering. Discussion around who would go, which spouses would attend, and what people who are attending would do.

- Most TEC bishops will attend with the goals of providing witness and maintaining the Anglican Communion.
- This is seen as a living out of the appeal of 1920, which outlined a vision of the church that extended beyond the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.
- It was noted that many GAFCON bishops will not be attending and will instead meet in Rome on their own.

Discussion also occurred on the recognition of Israel as a holy place of peace.

Great work happening in Cuba.

Concern about the Anglican Centre of Rome was expressed. The facilities are outdated and run down, finances are an issue, there seems to be a disconnect with TEC, and the new leadership may or may not bring us together. However, many board members come from TEC so there is still a working connection.

Staff/Margaret Rose

Two reports articulating staff and TEC projects over the summer were uploaded to the extranet page.

Two main highlights were the Moravian/Episcopal meeting in Bethlehem, PA, which included the possibility of future discussion between ELCA, Moravians, and TEC, and work with the World Council of Churches discussions on AIDS and the UN meetings on creation care. An additional document on this work is available on the extranet.

Other highlights were:

- The ecumenical officers conference in Montgomery Alabama, which included over a dozen officers from different denominations
- Abrahamic Faiths Meeting
- World Council of Churches work in the areas of interfaith relationships and racism

- PCUSA dialogue progress toward the stated goal of full communion. It was noted that there is a joint Presbyterian/Episcopal seminary in Cuba!

Upcoming projects include UMC meetings and the National Council of Churches (Christian Unity Gathering).

SUBCOMMITTEES: The four subcommittees/working groups each offered a status update.

1. General Convention, structure, and governance (David Simmons, chair):

There are two primary areas being addressed by this committee.

- a. Adoption of the UMC/TEC proposal, as well as considering the upcoming UMC General Assembly
- b. Incorporation of the ELCA, ACC, ELCIC, TEC agreement

In addition, it was noted that there is no existing “boiler plate” language or norm for these things. And we need to revise Canon I.20 each time we enter into or revise an ecumenical agreement that creates a full communion relationship (p92 in most recent printed Blue Book).

*All are asked to read thoroughly through the work produced by this subgroup so as to head off potential issues.

2. Anglican Communion, the Convocation of Churches in Europe, & related (Eugene Sutton, chair)

The group last met in May and have been working on individual pieces over the summer. One large piece is the agreement with the Church of Sweden. General Convention has required the establishment of a formal Memorandum of Understanding related to the 2015 agreement. Two primary topics to address are the exchange of clergy and the common mission areas (such as climate change).

3. Theology (Denise Yarbrough, chair):

Two short summaries are available on the extranet for review.

- a. The 2009 Interreligious statement was discussed. Potential need to include language around multiple belonging.
(should there be an informal poll on this topic through EDEIO?)
- b. 1988 statement on Christian-Jewish Relations with significant review by Dan Joslyn-Siemiatkoski.

Additional discussion was around the potential need to redo our ecumenical conversations statements, looking at internal vs external use and messaging, as well as how the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral should be used.

4. United Methodist Church and other bi-lateral discussions (Scott Hayashi):

This group has not convened. However, it was reported that Adam Hamilton (UMC) was the keynote speaker at the recent House of Bishops gathering.

DISCUSSION/NEXT STEPS

The question arose of the efficacy and relevance of the quadrilateral in this work (BCP p876-878). The environment now is so different than it was in 1886.

If our task is to reveal the unity of the church, we need to define and acknowledge what unity means, including the possibility that it may be different in different contexts.

We must keep an eye on the balance between exchanging of gifts vs measuring up.

Need to remember that the Quadrilateral relates to the other 37 churches in the Anglican Communion, so we must think locally AND globally.

Also noted that it is a historical document that should not be altered. However, something new/different may be in order.

There are lots of question around denominational identity, ethics, and history that need to be explored.

How does the Presiding Bishop's call to 'Beloved Community' shape this discussion? Do we move from a common Eucharistic table to a reconciling situation?

Looking forward, we need to consider both an internal look and an external look. What are our ecumenical partners already doing and saying? For next time, do some research and thinking on this, sharing documents and notes on the extranet.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

Goal to meet the first half of December.

Any chance of a face-to-face meeting in 2020/before ramping up for the 2021 General Convention?

CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord, in a time of turmoil and confusion you raised up your servant William White, and endowed him with wisdom, patience, and a reconciling temper, that he might lead your Church into ways of stability and peace: Hear our prayer, and give us wise and faithful leaders, that through their ministry your people may be blessed and your will be done; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Committee assignments/Requests:

General Convention

David Simmons, Chair

Sharon Alexander

Marisa Tabizon Thompson

Theology

Denise Yarbrough, Chair

Lucinda Mosher

Marisa Tabizon Thompson

UMC/Bilateral Work

Sharon Alexander

David Simmons

Denise Yarbrough

Scott Hayashi, Chair

Kate Bellam

Walter Baer

Anglican Communion and Europe

Lucinda Mosher

Walter Baer

Eugene Sutton, Chair

Jaime Briceño

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND REFERENCES:

Hungarian Reformed Church in America:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_Reformed_Church_in_America

<http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/nanassy1922.pdf>

Anglican/Presbyterian Dialogue: http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/misc/presbyterian_episcopal1896.pdf

Toward Our Mutual Flourishing by Lucinda Mosher:

<https://www.peterlang.com/abstract/title/22143?rskey=CGbcNL&result=2>

EMM – Episcopal Migration Ministries

EDEIO – Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Religious Officers

Methodist-Episcopal dialogue and resources: <http://umc-tec.org>

Anglican-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation in the USA (ARCUSA): <http://archusa.church>

Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee: <http://lutheran-episcopal.org>

Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee: <http://moravian-episcopal.org>

CUIC: Churches Uniting in Christ