

Task Force on Communion Across Difference

June 16, 2020 | Zoom Meeting

Present: Megan Allen, John Bauerschmidt, Gregory Brewer, Fred Ellis, Thomas Ely, Scott Garno, Mary Gray-Reeves Jordan Hylden, Susan Russell, Tanya Wallace, Christopher Wells

Absent: Moises Quezada Mota

The meeting was convened by co-chair Susan Russell after an opening prayer by Jordan Hylden. Luigina Johnson graciously offered to take notes in Spanish for Moise Quezada Mota who was unable to join the meeting at the last minute.

The co-chairs reported that in response to the request from the GCO to designate coordinators for the Blue Book Report and any Resolutions from the TF on CAD John Bauerschmidt will coordinate the report and Susan Russell will coordinate any resolutions. They also reviewed the update from the Presiding Officers that arrangements for General Convention remain in flux due to the COVID19 pandemic and the reality that since an in-person meeting for our Task Force is unlikely to happen we should plan to accomplish our work virtually.

Agenda:

- Review report from working group convened by Mary Gray-Reeves consisting of Megan, Fred, Jordan, and Greg to draft a “20,000-mile view” structural look at how our Blue Book Report might be framed.
- Appoint writing group to create draft report
- Agree on timeline for next steps.

Review Report:

Mary Gray-Reeves presented the report from the working group, which had been posted to the extranet prior to the meeting. [see Appendix A, attached] The report was reviewed and discussed by TF members. There was broad agreement on the three categories, the focus on reconciliation and the goal of authoring a concise report that included resources and best practices for those striving to be in communion across differences that challenge us in our church, our nation and our world.

Appoint writing group

Megan Allen, Tom Ely, Jordan Hylden and Christopher Wells agreed to form the writing group.

Timeline for Next Steps

The writing group will create their timeline and report back to the co-chairs. Per the minutes of our May meeting, the expectation is to have draft material to review by the end of August. We are operating on the assumption that the original Advent One deadline for Blue Book Reports will remain regardless of any decisions around the convening of the 80th General Convention.

After an invitation to offer requests for intercessions, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Mary Gray-Reeves.

Respectfully submitted,
(The Reverend Canon) Susan Russell
Co-chair, Task Force for Communion Across Difference

Appendix A: CAD BB Working Framework

Three sections: Theology, Postures and Practices, and Strategies

1. Theology: Understanding communion across difference as a commitment to reconciliation
 - Theologically define reconciliation, name principles of reconciliation, and name the overall objective of this work.
 - Predetermined commitment to work together required – disavowing winner takes all mentality. There will be personal and communal costs involved for all.
 - Seeking communion across difference implies accepting that there is room for difference in TEC, such that while we may well seek to persuade one another we will not impose our perspectives on one another

2. Postures and practices of communion across difference: What are the implications of holding to a commitment to relationships across difference that seek a grounded center? Four subsections: Virtues to recommend, vices to avoid, practices to suggest, practices to warn against
 - Virtues:
 1. Moving beyond tolerance to Christian forbearance, out of Christ-like love for one another even when we see each other as seriously wrong or misguided
 2. Others?
 - Vices:
 1. Authoritarianism: Letting the legitimate desire to persuade tip over into the desire to coerce
 2. Others?
 - Practices to suggest:
 1. Relationship building as the first step towards reconciliation
 - laying groundwork for the ability to talk *with* and not *at* those who hold different views than our own.
 - Naming points of difference *and* points of connection that keep us committed to working towards reconciliation
 2. Others?
 - Practices to avoid:
 1. Working in separate rooms on political strategies that aim to disenfranchise or exclude the other, rather than talking together about strategies that might make room for both
 2. Others?

3. Strategies for communion across difference: Local and churchwide
 - A) Local:
 - Focus on relationship building
 - Different localities participate in practices that are contextual
 - Narratives, stories, practices – (FB page)
 - How do participants experience this relationship building process?
 - B) Churchwide
 - Liturgy and teaching

- Polity
- Standing dialogue on communion across difference (e.g., an ongoing commitment to ecumenical dialogue with ourselves!)
- Others? Mention Anglican Communion-wide strategies, such as forging partnerships akin to Bp Mary's diocesan partnerships with Tanzanian and English dioceses?