

Task Force to Coordinate Ecumenical and Interreligious Work

September 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Members and Staff Present: David Simmons, Bill Franklin, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Denise Yarbrough, Lucinda Mosher, Walter Baer, Eugene Sutton, Scott Hayashi, Jaime Briceño, Valerie Balling, Margaret Rose, Chuck Robertson, Richard Mammana, Hank Jeannel, Salmoon Bashir

Absent: Kate Bellam, Sharon Alexander

1. Call To Order: Bill Franklin

The meeting opened at 11:00 AM Eastern Time with a prayer and overview of today's agenda.

2. Check-ins

Everyone shared an example of an ecumenical or interfaith experience in/as a result of COVID times.

3. Approval of the Minutes

The April 28, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved with one change related to terminology.

4. Statements for Review

The bulk of our time together was designated for the review of the three statements drafted and presented by Lucinda Mosher and Denise Yarbrough in April and refined following that meeting of the Task Force. There were a few areas of discussion, articulated below. Overall, huge thanks were offered to Denise and Lucinda for all of their work in creating these great documents.

Statement on Interreligious Relations

The area of greatest discussion was around the statement on White supremacy and Christian nationalism found on page 16.

- Marisa cited concern for the section, questioning both the efficacy of the language and the appropriateness for its inclusion in this document, eventually requesting a re-write or removal.
- Lucinda suggested adding a line to make it smoother and more connected.
- Eugene proposed that we remove it entirely.
- Margaret agreed with Denise that it is needed.
- Marisa said the appropriate reference to the issues of colonialism is already in the document (IIA, page 9) and agreed with Eugene that it could just be removed entirely.
- Margaret offered to pull together a small group to rework it and then have it sent out for approval by email. Volunteers for that group are Lucinda, Marisa, Denise, and Margaret.

Christian-Jewish Relations

The most significant issue discussed here was the reference to Israel and Palestine. Is it needed in this document? What is trying to be said in 11 B, Page 3? Should this be removed because it is ultimately a political issue and not dwelling our religion? As a BIG ISSUE in the work of interfaith groups beyond TEC and in other pockets of life, this needs to be addressed – the question is how.

Christian-Muslim Relations

Absent a few technical and terminology related questions and refining, this document was roundly applauded.

What's Next?

This Task Forces approves these documents and requests that the subcommittee listed above will work on refining the three documents, after which they will be submitted to the General Convention office. Marisa is contacting Molly James to find out if/how/when these could come into the General Convention reports and agendas.

In general, great job and many thanks to Lucinda and Denise!

5. Updates

Margaret:

1. Focusing on 1 devotions, including projects like the 16 days of violence against women, with representatives from the ELCA, ACC, ELCIC, and TEC (Churches Beyond Borders)
2. Violence against women is cited as a focus area of the UN and ERD.
3. There is a lot of work being done on the doctrine of discovery and discussions around slavery. An education statement will be released from Churches Beyond Borders related to the residential schools and more.
4. We are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the concordat with the Church of the Philippines.
5. Summer newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/episcopalchurch/eir-newsletter-august-2021?e=9947ea23d1>
6. Ecumenical Salon for bishops https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/ecumenical-interreligious/one-pagers/?mc_cid=7d7589779a&mc_eid=UNIQID
7. Upcoming webinars Moravian-Episcopal Coordinating Committee on Public Narrative or Racial History; Conversation Across Difference with Ecumenical Partners.
8. National Council of Churches Christian Unity Gathering-- Updated RSV Bible
9. Interreligious engagement: Parliament of the World's Religions/Shoulder to Shoulder 9/11 Campaign
10. Chaplaincy Research Project (with UTO grant funding)

Chuck:

1. Continues to bring together the work of the EMM, OGR, GP (Global Partnerships) which is TEAM BEYOND also includes on our Anglican Communion work.
2. Grateful to the Church of Latter Day Saints for their work in supporting Refugee Resettlement

Richard:

1. Rome and Constantinople and the joint statement on Climate Change is a big project.
2. Working on a series of upcoming quarterly webinars on Ecumenical Conversations

Hank and Salmoon (interns):

Hank and Salmoon, interns in the Ecumenical and Interreligious Office, created a series of one-page tools of information for the College for Bishops salon on ecumenism, and as a source (now available on the web site) for answering many questions for all who want to know more about the ecumenical and interreligious work of The Episcopal Church. Both interns assisted in the development and production of the summer newsletter (see above). Salmoon made an important contact with the Greek Orthodox Church.

Bill:

1. Working with Margaret and Chuck to update and revise a short history of TEC when finished to be posted on the TEC website. (This project remains confidential at the moment.)
2. The HOB Salon went well.
3. Next meeting is in November/December. Anything in-person is still COVID-dependent.

6. Closing Prayer and Adjournment by Margaret at 12:28 pm.