

**Arizona Ecumenical Council
Spring Meeting - May 3, 2011
St. Augustine's Cathedral, Tucson**

Roll Call/

Present: Ms. Holly Brown-Sisson; Ms. Nancy Splain; Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer; Mr. Ed Davis; Bishop Steve Talmage; Rev. José Olagues; Fr. Daniel P. Daley; Mrs. Loretta Tracy; Rev. Jim Holbert; Ms. Jane Rohwer; Mr. Dick Spinning; Rev. Jim Hobert; Rev. Michael-Ann Veziroglu; Mr. Greg Foraker; Rev. Lowell Byall; Sr. Gaye Moorhead, Rev. Jan Olav Flaaten, Executive Director
Mrs. Lita Johnson, Executive Assistant

Morning Prayer: Jan led us in prayer with "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing," a reading from Mark 9:38-41, and a reminder that the gifts of God "come in a variety of packages."

Agenda and January Annual Meeting Minutes:

Upon motion: the minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Ed Davis reviewed his full written report, highlighting facts such as the "customary deficit at the end of the 1st Quarter," noting this year's improvement in that deficit (of \$3,000), compared with FY10 (\$7,000)--- a change due in part to the decrease in the annual banquet's expenses (e.g., no expensive formal invitations, etc.). Following additional comments and the opportunity for members to ask questions:

Upon motion: the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Executive Director's Report: Jan gave a comprehensive overview of the AEC and our activities, including the following:

- "The Council's reputation is good in the community."
- Our focus on unity brings witness to the world of the Jesus in whom we believe, and we lift up the work of the Council in furtherance of that unity.

Some challenges to achieving this:

- + We are "missing some folks from the table." Some are smaller denominations which may or may not have ties with larger churches. Often, they are churches with immigrant congregations, and a connection to AEC would benefit AEC as well as them.
- + At times, Evangelical churches have expressed antipathy to joining because of "left-wing" and/or Catholic positions which are contrary to theirs.

Some possibilities for working together are:

- + 10th anniversary of 9/11---commemorating together.
- + Connecting with indigenous peoples (almost 20% of Arizona is Native American land), including those on the Gila River Reservation. Jan was invited to talk to the elders, noting "they laid out where the scars are between Church and tribe."

“The challenge is always: How do we focus on the goal/ mission of our group?”

- Next year’s banquet is TBA.
- Jan will be “stepping down” as AEC Executive Director in June, 2012.

He invited/challenged us to look at the ways the AEC will function in the near future and beyond. For example:

- + How will we staff AEC? How fund the organization?
- + What flexibility will be needed as we, along with ecumenical organizations throughout the U.S., evolve in size, in function, etc.?
- +To adequately plan for the change, the AEC Board is forming a 6-8 person Transition Committee, with Jan and Steve Talmage as ex officio members with different gifts, including some with experience in organization of non-profit corporations.
- + The Transition Committee will present its information to the Executive Board for decision.

JAN ASKED AEC MEMBERS TO SOON SUBMIT TO HIM SUGGESTED NAMES FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP, WITH THE GOAL OF THE FORMATION OF THE GROUP BY THE END OF THIS MONTH FOR PARTICIPATION THOROUGHOUT THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR.

We roundly applauded Jan in gratitude for his leadership now and in the year to come.

Commission Reports:

Written reports were submitted before the meeting for the following:

Public Policy (Billie Fidlin) *Jan commented that the PPC has evolved into a mutually supportive group of advocates and lobbyists.*

Earth Care (Sarah King) (4/12/11) *Sarah highlighted sections, including the excellent April 2nd presentation on Tending Earth’s Garden and the Commission’s efforts toward greater networking.*

Theological Dialogue (Al Gephart) (4/18/10) *The Commission is actively planning the next Donohoe Forum (Nov. 4th and 5th) on “Faith and Science” with presenter Dr. Philip Clayton.*

Comments offered on additional activities of AEC commissions and individual members:

Further substantive conversation is planned with the Mormon leaders who have been connecting with AEC regarding collaboration with and possible participation in our organization.

Nancy Splain: *The Blessing Project AZ* will be at George Washington Carver Museum from October 26- December 11th. It is a 2,000 square foot, multimedia exhibit—much more than a documentary--- an “emergent experience” sponsored by the Sodhi Family. Nancy has been involved since 2008 with the project which

promotes inter-faith dialogue and cooperation and has been/will be featured in Phoenix, Gallup and Tucson.

Jan remains involved with **Chayah Ministries**, a Cursillo-like program for incarcerated youth.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE INPUT- Small and Large Group Discussion

Jan asked members to consider these questions:

How large should the AEC table be?

What does it mean to be a Council of the Churches?

What will Church look like in 5-10 years, and is that different enough to have an effect on the work and effectiveness of the Council?

Why are you here? Why are others not here?

Following individual reflection and table sharing, each table's "scribe" reported back to the large group, particularly on the issue of "Why are we here?" This generated lively, future-directed comments. Scribes' notes (and individuals' writings) were submitted to Jan for compilation and submission to the soon-to-be-formed Transition Committee of the AEC.

The meeting adjourned at noon, and a docent of St. Augustine's Cathedral shared information about the beautiful church during lunch (*prepared by Lita*).

Important Dates

September 12	Executive Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
September 27	Fall AEC Meeting	9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
October 23	Inter-religious Youth/Young Adult Conference/ Immigration	
November 4-5	Donohoe Forum, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral	
January 9	Executive Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
January 24	AEC Annual Meeting	4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
February 17	AEC Banquet	6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by *Gaye L. Moorhead, RSM*, Secretary of the Board