

EVALUATION, POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE - Minutes
October 12, 2012, Cleveland, OH
1:30 – 3:15 PM

Members Present: Dorinda Broadnax – Kaji Spellman (Co-Chairs), Douglas Andrews, Walter John Boris, Marcia Charles, Art Cribbs, Megan Culbertson, Gilberto Garcia-Rodriquez, Christine Hanson, , Ron Hildahl, Ann Ito, Linda Jaramillo, Katherine Lambertson, Bermin Langbata, James Maki, Phyllis Palsma, Herbert Perkins, Bryan Sickbert

Members Not Present: Maren Elnes, Ruth Harvey, Kimberly McKerley

Staff to the Committee: Ann L. Hanson

Guests: Julie Kilmer and Andy Lang (UCC Coalition); Ben Guess, Geoffrey Black, Holly Miller-Shank, Karen Georgia Thompson (National staff in conversation with the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries); and Denise Shimell, Secretary to the Minister for Governing Body Relations

The meeting was opened with introductions combined with good wishes and a laying on of hands for Ann Hanson as she approaches retirement.

The agenda and minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Report from the UCC Coalition

Guests, Julie Kilmer and Andy Lang, reviewed their written report and passed out a Coalition brochure. The process of becoming an ONA church was lifted up as being very important; however, living out the ONA mission is not present in all ONA church. Networking of ONA churches is very beneficial. Churches in the MN Conference are providing a powerful voice in this year's Minnesota marriage amendment debate. Andy lifted up the importance of working with other groups (Widening the Welcome, Accessible to All, COREM). The average ONA church is approximately 27% larger than non-ONA churches. The Coalition is starting a church-wide assessment – Linda Jaramillo shared the experience JWM's staff had with this process. Douglas Andrews asked about the process of working with African American churches and inquired about a resource that was to have been made in regard to a conference of African American leaders in regard to ONA – the resource, "The Bible and Human Sexuality" was distributed to all African-American churches in the UCC. Linda suggested a UCC partnering in the annual Consultation with the United Black Christians and the Coalition. Further conversations will continue.

The Report of the Coalition was accepted with gratitude.

Report on the Twenty-eighth General Synod Adopted Resolutions

Holly Miller-Shank spoke about the Resolution to Form a Theological Forum. An effort is being made to reach out to a wide variety of settings and bring different theological perspectives to the table. It is hoped that many resources will be used – discussion can be framed in the UCC values of God's continuing testament, extending extravagant welcome, and changing lives. A staff table is going to meet on October 24. Art Cribbs encouraged the group to think about adding youth and children's voices into the conversation.

The Twenty-eight General Synod Resolutions report was affirmed.

Update on the Process of Evaluating JWM General Synod Resolutions

Linda Jaramillo led the Committee through the development and purposes of the proposed process. Over 1000 resolutions and pronouncements have been adopted by General Synod over the past 55 years. At this point in time, there is a need to evaluate these resolutions and consider our capacity to adopt new ones and well as issues of accountability. Linda thanked the UUA for assisting in development of this process. Although this tool was developed by and for JWM, other boards are considering adopting this proposal. Its measures could be applied to resolutions that come before General Synod 2013. It was also noted that conferences might find this tool useful – a shorter matrix will be developed.

The Evaluating Current General Synod Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements proposal was affirmed.

Relationship between the UCC and the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries

Ben Guess, Holly Miller-Shank and Karen Georgia Thompson led a discussion on the relationship between the UCC and the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. Sixty people from the Fellowship recently attended a Link (Leaders in Koinonia) event in Cleveland. National staff, along with a few conference leaders, spent a few days working toward common goals and a more formal partnership. Led by Bishop Yvette Flunder, the Fellowship consists of faith communities and clergy with varying relationships with the UCC. A document of joint affirmation is in the process of being developed, with input from both the Fellowship and the UCC. When the affirmation is written, the Executive Council will need to approve it (by January 1, 2013), so it can be presented at General Synod, 2013. This affirmation will not address issues of standing or ordination.

The relationships between the Fellowship and conferences were discussed. These relationships are being developed and are 'networks of choice.' The Fellowship is not striving to be a conference of the UCC. The importance of having intensive educational opportunities available prior to and during General Synod was stressed.

There is a writing team from the national setting that has been formed. It is working directly with the Fellowship.

The EPP Committee Affirmed and encouraged continuing conversation between the United Church of Christ and the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, in the hope that action will come before the General Synod in 2013

Ann Hanson closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann L. Hanson
Staff to the EPP Committee