



Commission  
on  
Social Witness

## Commission on Social Witness Meeting

Notes – Conference Call

**Monday May 9, 2016**

Present: Susan Goekler, Chair, Richard Bock, Caitlin Cotter, Christina Sillari,  
Jyaphia Christos- Rodgers

Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers opened with a chalice lighting.

During check-in and welcome, members shared about their lives.

The minutes of the March call were approved.

Caitlin Cotter agreed to be process observer and Christina Sillari agreed to be note taker.

### 5. Old Business:

- a. How to engage Escalating Inequality interested parties Christina/Jyaphia  
Jyaphia made a presentation to the group based on her call with Christina A long deep fruitful conversation followed with many viewpoints shared regarding different constituents' engagement with the issue. We identified four constituents: individuals (ministers or individuals with a prophetic voice), congregations, groups and organizations already involved, and groups and organizations who are not yet involved. The final recommendation on how to engage at GA:

**When we are talking to people we are trying to inform ourselves as broadly as possible. We can all say the following: We want your ideas and they will be considered but that does not guarantee that all your ideas will be included in the statement. We will receive oral and written statements from people. If you are writing to us please give us no more than 500 words. Inviting comments with an understanding that we are listening but not promising. We are open to the magic in conversations so need to have many of them because they create some of the best ideas.**

**At GA we will have something in CSW alert like: If there is something you want to include then please come by the booth or talk to one of us. We are especially want to hear from those have not yet been heard especially those who are most affected.**

- b. Following up with DRUUM

The DRUMM representative who asked to meet with the CSW at the 2015 GA has not responded, so Phia will send an email to the DRUUMM steering committee indicating our willingness to follow up with CSW. We will wait for their response.

- c. Hearing on newly selected CSAI: Process (Attachment)

We reviewed the Proposer's Guide on the CSW website. Susan will confer with Jim Key and ushers/tellers and commissioners to be sure they are all on the same page with us.

- e. Issues to raise at a session co-sponsored with Board on the Social witness statement development processes (see below)

Susan shared the list below and invited other Commissioners to share other issues to raise about getting input about the social witness development process. Phia suggested adding a question: How can marginalized groups who are not part of UU congregations in developing our statements of conscious participate and how are we accountable to marginalized groups who might be effected by our positions.

#### Social Witness Issues for GA session from CSW's perspective

The purpose of this session is to consider whether the way we are creating statements that provide a theological rationale for a denominational position on a social justice issue as well as a call to action is the best way to do so.

Explain current process – CSAI and SOC and for AIWs

Some issues:

- 1) Delegates selecting an issue for consideration often have no knowledge of or familiarity with previously developed statements, so issues on which we have no position might be missed while we revisit an issue on which we have already spoken.
- 2) We have no way of amending, updating, or archiving previously adopted statements.
- 3) We don't know how congregations are using already adopted statements as they engage in social justice work. They are not bound by the statements.
- 4) Amount of time spend during GAs on AIWs distorts the breadth of support and discernment on the statement.
- 5) Even with AIWs, we cannot be responsive to emerging issues in a timely way.
- 6) There is no provision for (or possibility of) fact-checking AIWs prior to adoption.

6. Staff Update: There are three possibilities for a CSW admin support person at GA. Susan, Christina and Caitlin will review the applications and make a decision.
7. Update on AIW Facilitation orientation. After GA2015, we decided to provide more training for those facilitating AIW mini-assemblies. In consultation with the UUA Board, we felt that participating in facilitator training for those conducting business resolution and bylaws amendment mini-assemblies would be valuable. We also want training specific for AIWs. Caitlin agreed to create a script that all AIW facilitators can use to ensure consistency.
8. Update on CSW-sponsored worship service. Christina is serving as worship leader.
9. Logistic arrangements for GA – travel, arrival, departure. Susan reminded Commissioners to purchase their plane tickets now and send Richard the ticket amount.

10. Updates on GA sessions:
  - a. Escalating Inequality speaker -- Christina is working with Susan Leslie and facilitators.
  - b. Reproductive Justice Implementation workshop – Jyaphia, Caitlin, and an intern for reproductive justice are organizing the workshop.
  
11. CSW Booth in exhibit hall ideas
  - a. Susan created an AIW/CSAI comparison and asked everyone to look at it and send suggestions.
  - b. Susan shared a list of materials to have at the booth.
  
12. Updates on Other Assignments
  - a. Volunteer coordinator at GA – Richard (Jyaphia?): Phia and Richard will train volunteers and create a schedule, assigning each volunteer no more than 18 hours.
  
13. July Meeting – begin prep work – save the date; read from study guide. We each need to come informed before we draft an SOC in July: Review the study guide and pick a few resources from the guide to read. Let CSW members know what you will read. Consider looking at resources on the UUJEC and Class Conversations websites. Read congregational feedback.
  
14. Caitlin provided process observations: It was difficult to indicate a desire to talk because we were using the phone, not webinar and could not see one another and because we are passionate about the issues. It was good that we were able to respectfully disagree.
  
15. Richard provided a closing.

Approved 7/29/16