

Issues Regarding GA 2012 in Phoenix: Accountability Panel January 2011

Core concerns:

- Honoring the justice charge given violating the boycott AND understand that we will do as much as possible to recognize the compromised accessibility and sense of sanctuary for historically marginalized groups in the our Association
- Honoring our moral commitment to build the capacity of congregations to work on the longer term issues
- Be accountable to historically marginalized groups AND local groups working on immigration issue

Justice GA related to the Resolution

- All aspect of GA would have justice focus
- Clear adherence to “minimum business required” by by-laws as far as business agenda
- Opportunities for profound transformation and building capacity of congregations regardless of size-to do justice work
- Focused on frameworks for justice: education, tool making, action and reflection, (challenge the old paradigm)
- Offering service opportunities in the committee
- Remember we made a difference here and we crossed a picket line to do this
- Working at the intersection of oppression
- In spite of the limits, we are committed to making GA as accessible as possible
- Recognizing systemic aspects of oppression and how it affects all groups AND truth telling

- Focus on immigration (as an example of common experience) AND broader human rights issues
- Right relations -before, during and after to the best of our ability

Messaging:

- The message about Phoenix GA should include that we are going to Phoenix because of our need to bear witness to the injustices there. Those injustices are a metaphor for a wide range of human rights abuses occurring throughout the nation.
- To break a boycott, which we have already done, we must not lose sight of this mandate to witness and assist those in Arizona.
- Some historically marginalized groups will have less accessibility and sense of sanctuary than at recent General Assemblies. For these reasons, some members of these groups may not attend. Others will and we must do everything within our power to mitigate issues they may have with the particular nature of this General Assembly.
- We need to be ready to communicate this by GA—President, Moderator and GAPC
- Marketing to congregations must begin now. Messaging at General Assembly must communicate this difference.

Content and Focus:

This must be a radically different General Assembly in both structure and content.

- We need to have some advanced planning that occurs before this General Assembly.
- Messaging needs to include the difference in structure.
- The focus could be a justice focus, around a framework of education, tool-getting, action and reflection.
- A strong component should be equipping congregations to take this work back to their states and communities.
- We need to keep to the minimum business required by the bylaws.

This means that many of the traditional activities may or may not happen:

- Exhibit Hall (maybe not at all or might only feature advocacy groups, or indigenous, or those supporting the human rights principles, products that serve justice, member-based groups within the UUA)
- CSW (not the structure of AIW which takes so much time and dictates the “business as usual” structure)

- Service of the Living Tradition (maybe not or if, offer those who would be recognized the opportunity to be recognized at other GA)
 - Workshops on topics other than the human rights issues highlighted by the Arizona metaphor
- Those that do occur must be focused on the justice imperative of this General Assembly.

Future Work: Planning a General Assembly in our system is complex. We ask that all parties put aside differences and focus on the importance of this to our faith, to the people we seek to aid and to our transformation as agents of social justice.

Funding:

- We need funding to support development of congregational resources, around racism and cultural competency.
- The Arizona Immigration ministry is listed in the resolution and needs to be funded.
- Special efforts need to be made to get youth, young adults and those without the financial means to get to GA.

Other critical issues to be addressed:

- How do we talk about the intersection of oppressions and justice issues at Phoenix? (i.e. the issues of those who are not able bodied who are among the population targeted in Arizona?)
- How will the economy affect this work?
- How do we market the social action part of this, develop real tools to take home to congregations?
- How do we spread the word to congregations?
- How do we get youth and young adults involved in core activities and also give them their own spaces?
- What tools can we give people to bring home?
- How do we accommodate the first time GA-ers (assuming we attract a new population.)?

- How can we get away from the language of “safety” and “security” which can be so divisive? How do we instead acknowledge the need for sanctuary and to acknowledge vulnerability.
- What are our sub-themes?
- How will we build in reflection time?
- What is the role of remote participation?
- How do we educate people about responsible consumption?
- How can we work to make this a well-attended General Assembly?
- How will the Accountability Panel continue to work with the GAPC and Board and others? How will accountability happen?