

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Commission on Appraisal



January Meeting, 2008
Boston, MA

Minutes

January 24th, 2008

Present: Tom Owen-Towle, Don Mohr, Bev Harrison, Jacqui Williams, Pete Fontneu, Orlanda Brugnola, Megan Dowdell, Barbara Child, Michael Ohlrogge

The meeting began at 9:10 PM

Approval of Minutes: Michael Ohlrogge presented the minutes from the October meeting. The Commission approved these minutes, with the addition of a note to clarify the changes in meeting dates since the creation of the minutes.

Approval of Agenda: The Commission reviewed and approved the agenda for the weekend. Barbara child led the Commission in worship and then the meeting adjourned for the night.

January 25th

Present: Tom Owen-Towle, Don Mohr, Bev Harrison, Jacqui Williams, Pete Fontneu, Orlanda Brugnola, Megan Dowdell, Barbara Child, Michael Ohlrogge

The meeting began at 9:15 with a centering led by Megan Dowdell

Barbara Child then led the Commission in an appreciative inquiry exercise.

General Assembly '08 Issues: The Commission discussed the concerns that have been raised by many about GA '08 and the security check points that will be there and creating a hostile environment for some UUs.

-The Commission decided that its work must go on and that it will be present at GA.

- The Commission also decided that everything we do and say at the GA will need to be responsive to the realities of what is happening on the ground at GA.
- Because the Commission's report must be submitted ahead of time, Orlanda will talk to Gini about the closed captioning (which is based on pre-submitted texts) and whether we can potentially modify that if necessary to be responsive to what's going on.
- This is an opportunity to build credibility of the Commission by being responsive to what's going on.
- This also reiterates the importance of the Commission's efforts to include and be accountable to the voices that are often silenced because we will be in a context at GA of certain voices being silenced.

GA Arrangements for the Commission:

- Staff housing will come out in February. Julie will let us know when this happens. There will be a month before it's open for everyone else.
- The commission talked about whether we would like a larger room to meet in and what kind of meetings of the Commission we would schedule and what kind of workshop we will do at GA. No final decisions were reached, so the Commission decided to ruminate on these and bring them up again at the next meeting when we know more about what will be happening at GA.
- Megan will write a letter to the GA Right Relations Team to introduce the Commission to them in case they deem it prudent for the Commission to take a role in anything that happens at GA.

Working Group Presentations:

- At the October meeting, the CoA broke into two working groups to study and consider the content, structure, and proposed changes to Article II. These two groups presented their work and initial findings to the group as a whole. These presentations and the discussion that followed produced a second set of "macro questions" concerning broad, conceptual matters for Article II.
- Continued Consideration of Changes?** The Commission decided to remain open to the possibilities of changes to Article II, but with a mindfulness to what will be able to pass the GA approval process.

Audience of Article II: The Commission discussed the ambiguity that has existed about the intended audience of Article II (individuals, congregations, the Association, etc.). No final decisions were reached on how to deal with the ambiguity and confusion that have been present in the life of the document so far.

Beliefs or Behaviors? The Commission agreed that it was clearly not in the scope of Article II or the spirit of our tradition for Article II to attempt to dictate individual beliefs for Unitarian Universalists. Instead, the Commission agreed that Article II will need to focus on the covenantal and behavioral aspects of our shared religious life. In the context of behavioral considerations, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment that this behavioral content reflect the important teachings of an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural lens.

Structure of Article II: The Commission agreed that a restructuring of the sections of Article II could help make the document more clear and compelling and the sections more distinct.

Sources and Theological Language: The Commission will continue to deal with questions regarding the sources and theological language at a later date.

January 27th

Symposium: Because the Commission did not receive funding for the symposium on Article II that it had planned, the Commission decided to gather as much additional input as possible through individual phone-interviews with some of the prospective symposium participants.

Financial Report:

-Jacqui Williams reported on the financial affairs of the Commission. There are two different reports showing either \$18,000 or \$24,000 remaining for the year. The differences probably are because the reports reflect different time periods. The Commission will work to get expense reports sent in a timely fashion and Jacqui will continue to monitor our financial status.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Ohlrogge, Secretary
Commission on Appraisal