

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING JUNE 29, 2004**

Present: Linda Friedman, Marc Loustau, Lillian Anderson, Carolyn Patierno, Ginger Brown, Elizabeth Collins, Beth McGregor, Jan Sneegas, Barb Atlas, Jerry Gaynor, Brenda McKeon

### **(I) REVIEW OF GA**

#### **General:**

Both the President and Moderator were very satisfied with the content and management of GA; Bill Sinkford found it 'the best ever.'

The covenant group facilitators reported a high degree of satisfaction among the group members, and would like to repeat the program.

There was also high satisfaction among the congregational presidents about their programming. The UUA Board would like to have a presidents' program again next year. Long Beach was a good locale for many reasons.

The setup at the Convention Center was not ideal, with not enough large rooms, the long walk to the 300 meeting rooms and youth space, and only a pipe-and-drape barrier around the exhibit area.

The computer systems all worked. (Gratitude to Charles McNulty of IT staff.)

There were multiple cell phone and pager problems. We need to find solutions.

We need to revisit chaplain program, ensure that they are always available and easily reached, and conversant with local resources.

Plenary hall was overbooked with programs. The Presidents' program should be elsewhere.

Mini-assemblies should not be scheduled against major programs.

The children's programs were fabulous.

The new banner registration and hanging system worked well; could be tweaked slightly.

The Intergeneration Breakfast seemed well received.

There were complicated negotiations with the Service Project, but it worked out well.

A few exhibit hall issues: security, possibly offensive material, a few exhibitors participating in GA without registering for it.

The apparent CSW loss of submitted material shows we need a sign-in log for items received.

Physical accessibility services worked well.

Economic accessibility continues to be an issue. The scholarship system needs overhaul.

Perhaps we should offer matching grants to congregations to encourage them to support their delegates.

The Planning Committee, Volunteer Committee, CSW, Moderator and President were a forgiving and loving team who worked well together.

#### **Opening Ceremony:**

The chorus was excellent and the program went well.

The banner parade went fairly fast.

We should choose participants whom we have some direct knowledge of.

The ushers didn't know where to get the programs and opened the doors too early.

### **Plenary Sessions:**

A few tech glitches, but on the whole smooth. Gini did a great job, the rules of procedure worked, and the sessions kept people engaged.

There were a few complaints about the length of reports and awards in plenary. Do we want UUSC and UUWF to report every year?

There needs to be attention to sharing the wealth on the plenary stage; having a variety of people appear and not over-using a few.

### **Sunday Worship:**

The Sunday worship service was inspiring and successful, but there was a problem of little and late communication with the Planning Committee from the President's office and the service coordinators.

Coordination problems showed up in the last-minute dash for crayons for the children. We raised the issue of needing more planning for children at Sunday worship next year. We need a Planning Committee liaison in on the Sunday worship planning committee conference calls and other communications. The committee to plan the service needs to be put together in the fall; we should raise this with Bill Sinkford in September. There are budgetary implications to the service, and the Planning Committee needs some say on costs.

The local greeters on Sunday were a positive addition.

The coffee hour after Sunday worship did not work as planned. It was not clear from the announcement in the service who was invited and where it was. There were very few seekers and too many GA attendees, and some people couldn't find it.

### **Other Worship:**

The Service of the Living Tradition ran a half hour over schedule and was slow-paced. There needs to be coordination between the Planning Committee and all worship leaders about hymn selection, so that we don't have repeats of the same hymns.

Elizabeth Collins would like to be the liaison, at least onsite, for all worship services, since she is responsible for the technical aspects and present at all of them.

A liaison experienced in worship planning should meet with the youth worship leaders before the final tech rehearsal to help them put it all together.

### **Ware Lecture:**

Positive response to Holly Near. Some concerns about political partisanship.

Not enough ushers in the right place at the beginning.

The lecture was booked late this year; we need to get plans in place earlier.

Possibility of having a theologian and pairing the lecture with a follow-up discussion of the language of reverence.

### **Youth programs:**

The youth programming grid was a positive addition.

Youth attendance was down this year; about 350. This may be in part because parents realized that GA was not a Youth Con, and the new format kept some away. Earlier negotiations with youth caucus were complicated and difficult, but paid off. The youth space was unfortunately in an inconvenient part of the building, but having it in the Convention Center is a good idea and should be repeated next year. There was some youth discontent about the distance and loss of 24-hour space. The HUUPERS were given a job based on the old model of GA youth programming; they needed earlier instruction.

### **Closing Ceremony:**

Confusion about the prelude led to dead time at the beginning. The choir music didn't fit the occasion as well as hoped, and the commissioned anthem was hard to understand and not engaging. Should we present commissioned anthems? A Planning Committee liaison needs to coordinate with the GA choir director early. The UUMN president picks the GA choir director; the Planning Committee would like to have some input into this decision and be in the loop about music to fit the theme. The pictures of Fort Worth submitted by Brenda McKeon should have been incorporated in the closing and/or the final plenary. There should be a more formal hand-off of the chalice.

### **Evaluation Session:**

About 35 attended. There is a separate, detailed transcript of comments and suggestions. Many were basically very satisfied and had minor concerns or requests. The only strong criticism came from youth and young adults (about half the attendees). It focused on three related areas:

- (1) Youth-unfriendliness. Primarily seen in remote youth and young adult space, lack of 24-hour space, low youth-adult interaction; also in local curfew, lack of youth housing and cheap food suited to their preferences.
- (2) Affordability. Desire for low-cost housing and food, lower registration fees. The cost was seen as elitist. Some declared they attended but didn't register because the fee was too high.
- (3) Not living out our values sufficiently: Excessive consumption of food and energy, waste, lack of support for simple lifestyle, buying from multinational corporations, use of facilities with non-union labor, elitism of cost of attendance.

## **II. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

Linda Friedman elected Chair (nom. by Loustau, unanimous, continuing)  
Ginger Brown elected Vice Chair (nom. by Loustau, unanimous; new)  
Lillian Anderson elected Vice Chair (nom. by Collins, unanimous; continuing)  
Beth McGregor elected Secretary (nom. by Anderson, unanimous, continuing)

### **III. TASKS IN PREPARATION FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING**

The Executive Committee should set aside time on the September agenda to address issues of economic accessibility, and begin formulating proposals.

Review and possibly propose revisions of chaplain policies.

Initiate a conversation with Bill Sinkford about both the Sunday Worship Service and the Ware Lecture.

There will be a retreat day spent on anti-racism/anti-oppression work. A survey will be circulated in preparation for it and should be returned in advance.

Applications for Planning-Committee sponsored programs are due in the GA office by September 1. (This was announced at all PC sponsored programs and is on the web.) We should encourage applications. A subcommittee is needed to review the applications; several people indicated they would be willing, and executive committee will put together a group.

Everyone should write reports and manual updates on their particular areas of responsibility for the September meeting and send the appropriate thank you notes.

### **IV. THANKS AND FAREWELLS**

The committee members expressed their thanks to Jan Sneegas and the GA office staff for their great work.

The group said farewell to Rev. Carolyn Patierno with cards, gifts, and words of appreciation, affection and sadness. She found it necessary due to other demands to resign from the committee.

[Note: The Planning Committee also met more informally each day at GA. Attendance varied based on members' GA work commitments. These meetings focused on monitoring the various aspects of the Long Beach GA, making specific arrangements, and dealing with potential or actual problems as they arose. Any issues with policy implications were flagged for discussion at the committee's September meeting.]

**Next Meeting:** September 17-19, 2004, UUA, Boston; gathering for retreat and anti-racism training beginning Wed. evening Sept. 15.

