

SUMMARY OF PATH FORWARD WORKING GROUP

January 26, 2008

Piggott Hall, Room 304, Seattle University

*“If you always do what you always did, you’ll always get what you always got!”
Wisdom from Hubba Teal at the Monroe Reformatory.*

Present

Cherilyn Williams, Disciples of Christ; Paul Aita, Evergreen Baptist Assn., Bob Rhodes, Episcopal Diocese of Olympia; Joyce Cox, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle; David Alger, Associated Ministries of Pierce County; Steve Lansing, WAC board; Justin Simmons, Church Council of Greater Seattle; Maryfrancis Lignana, Earth Ministry; Paul Benz, Lutheran Public Policy Office; Jack Olive, School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle U; Marilyn Stahl, Mennonites; Loren Arnett, Tom Quigley and Darel Grothaus.

Guest: David Leslie, Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

Worship

◆ Call to Worship

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

◆ Ephesians 1:15-23

When I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the Christians, I couldn’t stop thanking God for you. But I do more than give thanks. I ask the God of our Master to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is he is calling you to do, to grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life he has for Christians, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—endless energy, boundless strength!

All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ’s body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Gospel Song: This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.

Everywhere I go.

All through the night.

This little light of mine.

◆ Prayer:

Important Things to Consider in Our Work Today

Task: Recommend a viable and faithful future to judicatory leaders and ecumenical partners for a statewide ecumenical ministry.

◆ Reminder of Schedule

- Recommendations to denominational leaders, ecumenical partners and other stakeholders by March 31. Possible meeting of denominational leaders in Seattle on April 1 or 2.

- ***Decision Today: Encourage judicatory leaders to meet in Seattle on April 1 or 2 to take advantage of the meeting already scheduled on April 1 among the three ELCA bishops and Catholic bishops and archbishop.***
- Anonymous contributor is expecting a strategic plan by April 30 as condition for making a \$50,000 contribution for 2008. This contribution is an essential foundation for raising funds for the last six months of 2008.
- New board to be in place by May 31 and permanent executive director by June 30.
- Several expressed concerns whether there was sufficient time to develop thoughtful recommendations to meet these deadlines.

Important Perspectives Gleaned from Darel's Recent Trip to Spokane:

- Denominational leaders, the "Octet", have deep ecumenical fellowship and affection for one another, but are not connected with their counterparts across the mountains outside their own denominations—a reality they lament. Their strong personal bonds have not resulted in collaboration in programming and public witness and worship.
- Rick Moline, Executive Presbyter for Spokane Presbytery, noted that the historic Presbyterian representation on WAC through the Alaska-NW Presbytery doesn't "fit" the memberships of most other Protestant members. There are five presbyteries in Washington and none of them are represented as WAC members unlike the ELCA which has three synods, each a member, etc. Rick recommended the executive presbyters be invited to the meeting in early April to consider the draft recommendations.
- ***Decision Today: Invite the five executive presbyters.***
- Weyerhaeuser Center for Christian Faith and Learning at Whitworth University is a promising ecumenical collaborator in a renewed statewide ecumenical ministry. Dale Soden, its director, has a vibrant ecumenical vision and sense of history. (Dale's chapter in the "None Zone", "[Contesting the Soul of an Unlikely Land: Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Reform and Conservative Jews in the Pacific NW](#)" is essential reading for our work.)
- Mary Stamp, editor/publisher of the "Fig Tree," an on-line religious newspaper, has exciting ideas about expanding this journal ecumenically across the state.
- The January 13 briefing for the RCCG/LPPO/WAC legislative agenda was poorly attended in spite of a lot of promotion.

Budget and Cash Flow Perspectives

Our recommendations must be financially viable. As a reality check it is instructive to review WAC's sources of revenues since 2006 and our projected revenues and expenses/cash flow for the first six months of '08 and the projected cash position and fund balance at June 30 '08. The June 30 cash position will be needed to support a renewed ecumenical ministry and recruit a permanent executive director. Two spreadsheets are attached: Comparison of '06, '07 and '08 revenues and January to June '08 cash flow.

Here are salient trends and patterns:

Comparison of '06, '07 and '08 Revenues:

- Ten member denominations made 75,888 in cash contributions in '07 and 79,210 in '06. Eight of the ten denominational members have confirmed commitments to WAC for '08--total is 69,200. Two denominations have not responded to requests for '08 commitments.
- 22 congregations contributed 12,367 in '07 and 26 congregations 13,023 in '06. In '07, 7,800 came from two congregations; and one of these contributed 6,400.

- Other religious ministries contributed 10,550 in '07 and 1,255 in '06. Sisters of Providence contributed 10,000 in '07 to support the Religious Coalition for the Common Good.
- Individual donors contributed 54,089 in '07 and 49,949 in '06. In '06 the WAC board and staff contributed 23,005. In '07 board and staff contributed 12,517 and the anonymous donor contributed 25,000. The large reduction from '06 to '07 was caused by the uncertainty about WAC's future. Keep in mind that the '07 contribution by individual donors of 54,089 included 25,000 from the anonymous contributor. When this unusual contribution is backed out, contributions from typical donors were 29,089 and 12,517 came from WAC board and staff.
- A special fundraiser generated 64,345 in September of '06. No fundraiser was held in the fall of '07 because of the crisis about WAC's future. Instead, energy was directed toward determining whether the member denominations would commit to a strategic planning process.
- Nine Cooperating Ecumenical Partners contributed 250 in '06 and 300 in '07. However, most if not all continue to solicit contributions from much the same contributor base as does WAC.
- Community Agencies and Unions contributed 33,500 in '06 and 7,669 in '07. 20,000 in union contributions in '06 were directed toward the creation of the Washington Tax Fairness Coalition that WAC helped organize in '06. This coalition is no longer a part of WAC.
- One native tribe contributed 1,000 in '07.
- Fiscal fees and subleased rent contributed 78,879 in '06 and 48,371 in '07. All but one fiscal sponsoree was terminated by the end of '07. The one fiscal sponsoree now pays 750 per month and will be terminated at the end of June '08. WAC's move to a smaller and much less expensive office in June of '07 ended subleased rent.

January-June '08 Revenues and Expenses/Cashflow and Liabilities:

- Eight of the ten denominational members of WAC have confirmed commitments to WAC for '08. Total '08 commitment to date is 69,200. 35,740 will be paid in the first six months and 33,460 in the second six months. Two denominations have not responded to requests for '08 commitments.
- Contributions from all other sources—except the anonymous contributor—are projected to be 11,466. This is a conservative estimate based only on contributions received to date and future commitments that individuals have made.
- Total contributions from all sources net of the anonymous contributor are 47,206 for the first six months.
- The anonymous contributor has promised 50,000 by May, *if* a strategic plan has been adopted by the WAC stakeholders.
- To conserve cash, the interim executive director will be working half time and the office manager 35 hours a month beginning February 1. The RCCG staff will be terminated at the end of the legislative session. All executive director travel across the state to meet with stakeholders has been canceled. All other expenses are at a minimum.
- If the strategic plan *is completed* and the 50,000 anonymous contribution is received, there will be cash available of 67,175 at June 30.
- If the plan *is not completed*, the cash balance will be 17,175 at June 30.
- Eight of the ten member denominations have committed 33,460 for the second six months of '08.
- There are three known liabilities besides routine expenses e.g., payroll taxes, insurance, etc that are reported in the cashflow: Loan of 23,713 to the Seattle

Baptist Union. Copier lease of 9,223. Law firm of 3,343 for pro bono work on the Snoqualmie Falls tribal dispute. Prior board and executive minister borrowed 30,000 from the Baptist Union to cover operating deficits. The loan was paid down to the current balance and then no payments were made after 2005. The Seattle Baptist Union has offered to postpone payment until the end of the Path Forward strategic planning process and, should WAC continue, extend the payment period for five years. To date, we have not found a professional services agreement that documents the law firm's work. The issue is further complicated because apparently representatives of LPPO and CCGS made verbal agreements to help raise the money to pay the law firm. We are seeking to clarify and document the history of this transaction with all of the parties.

Dialogue with David Leslie, Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

This was a freewheeling conversation about a large number of factors related to statewide ecumenical ministry in Oregon and their possible relevancy to Washington.

Identity and Mission

The context for this discussion was three sample statements of mission and identity: WAC, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Michael Kinnamon's "model" mission statement for state councils of churches. (Attached electronically to this summary.)

Points of Consensus on Mission and Identify

- ◆ *Identity: Christian rather than interfaith. A sign and expression of the unity of Christ's church. From this identity move toward those from other religious traditions and those with no religious commitments, i.e." None of the above."*
- ◆ *Values: Christian unity, reconciliation, justice in the human community, hopefulness, hospitality, peacemaking, compassion.*
- ◆ *Membership: Covenantal in character. Association of denominations, congregations and other ecumenical ministries.*
- ◆ *Balance theological dialogue with witness in the world.*
- ◆ *Geographic scope: Statewide.*
- ◆ *Criteria for mission statement: brevity, clarity and understandability.*

Draft Mission Statement for February 25 Meeting of Working Group

The following persons volunteered to work on a draft: Joyce Cox, Justin Simmons, Jack Olive, Loren Arnett, Tom Quigley, Darel Grothaus.

Upcoming Meeting Schedules

- ◆ Monday, February 25 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Seattle. Place to be determined.
- ◆ Saturday, March 29 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Seattle University.
- ◆ Saturday, April 19 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Seattle University.

Decision Today: Cancel the invitation to Michael Kinnamon, new general secretary of the National Council of Churches, to meet with the Working Group at its March session. Re: The assignment to complete the draft recommendations by the end of March doesn't allow time for this conversation. Tom Quigley was asked to convey our regrets and explanation to Kinnamon.

Blessing and Sending Forth