

NORTHWEST REGIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Board of Directors Meeting

February 28, 2009

WAC Interim Board Report

October 22, 2008

1. Added Jannine Dagegg to Board representing the NW ELCA Synod
2. Staff to create a list and legend of abbreviations used
3. Membership to be expanded; currently 8 denominations/judicatories and 5 ecumenical/denominationally related agencies have taken official action.
4. Two-level of operation: 1) WAC Board meetings to deal with logistics and financial issues
2) Working group meetings to include board and invited others to join in discussions – next meeting on November 21 to be a working group
5. Survey to be created to use in soliciting ecumenical input for the need and/or design of an ecumenical body – to be distributed in variety of areas prior to November 21 meeting
6. Faith Advocacy Day – need representatives to work on this project
7. Contract with Malcolm Haworth as part-time staff through March 31, 2009, to reinvigorate Christian community in Spokane – specifically tasked to help organize Faith Advocacy Day in Spokane, promoting and encouraging planning for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, relationship building and help with the Fig Tree as a statewide ecumenical tool.

November 21, 2008 meeting: working board with invited guests – held in Tacoma to reach southwestern portion of the state

1. Accepted resignation of Rachel Tabor-Hamilton as board rep for Episcopal church
2. Extended the Transitional Interim Executive Director's contract and salary; current contract was to expire January 31, 2009
3. Survey instrument tweaked and assignments made for contacts and usage; statewide contacts identified and agreed to use it at the Annual dinner on December 4.
4. Two invitees present: Carol Harberg (UMC) of Bellevue: need representation of "younger" perspective at the table – at least three generations need to be present; WAC to be the conveners not the designers; and Mike Collier (UMC) of Tacoma working with the Micah Project (a peace and justice program) – speaks strongly to the importance of networking as we work for social justice
5. Recommendation that we be more intentional about the multi-cultural relationship building
6. Denominational commitments: DOC responded; still working with Presbyterian and Lutheran Synods.
7. Plans for Faith Advocacy Day moving forward – noted not getting Catholic participation

February 11, 2009:

Due to inclement weather and the holiday season, no meetings were held between November 21, 2008 and February 11, 2009. On February 11, a group of religious judicatory level representatives (I participated as DOC rep as Rebecca Hale was in Haiti), met with Governor Gregoire over budget issues that impact our communities and institutions. After a preliminary meeting to plan our approach, six areas were addressed with Governor Gregoire:

1. Housing: THOR (Traditional Housing Operating & Rent); Housing Trust Fund
2. Health Care: Basic Health Plan, Cover All Kids; Healthy Options
3. Economic Justice and Poverty: recommendation for division of \$5M in EFAP; Feeding Hungry Kids bill; General Assistance – Unemployable; Payday Loan regulation bills
4. Criminal Justice: Three strikes reform; Restoration of Voting Rights
5. Environment: Cap & Invest; Building Efficiency; Green Jobs – emphasis on ethnic inclusion
6. Balancing the Budget and the Need for Revenue

Our time concluded with “what can we do to help?” and prayer.

Following this meeting a WAC Board meeting was held in Olympia. Since only three on-going board members were present plus one newby, it was determined that decisions would be made only in light of the full board being apprised of discussion and recommendations from those of us present. Note that this meeting was to be available on a conference call with two other board members, but we were unable to connect.

1. Welcome Charlotte Nelson, new administrative assistant (this was her second day on board); Amanda Martinez resigned in December.
2. Welcome Becky Michelfelder to board, representing the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia
3. Reviewed end of year Financial Reports: ended year with \$34,514.90 surplus accomplished by cutting costs and a \$50,000 anonymous contribution; the surplus of last year and this year left a positive cash balance of \$62,420.00 with all bills paid except some payroll taxes and balance of long term liability with Seattle Baptist Union.
4. December 4 annual event, “Follow the Light”, made \$16, 170.14 (was budgeted to make \$20,000); reviewed “Survey” responses from this 4 event with view toward “design” of new ecumenical entity
5. Discuss/amend/adopt 2009 Proposed Budget: Unbalanced budget at -\$18,302; approved using carryover from last year to balance.
6. Revisited “membership” discussion and proposal for membership – provisional affirmation of first paragraph: “Members shall be denominations, ecumenical ministries, congregations, clergy associations, para-church ministries, religious orders and Christian colleges, universities and seminaries.” Further action tabled until full board present.

Concerns from your representative:

1. While I have attended every meeting of the Transitional Interim Board, there has never been a full compliment of members present. Does this indicate a lack of commitment?
2. At the February 11 meeting, I raised the question as to whether we are “beating a dead horse?” The lack of participation, the lack of energy and enthusiasm, coupled with the question about why WAC over putting energy and time into already functioning entities

that are addressing the same issues, i.e., RCCG – Religious Coalition for the Common Good addressing state budgetary short falls. Long term participants could not provide a reasonable definition or vision/mission orientation that would compel recruitment new participation/membership. It was agreed that we would address this in our next meeting, which I expect to be after March 17, Advocacy Day.

Attachments:

1. Current roster of Interim Board members
2. Two-page WAC 2009 Legislative priorities

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Rawlings".

Carol Rawlings

DOC Representative on WAC Interim Board

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The following public policy priorities are proposed. Policy principles guiding each priority area were adopted in prior years. These priorities are in keeping with the decision to limit the focus of the WAC's legislative agenda for this session of the legislature.

Washington Association of Churches 2009 Legislative Priorities

The Washington Association of Churches calls upon its member denominations, organizations, institutions and their churches and ministries to work in partnership with the Religious Coalition for the Common Good (RCCG), other faith communities and community allies to advocate for the public policies and related legislation identified below.

Budget

Who would Jesus rescue? "Woe to you rich!...Blessed are you poor!". The Prophets warn against favoring the rich over the widows, aliens, orphans and the poor. The state and federal budgets should reflect stewardship of God's abundance and God's preferential option for the poor and vulnerable; therefore,

We call for a budget that adequately funds services that meet the basic needs of our most vulnerable residents, especially low-income children and their families, the elderly and disabled..(Adopted 2001)

We will work to -

- Prevent cuts to vital housing and survival services.
- Seek new revenue solutions for a fair and adequate budget
- Provide local governments with tools needed to meet human services obligations in their communities.
- Support an economic stimulus package that includes funding of Green Jobs for low-income people.

Hunger and Poverty

Old Testament Prophets and Jesus declared God's outrage at the plight of those living in poverty and suffering from hunger. As followers of Jesus, we are challenged to respond to economic disparities and oppression in our world. We have an obligation to work for the common good so that all people can experience God's abundance and live with dignity; therefore,

We recognize the responsibility of government to develop and implement sound legislative and fiscal policies that provide for the economic well being of all (Adopted 1983) We support welfare reform that treats people with dignity and provides equal access to benefits for all people based upon need. (Adopted 1998) We will fight hunger in Washington. (Adopted 1999)

We will work to –

- Maintain General Assistance Unemployable (GAU) funding.
- Increase funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP).
- Pass the Feeding Hungry Kids Bill to eliminate co-pays on school breakfasts and lunches for K-6 children.
- End predatory payday lending
- **Federal:** Support U.S. commitments to reduce poverty, improve health and education and protect the environment as agreed to in the Millennium Development Goals while addressing global challenges of energy and food crises, climate change and health emergencies

Housing and Homelessness

The Bible teaches us the importance of having a place to call home. God makes a place for all at the table and all are invited to share in God's abundance. Likewise, Jesus ministry emulated God's hospitality. As Christians, we are called to do no less; therefore;

We support legislation that helps create and preserve safe, affordable permanent housing to address the basic need and right of every person to safe shelter. (Adopted 2006)

We will work to -

- Maintain the Housing Trust Fund at the current level of funding.
- Protect housing programs for people coming out of prison, mental health institutions and the foster care system.
- Protect rental assistance, support services and emergency shelter funds. (Transitional Housing, Operating and Rent (THOR) and Emergency Shelter Assistance Program (ESAP).
- Increase the time for no cause evictions to take place from the current 20 days to 30 and up to 60 depending upon length of rental time in a dwelling unit.
- Promote transit oriented communities while ensuring preservation and development of affordable housing for low-income residents
- **Federal:** Support additional emergency assistance for people who are homeless due to foreclosures, whether former owners or renters.
- Support economic stimulus funding that helps individuals and families maintain their housing, especially low-income people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Healthcare

God's love extends to health and healing. Jesus modeled God's love in his caring for and healing the sick and infirm regardless of whom they were – rich or poor. As Christians, we are called to promote the health and healing of all, therefore,

We believe all residents should have access to quality and affordable health care. We support state and federally subsidized health care programs and advocate for adequate funding to ensure that health care is available for those who need it. (Adopted 1999) We recognize that the environment is inextricably linked to the health and well-being of future generations.... (Adopted 2002)

We will work to -

- Maintain the Health Insurance Partnership (HIP) Program that subsidizes health-insurance for low-income employees of small businesses
- Maintain the current funding levels for "Cover All Kids" Law (Apple Health) insuring all children on a sliding scale up to 300% of poverty
- Maintain current funding for the Basic Health Plan (BHP)
- Invest in clean water and cleaning up our waterways by requiring polluters to pay for the pollution they cause.
- **Federal:** Support HR 676 - Single Payer Health Care: Universal access to health care funded and administered by publicly accessible agencies. (Recommended in 2004 WAC federal priorities).