

Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference Delegate Assembly

Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Arizona

16-17 June 2006

Assembly participants included 83 delegates and seven visitors from around MCUSA.

Friday Evening Session, 16 June 2006

1. Opening worship was lead by the Sunnyslope worship team.
2. Stanley Weaver welcomed delegates on behalf of Sunnyslope. He introduced Al Whaley who then gave greetings from the PSMC, and moderated the meeting.
3. Introduction of the Listening Committee – The members of the Listening Committee include Marc Schlegel (Northern California); Joel Shenk (Southern California); and Bryce Miller (Arizona).
4. Moderator's Address – PSMC Moderator Leah Ann Alcazar used the theme "Knowing the times ... Knowing what to do" as the basis for sharing her convictions about immigration.
5. Personal sharing about immigration:
 - a. An Anglo perspective – Jacob Froese shared the experience of the Russian Mennonites following WWI, the formation of MCC, and his family immigrating to Canada.
 - b. A Latino perspective – Nayely Arreola, a Fresno Pacific University student, born in the US to undocumented workers, told about her family's struggle for documentation and citizenship. She now has a California legislator working on her case.
6. Treasurers Report – Myrna Schwartz and Leah Ann Alcazar presented the financial statements and the Treasurers Report was accepted. Actions were left for the next day.
7. Following the benediction, refreshments were served.

Saturday Session, 17 June 2006

1. Gathering Music – Makinto led the assembly in singing.
2. Scripture Reading and Prayer – Clare Ann Ruth-Hefflebower read Deuteronomy 24:14-22 and Matthew 25:35-56 and prayed for the assembly.
3. Al Whaley introduced the keynote speaker Jan Flaaten, Chief Executive Officer for the Arizona Ecumenical Council and a former Lutheran Pastor.
4. Keynote Address – Jan Flaaten shared about the work of the Arizona Ecumenical Council on immigration issues. As followers of Jesus, he said, we may not be followers of policy. Jan described the history of laws in the United States regarding immigration and immigrants' legal rights. He spoke about pejorative language used to describe immigrants, including common phrases like "illegal aliens."
 - a. One delegate shared his discomfort about the tendency to label immigration motivated by religious persecution "good immigration" and immigration for economic reasons "bad immigration."
 - b. Another delegate shared that he sees no difference between religious, economic or political immigration. "Our resistance to all of these types of immigration are motivated by greed, love of power and control."
5. Hymn – Al Whaley and Rich Sisco led the assembly in singing "Rain Down."
6. Report of the Pastoral Leadership Committee – Rich Sisco, pastor of Koinonia Mennonite Church, shared about the joy of reviewing applications for licensure and the sadness of addressing misconduct.
 - a. He reported that the pastoral license of Justo Morenos has been withdrawn.
 - b. Pastoral licenses have been approved for Antonia Onie, Grace Alua, and Emmanuel Obonna.
 - c. Three licensing applications that are in process are Bryce Miller, Paul Meyer and Danny Begay. Bryce shared briefly his joy about being part of PSMC.

- d. Two new pastors were introduced.
7. Report from Mennonite Church USA – Stanley Green introduced several Mennonite Church USA representatives who gave a multimedia presentation about the ministries of the church.
 - a. Jorge Vallejos, Executive Board staff member, gave an overview of the Mennonite Church USA.
 - b. Christina Hamsher shared about the new “Gather Round” Christian education curriculum that will replace the Jubilee curriculum.
 - c. Jan LaRue, Mennonite Mutual Aid Counselor in Phoenix, introduced Living Water Community Church in urban Chicago, which started a prayer group at the location of a recent drive-by shooting. Living Water received funding from Mennonite Mutual Aid to build a building.
 - d. John K. Sherriff, Interim President of Bethel College, described a church in Norwalk that was assisted by the Mennonite Education Agency.
 - e. Steve Wiebe-Johnson, Africa Director for Mennonite Mission Network, shared about Nesville Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
8. Review of Past Minutes – PSMC Board Secretary Tyler Zabriskie presented the minutes of the February 3-4 Winter Assembly, and explained that some minor edits were still needed, such as filling in some last names.

Action: The delegates approved the minutes of the February 2006 Winter Assembly.

9. Jeff Wright thanked conference staff members: Vivian Schwartz, bookkeeper; Doreen Martins, editor of Panorama; Joel Shenk, Conference Administrator; Rebecca Franco, CAL office staff person; and Ty Buxman who manages the conference website.
10. Conference Ministers’ Reports:
 - a. Al Whaley introduced his report on activities in Arizona.
 - b. Clare Anne Ruth-Heffelbower introduced her report on activities in Northern California and the Faith Formation Team Report. She called up Christina Hamsher, who described the resources in the Gather Round curriculum that would be discussed further in the afternoon seminar.
 - c. Jeff Wright shared about the following information in his Southern California report.
 - i. New Ministerial Leadership Policies
 - ii. Janie Beck, a Ministry Inquiry intern at Pasadena Mennonite Church, shared briefly about her summer assignment working with pastor Jennifer Davis-Sensenig. Jeff prayed for Jamie.
 - iii. District Elders
 - iv. Conference Ministry Report – PSMC has formalized its relationship with Jeannette Buller and Goldensun Peace Ministries of Phoenix, directed by Leroy Willems.
 - v. Jeff thanked MCUSA staff and Susan Mark Landis for a rapid response to our request to address immigration issues.
 - vi. Shalom Ministries Report – Joel Shenk introduced Los Angeles Urban Core, a service program based on a model that originated in Pittsburgh. Young people are selected and placed at Harambee Christian Center and the Glendale Salvation Army. Applications of recent college graduates are being considered. Valentina in the CAL Office has been named Director of Theological Education and will supervise the LEAD program.
11. Pacific Southwest Mennonite Retreat Ministries Report – Steve Good called attention to the report and explained Retreat Ministries’ efforts to clarify long-term priorities for retreat ministries.
12. Treasurer’s Report – Myrna Schwartz explained an expense item added to the PSMC budget for Native Ministries. Volunteer Service funds were previously shown as income, though the funds were actually in the bank. These funds were removed from income to show that the funds are released from cash.

Action: The delegates approved the May 31, 2006 Treasurer’s Report.
13. Gifts Discernment Committee Report and Selection of Board Members – Gene Kimel asked delegates to indicate their affirmation of nominees for conference positions in writing. He explained

that Art Montoya's name had been added as a candidate for the Shalom Ministries Board. Tyler Zabriskie announced that he is currently in the middle of a two-year term on the PSMC Executive Committee and need not be considered for affirmation.

Action: The delegates approved the following nominees for conference boards: Leah Ann Alcazar as Conference Moderator, Tyler Zabriskie as Conference Secretary, Will Friesen as Northern California Representative, Denver Locke as Southern California Representative, Ben Shetler as Arizona Representative, Sean Kao as Member at Large.

Action: The delegates approved the following nominees for Pastoral Leadership Committee: Sheri Hostetler

Action: The delegates approved the following nominees for PSMC Retreat Ministries Board: David Penner, John Barkman, Marsha Nussbaum

Action: The delegates approved the following nominees for Shalom Ministries Board: Art Montoya.

14. After a time of worship and making an offering, delegates adjourned for lunch.
15. Seminars – Delegates participated in three seminars offered in two sessions.
 - a. Immigration seminar led by Sheri Weidenhoeffer
 - b. Mennonite Mutual Aid seminar led by Jan LaRue
 - c. Gather Round Sunday School curriculum seminar led by Christina Hamsher
16. Reflections on the Assembly from the Listening Committee:
 - a. Mark Schlegel shared the need for biblical justice, and his sense that we all have responsibilities regarding immigration. There are many concerns on all sides, such as immigration due to persecution vs. immigration for economic reasons and about going against our government. There is a strong sense that PSMC needs to continue to lead the way in MCUSA on these issues, for example, by writing a letter on the issue to other conferences. As a church, we cannot look only at helping individuals, but need to address changing systems. Immigration is part of a network of global issues that are interlinked. We need to continue to educate ourselves in order to be an informed, prophetic voice.
 - b. Joel Shenk gave thanks to Sunnyslope Church and their thoughtfulness in taking different dietary needs into account. He enjoyed hearing about new emerging ministries and leaders. He appreciated the concise MCUSA multimedia presentation. He heard delegates say they like the idea of voting for individuals within the slate of candidates, but would like clearer instructions on how the process works in the future.
 - c. Bryce Miller shared that we enjoyed a time of worship and of mutual discernment. We came to be together as a united body and engaged difficult issues. The work of discerning the times is not done; it goes with each of us back to our congregations and our homes. The church lives in and through its life in the world.
17. PSMC Moderator Leah Ann Alcazar made some concluding remarks with the assistance of Matt Hamsher.
 - a. Matt Hamsher reported on the voting for conference leadership positions. All of the candidates were affirmed by at least 32 of the 39 responses.
 - b. There was a suggestion that the Gifts Discernment Committee provide a brief bio and that candidates stand to be introduced before future votes on conference positions.
 - c. Some proposed that we used standing microphones for future group discussions so that everyone can hear clearly.
 - d. Stan came up and received thanks and applause on behalf of Sunnyslope Church for their hospitality during the assembly. Leah Ann read a resolution of thanks on behalf of the conference.
18. Closing Communion and Prayer – Al Whaley offered a closing reflection about Jonas' failure to get the point of God's compassion for all people. Al, Jeff Wright, Clare Ann Ruth-Hefflebower and Rich

Sisco administered communion to the congregation.

Minutes by Tyler Zabriskie

Attachments:

- I. Treasurer's Report for May 31, 2006