

TRANSITION TEAM

June 13, 2011

Topeka, Kansas

Those present were Tom Watson, Bob Cox, Bishop Scott Jones, Brian Kottas, Troy Bowers, Janet Maxwell, Eduardo Bousson, Gary Beach, Corey Godbey, Pat Ault-Duell, Debra McKnight, Charlotte Abram, Sheran Cramer, Oliver Greene, Bishop Ann Brookshire Sherer-Simpson, Nancy Brown, Jan Todd, Gary Brooks, Cheryl Jefferson Bell and Carol Roettmer Brewer.

Gary Brooks offered the devotions including an additional verse for "Breathe on Me, Breath of God." Referring to the Pentecost scripture, he reminded us that it is "nine o'clock in the morning" for our Transition Team. God isn't done with us and our great plans for the Great Plains.

Tom Watson shared the agenda of the day.

Bishop Jones reviewed the Five Finger Results in Kansas East and Kansas West. There was little discussion in Kansas East; people had made up their mind. There were 70 questions from 37 people. It was reported that there were positive responses to the Transition Team report; some concern was expressed about the difference in what the Transition Team presented and Gil Rendle said about individuals versus groups.

Bishop Jones said that 52% were in the top two categories and 29% in the bottom two. Pat Ault-Duell distributed her notes from Kansas West. There is concern about rural and small churches, distance, and geographical size of Annual Conference with the perception that the meeting venues would all have to be east. Others were encouraged by the response with good discussion of the pros and cons; they said that the Technical Teams and Dream Teams will help to respond to questions.

As a guest of the Kansas West Conference, Sheran Cramer said that the first day was positive; she mentioned the youth who spoke in favor of being one Conference.

Bishop Jones reviewed the issues for Kansas West including geographical distance, where Annual Conference can be held and paying attention to small churches. People are concerned about their loss. Gil's presentation helped.

Janet reported that there are plans for Rural Fellowship Groups of three conferences to gather. Oliver reported that 10 officers of each Conference UMW are meeting this summer.

Regarding the Nebraska discussion, Bishop Sherer-Simpson said that the Nebraska retirees didn't raise any concern until April. There were many retirees who voted against becoming one new Annual Conference. Some of the retirees convinced some of the older laity. These people also raised comments about changes in Conference representation if there was one Annual Conference instead of three.

Bishop Sherer-Simpson reported that there were 445 ballots submitted in Nebraska. 89 people (20%) marked five fingers, 117 (26 %) marked four fingers, 127 (29 %) three fingers, 36 (8%) marked two

fingers and 76 (17%) marked one finger. Bishop Sherer-Simpson said that people were engaged since there were only three sheets without questions or comments.

Bishop Sherer-Simpson summarized the concerns about small churches, fears about fewer D.S.'s., geographical distance and a larger Annual Conference. Some are concerned that technology wouldn't work, and others expressed concern about being in the South Central jurisdiction

Bishop Sherer-Simpson continued that there were positive comments under five fingers as "way to go", move boldly, and opportunity to cut administration. She said that now we know what we need to do.

As a guest at the Nebraska Conference, Jan Todd complimented the Table Conferencing process in Nebraska. Bob Cox said that having a Kansas person at the table made the difference in the discussion.

Tom reviewed Nebraska's Friday schedule including Table Conferencing. He said that there is some misunderstanding about 2012 timeline, and there was no angry tone at microphone in Nebraska. He summarized that the learning from the conferences is that western churches are feeling that they will be forgotten.

Tom called for Small Church Dream Team to begin immediately. How shall we organize? Debra suggested that the Team Dreams present at the Clergy Special Session and to the Transition Team.

There will be a report on the Five Finger Votes including the numbers and percentages to all three Conferences plus an article about the comments. Also all comments will be placed on the websites.

Nancy Brown asked that the other groups report back to Transition Team. There will be a Transition Team member liaison to every group that is meeting.

Nancy Brown, Oliver Greene and Sheran Cramer will write the parameters for the Dream Teams. They will send out the document to the Transition Team by July 1. Nancy will convene.

It was decided that the Dream Teams will alternate distance and face to face meetings. Pat Ault-Duell will liaison Small and Rural Team. Matthew Fowler will liaison the Youth Dream Team.

The current Technical Teams need a course to follow to prepare for next Annual Conference. There is a precedent for Nebraska retirees to get health insurance if paid by the former Annual Conference. Technology and distant meetings issues will also need to be addressed.

Carol will report where a joint Annual Conference can meet at the October meeting.

The Joint Distribution Technical Team will be asked to report about the retirees' health insurance benefits to the October Transition Team meeting. Then it can be discussed with the Nebraska stakeholders.

The Techno Dream Team was formed. Andrew Connard and Craig Finnestad will convene. Need five from Nebraska. Larry Williams and Tim Ault-Duell were also suggested. Eduardo Bousson will liaison.

Bishop Jones outlined five issues that he sees that the Transition Team needs to address. It was decided that there will be a group of 6 (two from each Annual Conference) working on these areas for October meeting. The five issues are:

Episcopal office, location and cost

Name of the Area

Apportionments

Plan for Conference buildings

Staff--how do we implement the vision?

[Apportionments and staff issue need recommendations by Jan. 15th due to budgetary implications.]

Those selected for the group were the following:

West: Gary Brooks and Bob Cox

East: Jan Todd and David Livingston (or Nancy Brown)

Nebraska: Brian Kottas and Tom Watson

Bishop Jones will put his suggestions in writing. Both Bishops will resource the group. Gary Brooks will call the group together.

Each Annual Conference will communicate that others can join the Dream Teams. Nebraska will submit names to liaisons through Carol. Other groups can look over guidelines on the website.

The Transition Team will suggest potential chairs to the liaisons.

The Dream Teams are asked to report back to the Transition Team by Sept. 19th via Carol Roettmer Brewer.

The grieving process was considered. Addressing their grief helps the conferences to move forward. Bishop Sherer-Simpson recommended being together for the final vote. At our October meeting, we will discuss logistical issues of coming together and ways to get to know one another and hear one another.

The Team was asked to thank Christina and Susan Steuber as well as Elaine Michaud for their quick work on the five finger results. Their email addresses will be sent to the team.

Mileage expenses of the Dream Teams will be sent to the Episcopal Offices.

The Transition Team meeting schedule was reviewed. A phone call or video conference will happen on November 17, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lisa and Carol will work on the logistics.

Tom offered the closing prayer.

Summary of Liaison Assignments:

UMW: Cheryl Jefferson Bell

Safe Sanctuary and Sacred Space: Nancy Brown

Young Clergy and Young Adults Dream Team: Debra McKnight

Ethnic Racial Ministry Dream Team: Charlotte Abram and Corey Godbey

Techno Dream Team: Eduardo Bousson

Small and Rural Churches Dream Team: Pat Ault-Duell

Youth Dream Team: Matt Fowler

Recorded by Carol Roettmer Brewer