

From the President

Will We Confess That We Really Do Need Each Other?

Two summers ago on sabbatical I was privileged to attend a conference in Birmingham, England with 250 pastors from throughout the UK gathered for five days to study what it means to be missional. Roughly a third of the group was Anglican, a third Baptist, and a third Pentecostal. As God would have it, I was assigned to join a small group with three Pentecostal pastors and their spouses for the five day event. I was worried. They knew almost nothing about Presbyterians. And I had brought all my stereotypes of American Pentecostals.

As the week wore on and relationships formed, I started to be peppered with questions in- between lectures and Bible study: "How do Presbyterians plant churches? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in your tradition? Tell us about John Calvin. What do Presbyterian elders and deacons do? Do you believe in predestination?" And I had questions for them: how do Pentecostals in the UK conduct worship? Tell me about your understanding of the Holy Spirit? And baptism. How do you prepare a sermon? What are your challenges in planting a new congregation?"

I didn't come expecting this informal five day Presbyterian-Pentecostal bilateral. But there I was in the middle of it, exhilarated by the honesty, openness, patience and inquisitiveness of my conversation partners. What was so shocking to me was that any sense of denominational pretense was utterly absent.

At lunch one day, surrounded by pastors from all three traditions, I said that in the USA you wouldn't typically find Pentecostal, Episcopalian, and Baptist ministers hanging out together for a week long conference. "Things are different in the UK," a young Church of England priest responded. "We have all been so marginalized in the culture, we really need each other. We couldn't survive without this kind of relationship."

And so I returned home somewhat changed by this experience. As our own Christian churches move to the margins of American culture, will we confess that we really do need each other to be the body of Christ in this new moment?

-Scott Anderson

NAEIS President



Scott Anderson
Executive Director
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Find NAEIS on Facebook!

To join the NAEIS Facebook group, simply:

- 1) log in to Facebook;
- 2) search for 'National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff' and select our group; and
- 3) click on the "Request to Join" button.

All NAEIS members and others who want to relate to NAEIS are more than welcome!

Having Trouble Viewing this E-Mail?

A PDF version of the NAEIS newsletter is online at www.naeis.org.

NAEIS Gathering Updates

In addition to those publicized on the brochure for the upcoming NAEIS gathering, the following two individuals will be joining us as presenters in San Antonio:

Hierald Kane-Osorto will be representing the newly relaunched Student Christian Movement USA on the panel discussing 'Welcoming Young Adults into Ecumenical and Interreligious Work'. Hierald received his BA in World History with an emphasis in South Asia and a minor in Education from Messiah College. As a student, Hierald conducted fieldwork in El Salvador and Nepal focusing on human rights, Christian peacemaking, immigration, and economic/environmental development. He recently held the position of Associate Director of Multicultural Programs at Messiah College. Hierald, continues to be involved with global advocacy and solidarity work by supporting the work of Siglo XXIII, a global movement based in El Salvador promoting social transformation through a culture of peace, and chairing the North American Region's Advocacy and Solidarity Working group with the World Student Christian Federation. He is currently doing a year of service through the Lutheran Volunteer Corp and is the Peace Organizing Fellow at the Washington Peace Center.

Bee Moorhead will speak during the program on 'Welcoming Immigrants into Our Communities'. Bee has been the Executive Director of Texas Impact, an interfaith grassroots advocacy organization, since 2000 and also serves as Director of Texas Interfaith Power & Light. Bee has done significant work on immigration policy reform in Texas, including equipping congregations to be knowledgeable about immigration issues and proactive in advocating for just policies regarding our neighbors who are immigrants.

Bee holds a Master's Degree from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Bachelor of Arts in Drama from UT-Austin. An ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Bee has been a member of University Presbyterian Church in Austin since 1983.

In response to popular demand, the planning committee is devoting some time at the gathering to discuss professional development and best practices. The focus will be on

board development. Please come with some reflections, ideas, resources, or questions about strategies for developing an effective, dynamic, and engaged board. Thanks to

Rev. Scott Fischer of the Lancaster County (PA) Council of Churches for facilitating the roundtable discussion on this topic. If you are not able to attend, but would like to contribute something to the process, contact Scott at sfischer@lcchurches.org.

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All NAEIS gathering participants are encouraged to read or review two **vision papers** prepared for the recent Centennial Ecumenical Gathering in New Orleans. 'Christian Understanding of Unity in an Age of Radical Diversity' and 'Christian Understanding of Mission in an Age of Interfaith Relations' are available at <http://www.nccusa.org/witnesses2010/ga2010studyissues.htm> .

NCC Local & Regional Ecumenism Committee Meets

The newly formed Local & Regional Ecumenism Committee of the National Council of Churches will meet on Feb. 3-4 in San Antonio, just prior to the NAEIS gathering. Many members will be staying on for the gathering. Please keep them in prayer as they discern how to encourage mutually supportive and empowering relationships among ecumenical and interfaith communities. Several opportunities to give feedback to this group will be made available, but feel free to share thoughts, ideas, concerns with any of them at any time. If you want to communicate with the whole committee, send email to aripple@nccusa.org.

The following two members will share leadership responsibilities:

Angelique Walker-Smith, executive of the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis and ecumenical officer for the National Baptist Convention, USA, and NCC Governing Board Member

and

David Baak, retired local executive in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Reformed Church in America member, and former chair of the Ecumenical Networks Standing Committee

Other members include:

José Luis Casal, PC(USA), NCC Governing Board Member & Judicatory Executive, West Texas

Steven Copley, UMC, Interfaith State Executive, Arkansas

Robyn Fickes, Disciples of Christ, New Fire Local Ecumenism & Outreach Team, Washington, DC

Arlene Gordon, PC(USA), Retired Judicatory Executive, Central Florida

Don Green, ELCA, Local Executive, Southwest Pennsylvania

Darryn Hewson, UMC, Regional Ecumenical Officer & Local Pastor, Washington State

Stan Kimer, UFMCC, State Council Board, North Carolina

Marilyn Mecham, ELCA, State Executive, Nebraska

Chris Morton, Disciples of Christ, Local Executive, Tacoma/Pierce County, WA

Tom Orians, Catholic, Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, New York

Ron Quay, ABCUSA, Local-Regional Executive, Southeast Iowa/Northwest Illinois

Stephen Sidorak, UMC Ecumenical Officer, NCC Governing Board Member, & Former State Executive, Connecticut

Brenda Stiers, UCC, Retired Local Executive, Washington/Colorado

Rebecca Tollefson, PC(USA), State Executive, Ohio

Alice Webley, Episcopal Church, NCC Governing Board Member, Former Ecumenical Networks Committee member

An Orthodox representative will be determined in the future - nominations

welcome.

Ex Officio Members:

Peg Chamberlin, NCC President

Scott Anderson, NAEIS President

Carlos Malavé, Incoming NAEIS President

Liaisons:

CADEIO Rep: **Joe Witmer**, Catholic, Regional Ecumenical Officer, Ohio

NCC Faith & Order Rep: **Ray Kibler**, ELCA, Regional Faith & Order Chair, Southern California

(Other liaisons will be established by the committee over time.)

NCC Staff:

Ammon Ripple and **Michael Kinnamon**

Faith Advocates for Jobs

Paul Sherry from Interfaith Worker Justice is interested in collaborating with local and regional ecumenical and interfaith councils on Faith Advocates for Jobs, a campaign to address the unemployment crisis in the nation.

The Campaign has three primary objectives: (1) To establish in 2011 a network of congregation based unemployed worker support committees composed of unemployed and employed persons in at least 1000 congregations around the country. The purpose of these committees, a number of which already exist, is both to support the unemployed in various ways and to help advocate for actions to address the crisis. If you join with us, we hope you will encourage congregations with which you are related to join this network; (2) to work in support of national, state and local legislation to reduce unemployment; and (3) to provide educational resources including a religious leaders speakers bureau, educational materials, forums, etc. to help people understand the dimensions of the crisis and what can be done about it.

Several local and regional groups have already signed on to this campaign. A more detailed invitation will go out soon after the NAEIS gathering, but if you want to indicate interest, send email to Ammon Ripple at aripple@nccusa.org.

Women of Spirit and Faith

Kathleen Hurty brings to our attention an upcoming conference on the spiritual leadership of women. "The Alchemy of Our Spiritual Leadership: Women Redefining Power" is sponsored by Women of Spirit and Faith and features Sister Joan Chittister.

The gathering will be held April 28 - May 1, 2011 in San Francisco. For more information and registration, go to: www.WomenofSpiritandFaith.org.

Please spread the word!

Vigils Against Violence

A number of local and regional ecumenical and interfaith communities hosted vigils in their communities in the wake of the shootings in Tucson, Arizona. A national interfaith coalition is coordinating a national event to be held in DC and is hoping to have some community conversations across the country on civility in public discourse, gun violence and mental health to keep the conversations going and to seek action. If you have not received emails about these vigils and wish to be notified with any future updates, send email to aripple@nccusa.org.

Several vigil resources have been made available for sharing with other communities who would like to sponsor similar events.

The Arizona Ecumenical Council has posted the interfaith vigil held in Tucson on Jan. 11 and a couple of other services at:

<http://www.aecunity.net/Home/MourningHealingandHope/tabid/47545/Default.aspx>

The service and some speeches from the Montana interfaith vigil are online and permission has been granted to use them as you wish:

<http://www.nccusa.org/lre/montana-vigil-resources-012011.pdf>

The Church of the Brethren has offered up a Christian service for use in the wake of violent tragedies at: http://www.brethren.org/site/DocServer/January_16_Worship_Resources_letterhead.pdf?docID=11061

Hymn-Prayers addressing gun violence by Rev. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette available from the National Council of Churches and Church World Service:

<http://www.nccusa.org/news/110110gillettehymnprayers.html>

Interfaith Documentary on Intimate Partner Violence

The Interfaith Broadcasting Commission has produced "I Believe You: Faiths' Response to Intimate Partner Violence," a documentary exploring the stories of survivors of abuse and the response of faith groups to meet their needs. This documentary is airing on ABC affiliated stations - check local listings. A study guide is in development by the United Methodist Church and there are plans to work with the National Council of Churches to distribute the documentary and study guide to local and regional ecumenical groups which want to offer this program to their communities. To request that you be on the list about getting a copy of the DVD and study guide, send email to aripple@nccusa.org.

For more information, see <http://www.nccusa.org/news/110103ibelieveyou.html> .

Job Opening: St. Paul Area Council of Churches

The St. Paul Area Council of Churches is seeking a new executive director. Grant Abbott is retiring from the position after 7 years of faithful service in that role and 10 years of service on the Board prior to that. For more information about the council, go to <http://www.spacc.org>. Find the job posting by clicking 'About Us' and then 'Job Openings'.

News From NAEIS is published monthly. News items should be sent to newsletter editor [Scott Anderson](mailto:sanderson@wichurches.org) at sanderson@wichurches.org.