

**Toronto Area Interfaith Council
Thursday, 21 January 2010
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

MINUTES:

Attendees:

Bob White, Roman Catholic
Bruce Rae, Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Church
John Hill, Anglican Church
Zafar Waqar, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
John Joseph Mastrandrea, United Church of Canada
Terry Gallagher, Scarboro Mission
Mark MacDonald, Anglican Church of Canada
Leslie Mezei, Universal Worship
Sid Ikeda, Toronto Buddhist Church/Japanese Canadian Cultural Center
Paul McKenna, Scarboro Mission
Ray G. Czajkowski, Ontario Multi-faith Council
Sam Vesuna, Zoroastrian Society of Ontario
Debra Faulk, Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto
Paul G. Walker, Anglican, Canadian Church Historical Society
David Tin, Evangelical Lutheran Church
Gigi Young, Evangelical Lutheran Church
Earl Smith, Church of Scientology
Pat Felske, Church of Scientology
Jack Panozzo, Catholic Charities

Chair: F. Damien Macpherson, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto

Regrets:

Davinder Dhanoa, Sant Nirankari Mission, absent due to the birth of his daughter
J.P. Morgan, Jesuit, absent due to illness
Zul Kassamali, Progressive Muslims of Ontario, absent on a mission in China

1. Opening Reflection: F. Damien Macpherson led the focus on the people of Haiti, asking attendees to provide a word to share.

2. Review of Agenda:

John Hill requested that the topic of Emergency Preparedness be added under "Other" and Earl Smith requested to brief on actions being taken in Haiti, also under

“Other”. Sid Ikeda raised the issue that for the Annual General Meeting that the financial reports also be included on the agenda.

3. Identification of proposed members of the Executive Committee

- **Recommendations by nominating committee**
- **Agreement on slate of officers**

Leslie Mezei spoke on behalf of the nominating committee (F. Damien Macpherson, Ellen Campbell and Leslie Mezei), providing a written memo of the new TAIC executive, by acclamation.

He referred to another printout of By-law no. 1 of the TAIC with reference to the Mission Statement “(a) to encourage dialogue among the faith communities in the Toronto area and affirm equity for all.” He noted that the new executive will among themselves decide what position each holds and asked for the new executive members to be welcomed and congratulated.

Ray Czajkowski asked that the minutes reflect that members present today were asked for any further nominations to the executive and there were none. Leslie referred to the TAIC bylaws which states we make decisions by consensus and we have consensus on the new executive.

The new TAIC executive is:
Davinder Dhanoa, Sant Nirankari Mission
Rev. Debra Faulk, Don Heights Unitarian Congregation
Rev. John Hill, Anglican Diocese of Toronto
Zul Kassamali, Association of Progressive Muslims of Canada
Sam Vesuna, Zoroastrian Community
Rev. Damien Macpherson, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, holding the position of Past President

F. Damien ended with remarks on the appointment of new executives being a positive movement forward, that it will continue to draw TAIC forward, and that success takes patience and perseverance.

4. Annual Plan of Activities

- **Mayor’s breakfast**

Bob White proposed to work with a planning committee for a Mayor’s Breakfast, due to the importance of staying connected to the City of Toronto. Other members who indicated they will be part of this Mayor’s Breakfast planning committee are: Debra Faulk, John Joseph Mastrandrea, Father Damien Macpherson, Earl Smith, and Bruce Rae.

The planning committee will meet sometime in the next two weeks and discuss the date (last year was 7 May) and venue. Bob White to send an email on meeting.

- **Action related to the two TAIC initiatives: Food Bank and 211 Toronto**

Bob White reminded attendees that last year he met with Toronto City Councillor Joe Mihev who suggested that the economic downturn had significantly impacted on people in the City and asked us to accept responsibility. We met and decided we could mobilize the faith community in two ways:

- 1) increase food to the food banks, particularly the 11 critical items named by the Food Bank; and
- 2) encourage faith groups to provide people guidance, education, jobs, clothing and food and direct them to the 211 Toronto number for people in need, as well as using the Internet.

Bob has not heard from the members and asked if they had done something on these initiatives to relay the information to him so that he can put it on a data base. The need is still there, since there is still a major economic crisis. He gave an example of the Native People's Church needing a computer which was organized by F. Damien. They then counselled four people, who then went out on job interviews.

Earl Smith briefed that just before the holiday, members of the Church of Scientology did a concert and collected 640 pounds of food for the Food Bank of the 11 critically needed items.

Bob White will continue to push that initiative.

- **Other:**

- a)Emergency Preparedness**

John Hill provided a memorandum to the members that he had prepared in relation to pandemics, re Death Surge Planning. He had been asked at the last meeting to revise this memo. John brought up an invitation to an Emergency Preparedness Seminar for Faith Groups, sponsored by the United Church of Canada, encouraging members to go. This will provide a larger picture and might be the jumping off point for more specific issues in relation to pandemics.

The seminar is for all faith leaders/representatives on Thursday, February 18th, 2010 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at the United Church of Canada, General Council Offices.

F. Damien encouraged all to attend.

- b) Scientology Volunteer Ministers in Haiti**

Earl Smith briefed on actions being taken by the Church of

Scientology to fly in doctors and Scientology Volunteer Ministers to Haiti to assist in relief efforts, as well as providing necessities like food, water and physical labour.

c) Wakening the Dream Symposium

Leslie Mezei briefed that the next Wakening the Dream symposium is to be held at Terry Weller's church – the Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora. Terry publishes the Unity Interfaith newsletter. The symposium brings together sustainability and spirituality and will be held on January 30, 2010.

d) Financial Report

F. Damien briefed the members that no financial report is available due to the absence of Liz Chapel, (former member of the executive and signing authority.) He will persevere in contacting her and get the signing authority changed.

Ray Czajkowski brought up the need to see a motion passed and an election of a Treasurer to show to the bank in order to change the signing authority. F. Damien indicated this is not necessary as he will have Liz there to make the changes.

Bruce Rae raised the question of what are the dues and when are they to be paid. Leslie Mezei indicated this will be up to the new executive. All current members of TAIC have paid once and some twice.

5. Interfaith Dialogue

- **Presentation on the Golden Rule:**

Leslie Mezei introduced Paul McKenna of Scarboro Missions, who briefed that there are 1200 expressions of the Golden Rule and it is the most universal moral rule in history. It is effective in many things, including inter-faith and very effective with youth. In Ontario, all Catholic schools are mandated to teach World Religions. Scarboro Mission provides Golden Rule retreats --- religion, ethics and spirituality and fun!

A video presentation done by the Scarboro Mission was then shown, with discussion following the presentation.

6. Next Meeting:

- **DATE:** March 23, 2010
- **LOCATION:** Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto
- **Suggestions for Agenda:**

Paul McKenna, Scarboro Missions, suggested that we might want to hear about the World Parliament of Religions, which he attended. Father Terry Gallagher noted that other people were there from other traditions, such as Imam Abdul Hai Patel. Other individuals named included Dr. Golan Dastigir, professor of religion, and Gail Allen, United Church and General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Father Terry Gallagher and Paul McKenna were requested to arrange to have them attend our next meeting on March 23rd, 1010.

7. Closing Reflection: Leslie Mezei

At the request of the Past President, F. Damien Macpherson, minutes were taken by: Rev. Pat Felske. Church of Scientology of Toronto
21 January 2010