

Pomona Valley UNA of USA
Minutes of Board & Program Meeting – Porter Hall, September 16, 2008

Present: Mel Boynton*, Dean McHenry*, Bob Smith*, Art Sutton*, Lois Thompson*, Rhodes Thompson, Shirley Williams*, Tinker Williams, Willard Hunter, Divina Himaya, Kim Hougland, Tom Ambrogi, Ardi Rashidi*, Charles Bayer, Bob Gerecke, Graydon Bell, Louise Bell, Alicia Sheridan, Howard Towne, Jack Monroe, Carolee Monroe, Bob Wallace, Rizek Abusharr, Carter Burch, & Eve Burch. Refreshments were provided by Mel. *Board Member

President Mel Boynton called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

The Secretary had provided minutes of the meeting of June 17th by email with a summary of the presentation by Dean McHenry of CGU on “Seeds of Ethnic Conflict.”

Treasurer Emily Burch reported by phone that our treasury balance stands above \$2000

The President shared our chapter award for membership growth in 2007, a letter from national President Bill Leurs regarding national reorganization, our chapter’s display in the Claremont library next month to celebrate the UN, and announced forth-coming Chapter meetings and events:

October 21 5:30 meeting – Richard Harris will report on his Palestine Israel experience – Bob Smith will provide treats.

October 23 luncheon at International Place – UN Day speech by Pasadena’s Sherry Simpson Dean

November 8th Division Annual Meeting at 11 AM in Pasadena – with focus on human rights

November 18th 5:30 meeting – Karl Haushalter will speak of the Global HIV-AIDS Pandemic – Shirley Williams will provide treats.

December 16th 5:30 meeting – Lako Tongun will update us on the Darfur Genocide.

Mel introduced Charles Bayer, respected author, Pilgrim Place resident, and formerly with Progressive Christians Uniting. He gave a presentation regarding the relationship between religion and culture.

Charles asked us to consider that when one religion dominates a culture, that religion becomes more controlling and fundamental. Examples include Christianity in Rome after Constantine; the inquisition after Christianity became controlling in Europe after 1300; and Christianity in the US south in the early 20th century.

When two major religions dominate, they clash. Catholics vs. Protestants and Islam vs. Christianity have had bloody conflict for control between and within countries. Religious strife had caused many wars and lots of strife within culture.

On the other hand, we know that when multiple religions co-exist and no one or two dominate, there is better chance for peaceful/respectful relationship and less fundamentalism and control by any one religion. This was the vision of the US founding fathers and is in our constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. They had experience with state religions and wanted nothing like that in the new United States. Some in our culture have forgotten this.

As with these three scenarios on religion, a single nation state dominance is harmful. If one nation or super power dominates, they think they have the right to control and often abuse that control. This is called empire. Empires abuse other nations and people. We have seen it many times in history and no empire (including our own) lasts forever.

Similar to religion, if two super powers compete, they tend to fight. The cold war is a recent example. The conflicts is also harmful to people around the globe. The cold war nearly turned to hot war.

If multiple countries can establish peaceful co-existence, there is better chance of respectful relationships and the possibility of war is reduced. This supports the idea of a well-organized and fair United Nations.

The worst scenario is a super power with a state religion as this combines two concentrations of control and

abuse. Recently, some have suggested that the United States should embrace our Christian heritage and make Christianity our official religion. IN political terms, the Republican Party convinced conservative Christians in 14 southern states to effectively take control of the party. Nationally, George W Bush was the bridge between the Republican Party and his Conservative Christian followers. Charles suggested this coalition is beginning to fray as the Christian right has begun to realize that they were conned by the Republican Party. Many fundamentalist Christians have found common ground with the wider culture on environmental and economic issues and will not be voting en masse for Republicans this November.

Charles read several quotes from his latest book, "Reclaiming the Christian Faith". An excellent discussion followed. He made copies available to those in attendance at his cost of \$10.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mel Boynton, President