

Daily Summary

Thursday, June 18, 2009 Morning Session

Bishop Brown called the morning session to order at 8:30 a.m. Rochelle Frazier offered prayer. A point of personal privilege was granted to Pam Fine, co-chair of the Commission on Children and Poverty, who announced the winners of 5 grants from the commission: St. Marks, Stockton; Forrestville, St. Paul's; Manteca; First UMC, Reno; Bakersfield Trinity.

Bishop Brown reported on the **Ruling of Law** arising out of last year's Annual Conference Session. Bishop Shamana had ruled an item out of order and the decision was automatically referred to the Judicial Council for review. The Judicial Council ruled that the Bishop's decision was in order and therefore the item has no effect and is moot. Because of this ruling, Bishop Brown ruled that the current Item 18 is out of order and will not be presented. Further discussion brought a motion to suspend the rules in order to allow Item 18 to be heard in its assigned legislative section with appropriate amendments to bring it in line with the judicial ruling. Motion approved by a super majority.

Susan Hunn brought the organizational motions, accepted the addition of the interpreter's table to the bar, and the motions were approved. She introduced Emily Long, the Assistant Agenda Secretary, and requested that all courtesies be addressed to Emily.

Three items were brought for **late admission** due to events taking place after the Conference deadline. The body voted separately, by super majority, to accept Item 31, September as National Recovery month; Item 32, Marriage Equality; and Item 33, Concerns for the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma.

Jola Bortner requested that anyone who would like to sign a petition to be presented to Senator Dave Cogdile of California State Senate District #11, may do so at Table 24 in the display area. The petition concerns inflammatory remarks he made regarding immigrants.

Bishop Brown repeated the request of the Committee on Religion and Race that we introduce ourselves when at the microphone, by including our racial ethnic origin(s). The Bishop explained that the intent of this exercise is to raise our consciousness about how widely diverse we are, and to encourage us to extend our hospitality to all. We are asked to identify ourselves in the way in which we want to be identified.

The Conference Secretary moved the Rules, for consideration of Constitutional Amendments, and after discussion the motion was approved.

In a point of personal privilege, prayers were asked for Karen Watson's mother, who was admitted in the ICU; and for Gordon Fairchild, clergy member who has been diagnosed with cancer. The Bishop reminded the body that each day we have a person who is in prayer for the Session, and that this morning it is Rochelle Frazier. Prayers may also be given to the prayer center.

The Committee on Religion and Race reported on their monitoring of yesterday's sessions. Jane Yin and Lee Williamson, members of CORR, provided the report and assessment of the church's openness to inclusiveness. Statistics regarding ethnicity and gender of presenters, speakers, and staff were included in the report.

Jeffrey Kwan, chair of CORR, presented **The Mel Talbert Award for Social Justice to this year's recipient, Lee Williamson**. The award, established in honor of Bishop Talbert, is given to those who best exemplify a proactive stance in dismantling racism in church and society. Lee was awarded this for lifelong commitment to full constitutional justice for all people.

Laddie Perez Galang, chair of the **Nominating Committee**, identified **Tables K2, 4, and 6** as the committee's table, and requested that corrections to the report be turned in by noon today. Additional nominations may be brought to the table for consideration.

Mark Zier introduced Section information. Items to be added to the section assignments: Item 31 – September Recovery month, Section G; Item 32 – Marriage Equality, Section H; and Item 33 – Methodist Church of Fiji, Section F.

Franklin Scott reported from Retired Clergy Association that two scholarships are given each year to seminary students in our Conference. This year they were presented to **Kim Young and Samuel Sondah**.

Bishop Brown recognized **the new Circuit Leaders**, acknowledging that because this is a new idea, there will be some confusion. It takes time to live into a new way of doing things and we are all invited to participate in the process of discovery. All 7 of the existing districts will continue and will function in many of the ways they have always functioned. The AAs will be supportive of the churches and pastors. Each congregation and pastor will have a clearly identified DS. That person will be available to them. This is not re-districting. It is a process by which we intentionally think together the ways in which we need to be different in the years to come. There is no secret plan; rather, we want to think this through together. The emphasis for the circuits is on building relationships and having conversations in new ways. The Bishop's desire is to work in a posture that is not seen as top down, but as working beside. The Conference was invited to discover the ways in which we need to be present to each other in the days to come. There will be District Superintendents in an expanded version of the role we have known. **Ted Virts** will stay as Dean of the Cabinet, being a hybrid of DS/Assistant to Bishop. He is not a mini-Bishop. Ted brings excellent gifts that will help us facilitate leader development, discipleship formation, and improved functioning as a system. The Circuit Leaders were prayed over with a laying on of hands by all the plenary.

Linda Wiberg introduced the ministry workshops being offered this morning.

After announcements, we were dismissed with prayer to go to workshops, lunch, and legislative sections.

(Afternoon and evening sessions will be summarized in a second document.)