

Genetics Task Force Meeting September 12-14, Chicago, Illinois

Meeting Notes

Present: Janet Williams, Jadon Berry, Frank Maenpa, Sandy Schlesinger, Mary Minette, Steven Ullestad, Yvonne Marshall, Judy Klusman, Aana Marie Vigen, Susan Martyn, Leland Glenna, Paul Nelson, Robin Mattison, Carmelo Santos, Juliette Kahle, Jerry DeWitt, Pat Zerega, Ted Peters, Linden Olson, Per Anderson, Richard Perry

Excused: Bob Lebel

Staff: Roger Willer, Ron Duty

Friday, September 12

Janet Williams convened the meeting at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 12. Roger Willer led a Dwelling in the Word exercise on Ecclesiastes 3:1ff. Task force members then gave personal updates.

Each task force member assessed what the task force needed to do in the next two to three weeks to get the study ready for editors with some specific suggestions or concerns. It was explained that each task force member will need to sign off by e-mail on the final draft before it is sent to the publishers. Willer summarized the main concerns that he heard from the members about the existing manuscript, which tended to focus on readability, redundancy among some of the sessions, and the inadequacy of the treatment of certain topics such as justice. Redundancy was noted between sections A5 and B2, A1 and A2, B4 and B8, and A5 and B1. Willer said that in the remaining time for work on the draft, the task force should prioritize those concerns or areas that are of most concern. There was additional conversation about how best to express the dynamic nature of the time we are in with respect to genetics in a way that encourages and does not foreclose deliberation about the issues of genetics.

The task force then reviewed the manuscripts for Sections A1 and A2 in detail. It then recessed for dinner.

The task force re-convened and reviewed in detail Sections A3 and A4. Willer led a closing Dwelling in the Word exercise on Matthew 22:34ff. The task force then recessed for the evening with an assignment to re-read A3 and A4 by morning.

Saturday, September 13

The task force re-convened and engaged in a Dwelling in the Word exercise on Psalm 8.

There was additional discussion of Session A4 in light of the previous evening's discussion.

The task force then turned to a detailed discussion of the manuscript of Session A5 in light of two "test cases" and consider whether the resources mentioned in the session are helpful or not.

There were two sets of sessions for small groups which considered sessions in the "B" section of the study manuscripts. Notes from these sessions were collected for the writing team.

Willer reviewed the schedule of editorial steps leading up to publication of the study:

- Sessions will be revised by their primary writers by September 26th in light of discussion at this meeting
- The Writing Team (Per Anderson, Janet Williams, Leland Glenna, Susan Martyn, Roger Willer, and Ron Duty) will meet on September 28th
- Session manuscripts will be between 3,000 and 3,500 word in length unless there are lengthy examples
- On September 30, the editing process will begin; initial work will be done by Roger and Ron, and final work will be done by a style editor
- The manuscript will be available for task force members' review on October 10
- Task force members will have until October 14 to sign off on the manuscript by e-mail
- Copy editing will start on October 15
- The corrected manuscript will go to print on October 20
- Publication is due on November 3, and the manuscript is also expected to be live on the web site by that date.

Martyn asked for volunteers to review various B-sessions by September 28th.

Co-chairs Anderson and Williams will represent the task force to the media about the study. Others are encouraged to refer media inquiries to the staff. Ullestad said he would inform the synodical bishops about the study.

Willer noted that the study will be featured as part of the 2009 Annual Gathering of Lutheran Ethicists in Chicago in January.

Task force members were encouraged to send staff suggestions of other groups to which we should send copies of the study. There was also a possibility of a workshop on the study at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Upcoming Task Force meeting dates were set:

April 17-18, 2009.

November 6-8, 2009.

January 22-24, 2010.

October 22-23, 2010.

January 21-23, 2011

Willer said that the April, 2009 meeting will be used to consider topics which the task force has not yet addressed in depth. We will also consider what we have heard thus far about the use of the study. The task force will also map out its process for drafting the social statement at that meeting.

The day's work was ended with a Dwelling in the Word exercise using Romans 12:1-2.

Sunday, September 14

The task force worshipped in the Lutheran Center Chapel.

Ted Peters presented an updated session on genetics and human identity (B2) and promised additional changes to come.

There was discussion of the primer, what additional features might be added to it, and how it was intended to be used with sessions of the study.

Each of the writers who lead Saturday break-out sessions on the parts of the study they drafted was asked to share what they learned from the break-outs. Discussion of the features of certain of the B-sections followed.

After a break, the meeting was wrapped up and adjourned.