

International Catholic Engaged Encounter Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

September 26 - September 30, 2005
Schoenstatt Retreat Center
Constantia Cape Town, South Africa

Monday September 26

Opening Mass celebrant Fr. Rohan Smutz

20:00 - Gerry Bach officially welcomed all. The meeting was opened. Thanks were extended to our host community of Cape Town for the flower arrangement and the time spent that afternoon touring, etc.

Introductions: We began with the host community of Cape Town. **Phillip & Patsy Prince** involved with EE since 1991 former regional team from 1996-1999. They have three children and five granddaughters.

Ronald & Ursula Sobotker-12 years married, two daughters and have been involved with EE for over 10 years and they are the local coordinators.

Fr. Rohan Smutz--ordained 6 years, has one older brother who is also a priest and 2 sisters who are married.

Outline and Weekend Resources--Fr. Gilberto Gomez - ordained in 1959 involved with EE since 1977. Started EE in Columbia in 1978

Jairo & Claudia Duque--they are married 37 years 3 children 2 grandsons, been involved in ME 11 years and EE 17 years. This is their transition year off the Executive Committee, having completed two terms.

International Executive Team--Gerry & Ann Bach -married 32 years, 3 children, 3 grandsons and another grandchild on the way. Involved with EE for over 20 years.

Fr. Gary Gummersheimer- ordained 26 years and involved with EE over 15 years.

Financial Team -Francis & Annette Wattie- married 24 years, 2 children, EE for 15 years.

Fr. Leonard Alfonso--involved with EE since 1985 and was ordained in 1986.

Paco ~ Mali Rocha -incoming outline and weekend resources team, they have been married 35 years, have 3 sons and involved in EE for 22 years.

Fr. Javier Hinojosa-has been ordained for 31 years been involved in ME since 1987 and EE since 1991. Fr. Javier also served as our interpreter.

US NET-Fr. Jules Arceneaux-has been involved with EE for 15 years and was ordained in 1990. Fr. Jules was representing the US NET team as the team couple **Paul & Carolyn Trahan** were unable to join us as they were staying home do to damage to their property during Hurricane Rita.

Statistics and Post Weekend Resources-Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado -

married for 19 years they have 2 children and been involved with EE for 10 years. They are currently without a team priest as Fr. Angel Heredia died suddenly over the summer.

Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and apologies were extended that the e-mailed version did not get to everyone before arrival here in South Africa.

Dinner on Tuesday evening will be with Archbishop Lawrence Henry of Cape Town and members of ME and some of the Archdiocesan offices. Following the dinner there will be a reception with the Archbishop and members of the local EE community.

Since they did not receive the agenda prior to leaving Trinidad, Francis & Annette Wattie is not prepared to do a dialogue on Wednesday. Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado will take care of this.

Gerry explained this is an Executive Meeting and how voting procedures work. While regional teams are present and welcome and their input is encouraged; the Executive Committee trios do the voting.

It was requested that in the future to avoid not receiving information that all emails be sent with a "receipt requested".

International directory was passed around so that corrections could be made on the information contained there.

It was also noted that the web site needed to be corrected and updated, especially in the area of email addresses.

Copies of the new "Intimacy" talk outline, writing guide and questions will be made available in the morning to all members in both English and Spanish for their study prior to discussion later in the week.

Discussions then followed regarding the structure of the weeks meeting times and times to spend with the local community.

Copies of the new International Handbook were distributed to all present. This is the third revision of handbook and by-laws that was approved last year in Virginia, USA. Discussion followed on some corrections that needed to be made to the text.

Tuesday, September 27th

9:00 - Mass (Main Celebrant - Fr. Javier Hinojosa)

Fr. Javier spoke to the Gospel regarding the difficulties of sometimes accepting Jesus in light of the issue of our world. He used examples of situations he knew of regarding a couple involved with EE and their marriages of their children.

9:30 - Review of Minutes from the 2004 General Board Meeting.

Fr. Gilberto pointed out that the text was not clear regarding the meeting with ME in South America and the ICEE leaders that the Maldonado's represented ICEE.

Fr. Gilberto also noted that the report of the Outline team was only put in an overview form rather than as an attached document giving the full report. He suggested that the full report be added to the official minutes but not necessarily added to what is put on the web site, so that all can view the report and for the history of organization. It was suggested that regional coordinators be given the entire minutes of the meeting and only the important highlights be posted on website.

10:00 - Regional Reports

Annette Wattie gave the report of the English-speaking Caribbean. Major point of the report St. Vincent and Guyana are no longer giving weekends. Full report is attached to these minutes.

Then Paco Rocha gave the report of Mexico. A key point was the increase in divorce noted by the government statistics. They are also experiencing a decline in presenting couples. A major issue in Mexico affecting the ministry is the High rate of unemployment. The Mexico region was happy to report expansion into several new areas and is working in several other areas to expand. They are also planning to expand their program for priests to include all Spanish-speaking priests, a retreat style atmosphere but more of a sharing with those who work in the area of EE. Full report is attached to these minutes.

10:30 - Break

10:45 - Regional Reports continued

The Maldonado's gave the report of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Central America on behalf of Cesar & Gilda Liranzo and Fr. Rafael Cruz, who because of finances were not able to attend. They reported on the issues of difficulties in Cuba and because of help of ICEE they were able to go to Cuba and expand the community to Guantanamo. They have been requested to make another weekend in November in Santiago de Cuba and will be requesting money for expansion. It is necessary for them to be involved because they have not been able to find a couple in Cuba to take charge. In February 2005 they had a regional meeting for Central America in Honduras. The highlights of that meeting seem to center around the issue of the outline used in Guatemala, relationship with ME in Panama, expansion into Puerto Rico, the continued work in Nicaragua which is currently being helped by Costa Rica and the desire to continue working on expansion into Cuba. Discussion on this report followed with major areas being expansion into the several areas, the relationship with ME in Panama and Guatemala outline.

Guatemala outline-important to realize that we as ICEE need to safe guard the integrity and sanctity of the entire program that it is a true presentation of marriage preparation of

The Catholic Church. The suggestion was made that there be a meeting between the Guatemala community and the current Outline Team (Paco & Mali Rocha and Fr. Javier) to address this issue. Fr. Jules stated that the USA is in the process of looking over the entire outline for update and that perhaps it would be beneficial for Guatemala to send a copy of their outline to the USA to be looked at as part of that review, to be understood not as an approval of their outline as separate but just as a part of the overall review that the USA is undertaking, as the cost to get this approved as a Catholic program is very expensive. The decision was made by the Executive Committee that the Outline Team will meet with the Guatemala community and will forward to the USA their outline or issues within their outline if they feel that it is warranted.

Gerry & Ann Bach gave the Canada report, as they attended the National Convention in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. An issue that came to be realized is that EE is in all of Canada not just in the eastern area close to the USA it was decided at that meeting that the trio that represents Canada will no longer all be required to be bilingual in English and French but that at least one member of the trio be bilingual. Canada will be the host of the 2007 committee meeting of ICEE in Niagara Falls, Canada as was agreed to at the 2004 committee meeting.

Juan Simon Maldonado gave a report on EE in India. Most of the report was statistical and also dealt with the various languages that are covered in that country, especially translating the outline into some of the local languages.

12:30 - Lunch and Siesta

14:30 -10110 Dialogue led by Paco & Mali Rocha

15:15 - continued with Regional Reports

Fr. Jules distributed to each trio a CD entitled "Marriage and the Eucharist " by Christopher West. He also stated that he had extra copies if any one wanted one. Also extra copies and other titles are available from Mary Foundation the address can be found on the CD.

Fr. Gilberto then gave the South American-North report sent by German & Sofy Hurtado de la Roche and Fr. Dario Valencia Uribe. An obstacle far the region is the area that is covered and the expense to bring everyone together. Also an issue is the lack of information and communication between countries as well as between bishops and priests. Information on the individual countries can be found in the attached report.

Juan Simon Maldonado passed out the report from Santiago & Jalyne Castillo the National Team of Ecuador CEE. Complete report is attached to these minutes.

Fr. Rohan Smutz gave an oral report on EE in South Africa. They are experiencing a priest shortage throughout the country. Cape Town is having an issue of funding even though they give about 8 weekends a year. Johannesburg gives about 10 weekends a year. They have no follow-up program. Durban gives about 4 weekends a year

The South America - South report. The report of Paraguay CEE from their coordinators Hugo & Mirtha Alcaraz and Fr. Gabriel Lopez was distributed in both English and Spanish and presented by Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado. Both Spanish and English report is attached to these minutes. The Maldonado's spoke to the issue that they believed that the correct decision had been made to separate South America into two regions even though there are still issues that need attention. In Chile the issue remains the independence of CEE from ME as is the case in other areas of South America - South.

Juan Simon Maldonado also gave a report on East Asia, especially in Singapore who are holding 18 weekends a year with 32 couples each. They have been given approval as a marriage preparation program. There is new leadership in Singapore. They also gave statistics on the make-up of couples on a weekend. A complete copy of report is attached to these minutes.

Fr. Jules Arceneaux gave an oral report on USA. National Convention in Houston, Texas in 2006 as the hurricane has not dampened the spirit of the local community in their preparation for the convention. The East Coast and the Midwest regions of the USA Board are up for discernment as will be the office of NET as they will have their last meeting as NET next month. There is a problem with the new outline on "Intimacy" with the West Coast communities who have written their own new "intimacy" talk. Copies of the rationale, outline and questions of the new approved outline were given out to all participants of this meeting. The US Bishops are in the process of issuing a pastoral letter on marriage and EE and ME are very involved in giving input into this work. USA is experiencing new communities as a new one in Alaska and renewed one in Brooklyn, NY and are in the process of closing the community in Chicago, which has been a problem. A decline in the number of weekends and the number of participants means a loss of revenue, which is causing the USA to reevaluate its spending policies. Priestless weekends are growing in USA, as are two-day weekends as the cost of facilities is making this a reality. USA still wishes to receive any and all Spanish-speaking materials from ICEE that they can. The USA National board prays at each meeting for the continued success of ICEE and much interest is shown for the continued growth of EE in Cuba.

Jerry Bach reported that while the ICEE Executive Team was in London that they made contact with folks England and that they are part of ME and they realize that they may need to stop using the EE name and logo. Also, it was discovered that Manchester is looking for marriage preparation programs and when we return from this meeting an attempt to contact them will be made.

16:45 - Break

16:55 - Prayer Service (Paco & Mali Rocha and Fr. Javier)

18:30 - Dinner with Archbishop Lawrence Henry

Wednesday, September 28th

9:00 - Mass (Main Celebrant- Fr. Leonard Alfonso)

9:45 - TEAM B Report - Finances

Annette Wattie passed out the financial report and shared the report with the committee. The report also contained the anticipated expenses for 2005-2006. Discussion followed concerning next year's meetings in conjunction with the National Convention USA in Houston, Texas. The amount of money available for expansion will be discussed later in the agenda. The complete report is attached to these minutes.

10:30 - Break

10:45 -. TEAM A Report - Statistics & Post W/E Resources

Juan Simon & Patricia Maldonado handed out both a written report in both Spanish and English as well as a CD containing the same material as the handout as well as information about the history of ICEE and various pictures of meetings and activities throughout 2004. The important portions of this report will be attached to these minutes.

12:00 - Marriage Encounter Relations World Wide

The gathering last evening with members of the communities of ME and Retrouvaille was a sign of what can happen, but this is not the case in all the world. This is not the case in several areas in South America. As we are meeting here, World Wide ME is meeting in Kenya and they are to address this issue reminding the WWME communities that this is also a matter of justice as they are using our materials without permission. There seems to be some places in the world, however, where the communities do not wish to be separated from ME.

12:30 - Lunch and afternoon & evening activities

Thursday, September 29th

9:00 - Mass (The Main celebrant Fr. Gilberto at the Shrine of Our Lady on the grounds of the Schoenstatt, South Africa retreat facility.)

10:00 - TEAM C Report - Outline & W/E Resources

Jairo & Claudia Duque and Fr. Gilberto shared their final report as the Outline team as their second term in this position is ending; they thanked the Executive Teams that they have worked with and they congratulated Paco & Mali Rocha and Fr. Javier, to whom they are now passing on the responsibility of this committee.

They did voice several concerns especially the shortening of the weekend in too many countries. They encouraged the ICEE to work to increase the scope of marriage preparation of which EE an integral part, especially in the area of a formation session for future parents-in-law. The entire report is attached to these minutes.

RESOLUTION - *The Executive Team will put together a statement dealing with the recommendations of this committee, will circulate it to the members of the committee for their approval and then forward it to the Bishops of the USA who are in the process of drafting a letter on Marriage.*

RESOLUTION - *Juan Simon Maldonado suggested that we have a presence at the Vatican Council meeting on the Family in Valencia, Spain in 2006.*

The committee agreed this to and Fr. Gilberto agreed to make contact to with Cardinal Lopez Trajillo to get us an invitation.

Discussion also followed on the need for follow-up program in the first five years of marriage. A program was presented that used the name of "Junior Marriage Encounter" and this concept sparked major concern because we were in effect doing just what we asked ME not to do regarding their programs for the engaged. We understand that this is an on-going program in Colombia and ask that they suspend using that name for their program until they receive permission from ME. Discussion also followed on who does and does not have a program of follow-up in those first five years after marriage.

11:15 - Break

**11:30 - USA Outline changes and updates
Sexual Intimacy in Marriage (new presentation)}**

Fr. Jules began the discussion regarding this new talk and its outline, by explaining that this was a three-year process by a team of four couples and a priest. The talk is based on the "Theology of the Body" of Pope John Paul II. While there was a video of this made in the USA it is not being distributed because it is the desire that the outline and writing guide be used as the source for others to write their talk and not taking it from the video. Fr. Jules then discussed some of the highlights both the good and those that have caused some difficulty. USA has mandated that all communities use this outline as soon as it can be implemented but no later than a year. The floor was then opened to discussion.

Fr. Gilberto made the following resolution:

RESOLUTION--*That this outline as it has been presented to us be accepted by ICEE as a part of its outline and that all communities and teams using the International Outline be instructed to write their talks based on this new outline. We expect this to be implemented within one year of the date of this meeting.*

Discussion continued on the implementation of this new outline realizing that there are still some communities that are using the original outline for this talk

Prior to next year's meeting we will request that all communities to respond to the issues, positive and negative surrounding the implementation of this outline

12:30 - Lunch

13:30 -10/10 Dialogue - (Jario & Claudia Duque and Fr. Gilberto)

14:10 - Expansion Fund Requests: Availability & Accountability

Annette Wattie gave a report that stated that Nicaragua had requested money last year and they were given permission but they never asked for the money.

Juan Simon made the following requests:

\$200.00 for Nicaragua
\$1463.00 for Cuba-Santiago de Cuba (Nov.2005)
- \$1461.00 for Cuba-Holguin (Aug. 2006)

Requests were also made for the following:

- \$1200:00 for St. Lucia
- \$1000.00 for Venezuela

Resolution - *Approve expansion funding for all but the Aug. 2006 Cuba weekend.*

It was agreed that we would cover the expenses for Nicaragua, Cuba (Nov. 2005), St. Lucia, and Venezuela for a total of \$3863.00. If funding were still needed for the Aug. weekend in Cuba we would approach the USA to see if we could find funding from a community.

Resolution - *If money is available we will reimburse upon receipt of receipts up to 75% of the cost of travel to next year's board meeting.*

14:45 - Regional Concerns

Nothing was received when request for this was sent earlier, but floor was opened for concerns of Committee.

Juan Simon Maldonado spoke of his concern for the work of EE in Chile. He hoped that we will not let them out on their own but will help them to deal with the obstacles that they are facing with ME. He also expressed a concern with the health of EE in Europe, again the issue being the relationship with ME. In South America-South he recommended that we be present in Argentina when they become independent of ME not knowing exactly when this might happen. It is the recommendation that the Alcaraz's be the continued contact with both Chile and Argentina and if they need funds to accomplish this they need to ask. It was also stated that it is very important that they (the Alcaraz's) be present next year in Houston.

Fr. Gilberto also spoke of the need to strengthen the relationship of Paraguay so that they in turn can assist Bolivia in expansion.

Discussion followed with the importance of building strong communities with good teams before we look at expansion, while expansion is important the strong communities are the most important.

15:10 - Break

15:45 - Accountability of Funds

Gerry Bach reminded everyone that it is not only important that we be concerned about the availability of funds but also the accountability of the funds used. It is important that receipts be sent so that the Wattie's are able to let everyone who gives money a proper accounting of how their money is spent.

15:55 - Other Matters

Gerry Bach spoke to the availability of each member of the committee having an email address connected to the web site. This would give everyone an address that would be able to receive emails that contain large attachments. The cost of this is about \$80.00 a year. This was agreed to by the committee using titles rather than names in the email address.

Fr. Jules spoke to the availability of receiving lap top computers from the National Board of USA as they replace them on a regular basis. We only need to notify them on a yearly basis of our needs.

Fr. Gilberto spoke to our sending the resolutions of this meeting to Horizons the National Newsletter of USA EE .It was suggested that newsletters from other areas be sent to IET for inclusion on web page and in other publications.

Also it is important that we acknowledge receipt of emails to the sender so that they know that it has been received and hopefully read.

Gerry Bach stated that electronic version of Sexual Intimacy are available to those who want it in both Spanish and English. -

16:30 - (Prayer Service led by Claudia & Jairo Duque and Fr. Gilberto

This finished our business portion of the meeting for the day.

18:00 - Dinner out---a South African Bar-B-Q

Friday, September 30th

9:00 - Morning Prayer (Gerry & Ann Bach and Fr. Gary)

9:30 - Discussion of any unfinished business

Juan Simon Maldonado reported that there were some questions from Central America about some changes in the questions to some of the talks. It was suggested that it be given to the Outline Team (Rocha's and Fr. Javier) for their consideration.

Paco Rocha also spoke to some requests for outline and question changes from the area of East Asia. They seem to want to focus only on the problems that they have in their area. They are asking for permission to implement them into their weekends. This too was turned over to them (Rocha's and Fr. Javier) the Outline Team for their study and suggestions to the whole committee

Fr. Jules asked that the areas of the outline spoken of in the above two concerns be forward to the USA as they are looking at reviewing the entire outline.

Gerry Bach stated that we had the sad task to bid farewell to our out-going Outline Team of Jairo & Claudia Duque and Fr. Gilberto Gomez Botero. A gift of a statue of the Holy Family blessed by the Holy Father while the Bach's and Fr. Gary were at a Papal Audience were presented to the Duque's and Fr. Gilberto. The Duque's then expressed their sadness at leaving but their gratefulness at having had the opportunity to serve on the International Committee. Fr. Gilberto then spoke of his gratitude and his history with the International Committee and promised that while they were leaving the Committee they are not leaving the movement

10:20 - Break

10:45 - Resume unfinished business

Short discussion followed on the resolution to the bishops as was drafted to this point, but it was felt that each needed a hard copy of the document to study in order to give them an opportunity to review.

Discussion then turned to expressing our core beliefs regarding a definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman. It was decided that the Core Concepts of the weekend as established by the USA would also be established as the Core Concepts of ICEE as well.

The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the members of the South African hosts, for their hospitality and kindness.

11:10 - Meeting closed with the "Friday Prayer for CEE"