

PHOENIX 2013 – Table Responses from Annual Meeting 2010

The Question: Due to the Immigration law going into affect in Arizona 2010, should MC USA continue to plan to meet in Phoenix for our Convention in 2013? Decision will be made by MC USA by April 2011 in order to avoid additional cancellation penalties.

1. How does our decision to go or not affect us as a faith community? (1 table - no response to this question)

- Hospitality
- Stewardship of money - how many states will have laws? How much money spent - will law still be in place?
- Are we called to be law abiding or witness against an injustice?

To not go...find a way to cover costs

To go...alienate people within MC USA

To not go...Send protest message to city and state of Arizona

To go...protest/public action required

To not go...is running/quiet in the land

1. Reinforcing our tendency to withdraw/abandon
2. Easier way out to go and "let Hispanic decide to go or not"
3. Hispanic church members/group decision should trump. They say no, and we say no.

Go - it will not only be Hispanic individuals who don't go; other people will boycott in solidarity - this will divide us more if we go.

Not go - lose money

Shouldn't be about money!

- Challenges our commitment to our principles and identity.
- Forces us to discern with wisdom the relatively best course.
- **Ties that bind us**
- **Public identity**
- **Money - (though not so important)**
- How do the Arizona congregations feel about us not coming? They deal with this issue on a daily basis. Should we experience what they are going through?
- We need to be at the table. Should we avoid the conflict? Is confronting one way to be at the table (not going)? Should we give them our business?
- Should we go and be visible in our confrontation?

2. What are the implications for us, as a faith community, to not have a significant number of Hispanic brothers and sisters be part of our Phoenix 2013 Convention? (Two tables no response to this question)

We would miss the voices on the issues of immigration. How many Hispanic people/delegates would attend?

Phoenix needs our income and their economic situation - people who clean rooms won't have a job, need to have a good answer to request from Hispanic group regardless of which way we choose.

- We are saying to our Hispanic friends that they have no place at the table.
- We are putting more allegiance in money and the law of our nation than in Jesus Christ.

Undermine the oneness of the Church (Eph 1-3)

- We are going to demonstrate our truest feeling of our Hispanic brother and sister by what we do here.
- As a church we must shelter and protect our Hispanic brothers and sisters. If we go, we will be turning our backs on them at the moment of testing.
- **We can't come. Our perceptions of the law are actually less than how bad it is. People who look Hispanic will not be safe. (Rapid?) We can not support that system.**
- **Arizona testing ground for discrimination. Apartheid started this way in South Africa.**
- **Want to talk with people experiencing this first hand.**
- **Most Mennonites in Arizona are Anglo.**
- **Symbolic statement or actions**
- **By going will we be saying this is fine?**

3. What might be some alternatives that stay faithful to who we are in following Jesus?

- Not going would make a statement, but we could make an even bigger statement while in Arizona.
- Engage in conversation, learn about the issue, make immigration/global poverty the theme of the convention
- Do convention in a different way, on a border town
- **Help people in order to get paperwork in order**
- **Need to include/admit our own immigrant past and the way we took land from people**
- **Immigration issues theme of conference**
- **Go to Phoenix and have visible statements or witness**
- **Work with Phoenix law enforcement**
- **Use money we would "have lost" to help provide scholarships**
- We need to put ourselves on the line, walking with and surrounding people who come to Phoenix (CPT style of getting in the way)
- Political/Public action - are we willing to step up?
- Truly make a statement about "what would Jesus do"? How would you walk into the situation as Jesus should?
- Only go to Arizona with support of Hispanic people, do they feel/trust MC USA to surround and care?
- **Change location and send small contingent to make a statement**
- **Consider not having a conference or just a youth conference in a different location - let youth conference have a focus on the issue.**
- **When we decide not to attend in Phoenix we need to do so publicly and vocally**
- **If we go we need to be very vocal in support of immigrants (but our table is not in support of this idea)**
- Donate back to Phoenix/Hispanic Churches if we leave
- Move to another border location
- **If we stay, we will potentially be breaking the law in carrying out daily conference activities (transporting, feeding, serving immigrants)**
- **Massive demonstration**
- Economic impact only thing that will protest law.
- If we don't go - Press conference and state why decision is made.

- HEADLINE: Mennonites decide not to come to Arizona
- Are we hurting hotel employees.
- Rich less affected by these decisions
- If there is one of our own who feels at risk can we go? If we have a family with a member who can not go, would we go?
- From here on out we should have a contingency clause in our contracts regarding discrimination.

Additional Comments/Questions:

- What are the costs?
- Hear from Hispanics from Arizona Churches
- Local determination
- What is really at stake? Is it just because we dislike the law or would it restrict participation?

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Delegate Session II