

Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations Response Group

Board of General Ministries

November 14 & 15, 2013

Committee Participants: Ruth Clark, Ernest Jones, Jonathan Malone, June Totten

Guest Participant on 11/15: Judith Frackenthal, ABC vice president elect

Jesus prayed to God for his followers, "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one...may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." *John 17:20-21 (NRSV)*

With this goal, we are acting on our corporate responsibilities to work for unity in the body of Christ and peace in our interfaith relations.

Ruth Clark and June Totten, reported on the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly held in Busan, Korea, October 30 - November 8. The theme for these seven years is, "God of Life, Lead us to Justice and Peace." CCUIR Chair June Totten was elected to serve on the WCC Central Committee.

The National Council of Churches will meet following our BGM meetings in Chicago to install the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley as NCC Chairperson. We are proud to have Roy serving in this capacity and pledge our support.

We nominated, with notice to the Board of General Ministries, the Rev. Dr. Loida Martell-Otero, Professor at Palmer Theological Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Christian Collins Winn, Associate Professor at Bethel University, to be our two representatives to the NCC Convening Table on Theological Study and Dialogue and Matters of Faith and Order. Serving on other NCC Convening Tables are: Ms. Laura Alden on Education, Formation, and Leadership Development; Rev. Fela Barrueto on Joint Action for Justice and Peace; and Dr. Paul Martin on Christian Education, Ecumenical Faith Formation, and Leadership Development. Other representatives have been listed in previous CCUIR reports.

In the new NCC structure, a Christian Unity Gathering will be held May 18 – 20, 2014, in the Washington, DC, area (near Dulles Airport). Anyone is invited to attend. Our representatives on Committees and Convening Tables will be meeting at that event.

We are looking to the future of our Baptist-Muslim dialogue process. The Planning Committee will meet via conference call in late December. American Baptist Seminary of the West has held a Regional Dialogue. One suggestion is to hold a youth/young adult gathering on the theme of peace building. Suggestions for next steps and funding sources are welcome.

Ernest Jones will represent ABC at Impact Holy Land, sponsored by Evangelicals for Social Action, December 4 – 6, in Philadelphia, PA.

Our anticipated Spring 2014 American Baptist and Church of the Brethren peace-seeking trip to Palestine and Israel is postponed because we were unable to confirm dates. In its place, we encourage those interested to attend the Christ at the Checkpoint 3 Conference to be held at Bethlehem Bible College March 10 – 14, 2014.

For Spring 2015 we plan a combined trip for ABC and COB and the Progressive National Baptist Convention that will be led by the Telos Group who have led previous trips for us. We will secure dates that work for all three groups, and hope to have an itinerary and pricing by the next BGM meeting.

Our Response Group spent time debriefing our activities at the Biennial Mission Summit. Our exhibit space was very small, but well displayed. We had excellent attendance at the Christian Unity Dinner, good community around the tables, and an engaging speaker and Luke Mowbray Award recipient who also spoke. There was not adequate time for such a long program, so we are looking at future meal events for other ways of presenting how Christian unity and interfaith relations is happening within ABC.

President Ruth Clark shared about her trip to Ocho Rios, Jamaica, for the Baptist World Alliance meetings where she represented ABC.

Our Response Group is grateful for the help of Roy Medley and Iris Cobb and other staff, and our ecumenical representatives, who facilitate our work with such dedication and ability.

Submitted June, 2014, by June Totten, chairperson