

ABC President Report-Don Ng

June 12, 2014

Becoming a Beloved Community

There's an old Chinese proverb that says,
If there is light in the soul,
There will be beauty in the person.
If there is beauty in the person,
There will be harmony in the house.
If there is harmony in the house,
There will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

I know that when I have any ounce of disagreements in my marriage or with our children, I am not happy and the discord just gets magnified. As a board and denomination, we have been committed to becoming a "beloved community" and to live that out with the full understanding that striving to be is what is expected of us. Getting there is more God's time and not ours. Another adage says, "The journey is the adventure rather than the destination."

One effort in becoming a beloved community is facilitating the Burmese Diaspora Consultation (4/30-5/2) where people from 7 Burmese groups gathered in VF for the purpose of building a coalition for ministry in the US. Drawing from *West Side Story*, only in America can groups find unity over the differences that they may have in Myanmar! We'll provide more details about this consultation along with the celebration of accepting the Chin and Karen Baptist conventions as AMOs in the ABCUSA.

After more than 30 years of recognizing that we have differences in our understanding of the LGBTQ community in ABC life, I believe it is important for us to begin the process of recognizing and respecting one another. Furthermore, over these many years, I believe that we now have a stronger reaffirmation of our Baptist principles of soul liberty and the priesthood of all believers that invites us to differ without being disrespectful. We can say that we agree to disagree but we also need to say to one another that we acknowledge that we all exist as members of the ABC family. As president, I have been in communication with Rev. Robin Lunn and members of AWAB (5/7) to seek mutual understanding and to build trust. I am aware that there are some who would question my commitment to reach out. My commitment is to keep the lines of communication going by calling the BGM Board to have an extended conversation over the next few meetings on the belief that we can still respect each other even when we differ. I invite you to explore with me on how best we might engage in these conversations. I deeply seek your prayers for the convictions that we have together to truly become God's people. As the proverb reminds us, when there is harmony in the house, there will be peace in the world.

General Secretary Search Committee

The committee has met twice this past spring (3/19-20 & 4/22-24) leading to the completion of the position description that will come to BGM for approval. We worked to incorporate current issues and emerging concerns facing the ABC that the next GS will surely encounter. We are on track with our timetable to hopefully have a candidate by the end of 2015.

Emerging New Initiatives

Dr. J. Alfred Smith (Allen Temple, Oakland), Dr. Aidsand Wright-Riggins (ABHMS) with GS Roy Medley and I have been exploring what it means to reclaim our ABC prophetic voice especially since we have seen the devastation of people's lives in mass incarceration and the "stand your ground" laws. Also, as one who is committed to a "plant-based diet," I am proposing with others on a "Call to Compassionate Living in the ABC" to explore the meaning and practice of living in harmony with God's creation. I invite you if you have interests in these initiatives to join me in these conversations.

Travel Log

For the record, I had the privilege to participate in the following: Co-directed EMERGE (1/6-9); Portuguese Caucus (1/15); Pastors Colloquium (1/27-29); Asian Colloquium (2/26-3/1); BGM Exec. Comm. (3/13-15); Dick Ice's Memorial (4/5); NLC (4/7-10); PCBA (5/10); Inter Caucus (6/2-3); and will attend Veronica Lanier's Memorial on Sunday, June 15 and speak at Grace BC, San Jose's 100th church anniversary (6/22).