

## **Report to the Board of General Ministries and the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations**

**November, 2016**

Dearest Friends,

This report will be briefer than my last because I have been more fully living into retirement now that Pat is also retired.

### **National Council of Churches**

The NCC continues to focus on Mass Incarceration and Peace-building through Interfaith Relations. As a continuation of my involvement in US-Egyptian relations, I was asked to serve as one of a team of three from the US to train 60 young community leaders in interfaith relations in Cairo in July. The training event was sponsored by Hands Along the Nile which partners with the Coptic [Egyptian] Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Egypt. The leaders were both Muslim and Christian. As part of their participation in this symposium, they were tasked with planning a major event or program in their area that would enhance Christian/Muslim relations. It was encouraging to see and participate in such a different story of relations between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East/North Africa than what fills our news here in the US. While in Egypt, we worshipped at FBC, Cairo where I preached and brought them greetings from Susan and ABC.

I chair the Committee on Bible Translation and Utilization which oversees the publication arrangements for materials related to the RSV and NRSV Bibles. In a special meeting, the NCC board authorized the reactivation of Friendship Press which has been publishing arm of the NCC but has lain dormant for several years now as we are gearing up for a stronger emphasis on the scriptures.

Dr. Jim Winkler and his staff, which includes American Baptist leader Aundreia Alexander, continue to give creative leadership to the council. Aundreia provides the major staff support for our emphasis on mass incarceration as well as immigration. She and I are also working with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services and HANDS to bring the Grand Imam who is the titular world leader for Sunni Islam to America. He has spoken out often in the strongest condemnation of religious extremism and terrorism in the name of Islam.

### **Churches for Middle East Peace**

The biggest news here is the election of a new executive director. A year ago Ambassador Warren Clark announced his intention to retire this year as executive director. The Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon who served with World Vision for 5 years as Senior Director of Advocacy and Outreach is the new executive director. Dr. Cannon will offer strong and experience-based leadership to CMEP. CMEP produces weekly reports on the situation in the Middle East which are quite informative. They can be found on its website: [www.cmep.org](http://www.cmep.org). Due to conflicts, I have not been able to attend the last two meetings. I have been able to convey requests for ABC to sign onto CMEP statements to Dr. Gillies' office.

### **Baptist World Alliance**

At its Annual Gathering in July in Vancouver, BC, Canada, the BWA entered a major re-organization. At this time, with retirements and staff calls to other positions, the BWA has no full-time associates. The executive committee and the General Council approved the hiring of part-time interims to cover key programmatic areas as the staff configuration is rearranged. One of the most challenging discussions was around the future of BWAid. A special taskforce was appointed and will bring forth recommendations for consideration within the next year. There was good ABC participation in the commissions and the General Council. Next year's meeting will be in Bangkok, Thailand. Unfortunately the dates overlap with our Biennial gathering in Portland, so many of us with leadership responsibilities in BWA will not be able to attend the Biennial.

### **Burma**

In February, I shall be returning to Burma with IM staff person, Leslie Turley, and the executive minister of ABC/Indianapolis, Joan Friesen, to focus on the issues related to the repatriation of refugees from Burma who are living particularly in Thailand and Malaysia.

### **Third National Baptist-Muslim Dialogue**

The Rev. Dr. Raimundo Barreto who serves on CCU/IR has agreed to assist in implementing this effort. We have the commitment of ISNA, CBF, and Lott Carey, as well as ABC. We are still struggling to nail down dates due to two complicating factors: 1) the retirement of Dr. Rob Sellers of CBF and myself who have given primary leadership to the previous events, and 2) the number of other events of partner organizations that we are trying to honor. We are in contact with Green Lake for sets of dates that we can circulate to the major participants. Thank you for your patience with me.

### **Other Matters**

In September I participated in the farewell event for Judy Allbee who retired the end of September as Executive Minister of ABC/Connecticut.

I also agreed to be the keynote speaker for the MLK City-wide Celebration in Norwalk, CT, Jan 16, 2017.

As honorary co-chair of the capital campaign for Bethel Neighborhood Ministries in Kansas City, KS, I am pleased that we have fully secured our campaign goal of \$2,250,000. This ABC Christian Center is actively serving 10,000 persons a year including refugees from Burma who have settled in the Kansas City area. The campaign will enable Bethel to enhance its property and building to better serve.

A. Roy Medley  
General Secretary Emeritus