

COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

June 23 & 24, 2015 – Overland Park, Kansas

Committee participants: Andy Arndt, Ruth Clark, Dennis Johnson, Ernest Jones, C. Duh Kam, Marijane Kiley, Roy Medley, Alan Rudnick, and June Totten

We welcomed our newest member, Marijane Kiley, new representative from West Virginia, and shared around the table about significant happenings in our lives since the last meeting.

Chairperson June Totten met with the BGM Executive Committee at their invitation before BGM meetings convened to review with them our ABCUSA Ecumenical relationships and representation.

Roy, Ernest and June reported on the annual Christian Unity Gathering held by the National Council of Churches in May. This event is open to anyone attending, and ABC has representatives serving on various NCC committees and convening tables.

The committee-sponsored trip to the Middle East was held in April. American Baptists, Church of the Brethren, and Progressive National Baptists were invited to participate. June served as the organizer. There were three segments of the trip—a Peace Conference arranged by the Nazareth Evangelical College, a Telos-led tour of Israel and Palestine, and an optional extension of the trip to Jordan. June, Ernest and Roy reported to the committee, and later to the full Board of General Ministries. The time in Jordan included visiting refugee families and hearing their very troubling stories.

The next steps in our Baptist-Muslim Dialogue planning will involve changing the style. The first two national dialogues were conferences with scholarly presentations and small group opportunities for dialogue. Regional dialogues have also been hosted by three ABC seminaries. Roy reported that for the third national dialogue, a retreat setting such as Green Lake will host the event in 2016. Pairs of persons from local communities, one Baptist and one Muslim, age 40 or under, will be invited. Participants will commit to returning to their communities and working together after the event, and then meeting a year or two later to evaluate how this has strengthened ties between the faith traditions in their communities. Six Baptist groups are involved in the planning along with the Islamic Society of North America. Hopeton Scott and Roy serve on the planning committee for ABC.

Ernest reported on a Baptist-Muslim dialogue event held in New York. It was well attended, and one outcome was a statement on drones that was adopted. Ernest serves on the Shoulder

to Shoulder steering committee, working to combat Islamophobia. They are sponsoring a conference in Detroit in August and inviting emerging leaders. CCUIR will provide modest scholarships to two ABC seminarians to help them attend. Alan Newton will help as a resource to churches to want to work with Muslims in their communities. He has been talking with the Tony Blair Foundation about possible project between faith communities in the USA.

Our committee hosts the Christian Unity dinner at the Biennial and is responsible for a display in the exhibit hall. We discussed the details that needed our attention. Two Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Awards will be given this year. Recipients are the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley and the Rev. Dr. Molly Marshall, and they will be presented at the dinner. Roy is our speaker for the event.

Through Transformed by the Spirit, CCUIR will receive a major gift, beginning in 2016, for support of some of our work over the next three years. The committee brainstormed how this might be best utilized, and what our unfunded priorities are as we look ahead. We also discussed how we could keep Christian unity and Interfaith relations issues before our ABC congregations.