

## Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee Report

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When the Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee (CIRC) met last October we were excited to hear news of the World Council of Churches (WCC). As we reported previously, the Historic Peace Churches around the world have a much larger percentage of members on the WCC Central Committee than we ever have before, including Ann Riggs from FGC. The WCC Assembly in Brazil (2006) sent the WCC Central Committee off with a mission to “to move together.” The succeeding Assembly in Korea (2014) challenged all people of good will to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions. The WCC Central Committee responded to this challenge by visioning the “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.” Over the next several year the members of the WCC will be pulling together to define this pilgrimage. We look forward especially to working with our Historic Peace Church partners. Already there is collaboration worldwide between Quakers and Mennonites and Church of the Brethren concerning the issue of Conscientious Objection to serving in the Military around the world.

The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is still in the visioning stage. Over the next several years there will be many opportunities to plan and make the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace an inspiration to the world around us. If you want to help plan this Pilgrimage please be in contact with the CIRC Co-Clerks Dorothy Day (daydo@earlham.edu) or Dorothy Walizer (dewalizer@msn.com).

We continue to respond to the WCC documents and the Faith and Order Commission documents. In our work to craft a Quaker response to the WCC's document, *The Church: Toward a Common Vision*, we recalled the thoughts of Mel Robeck, a Pentecostal ecumenist, who noted that earlier WCC documents are not very meaningful for the people of the Global South. To be relevant these documents need address *the life of the church* today. We also believe this approach would be more compatible to a historical Friends approach and more likely to engage the younger churches in the 3rd World as the recent WCC Assembly requested.

As the National Council of Churches USA continues to reorganize itself, Tom Paxson is faithful in his service to the World Council of Churches Relations Committee which meets together with the National Council of Churches USA. We hope soon to also connect with the other Tables (formerly Commissions) of the NCC USA to see where Quakers can best serve the ecumenical movement in the United States.

In the late 1800's Friends' created a committee which collaborated in presenting the Religious Society of Friends at the 1893 Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago. This committee which organized the “Hicksite” Friends presence at the Parliament continued afterwards and was one of the committees the yearly meetings used to work together. Shortly afterwards, these committees were combined into Friends General Conference in 1900. FGC has maintained an interest in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue ever since. The Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee (CIRC) is the name of the committee through which FGC carries out its ecumenical and interfaith work on behalf of member yearly meetings. With the renewal of the Parliament of World Religions in 1993 CIRC has been represented regularly at sessions.

Given this history you can imagine my sense of panic when I discovered that we had one week to write a proposal if FGC Quakers were going to make a presentation at the Parliament of World Religion. In our proposal my intent was to offer some Quaker Worship in the midst of a meeting of almost 10,000 people, 80 religions and 100 countries. Who would not need some peaceful contemplations and some quiet worship? We were accepted for a 90 minute presentation that became half worship and half preparing and explaining worship in Quaker style. I am very, very thankful for the help Margaret Fraser and Barry Crossno and Maurine Pyle in presenting our traditions on this world stage. I am also very excited to see what new chances for dialogue that may develop.

I felt called to share my excitement about the Parliament with Friends in Salt Lake City and the surrounding Yearly Meeting (Intermountain YM). This summer on my way to Intermountain Yearly Meeting, I was able to visit Salt Lake City Friends and share with local and regional Quakers my excitement about the Parliament of World Religions that was about to happen in their midst. The FGC office was very helpful creating a wonderful flyer advertising the Parliament and inviting local Quakers to also attend this amazing event. CIRC also has a responsibility for “Intra-Quaker” dialogue. So it was with great pleasure that my trip to Intermountain Yearly Meeting was jointly sponsored by Urbana Champaign Monthly Meeting of Illinois Yearly Meeting and West Hills Evangelical Friends Meeting of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends. I also want to convey my respect for Salt Lake City Friends Meeting Member Elaine Emmi who was very active in the Salt Lake City Interfaith Roundtable and instrumental in inviting the Parliament of World Religions to Salt Lake City, UT.

While each committee member continues to be engaged in representing Quakers in the local, regional, National and International forums of ecumenical and interfaith work as a Committee we are looking forward to 2016 which will hold the FWCC Representatives Meeting and participating in the WCC's Pilgrimage of Peace and Justice.