

Moderator's Report November 2019

Submitted to Governing Board Meeting 3rd December 2019

My visit to Brazil confirmed to me how much MCC/ICM is still needed as a powerful and inclusive spiritual presence. In Sao Paulo, I learned that the average life expectancy for a transgender person in Brazil is 35. Practical support, such as food and housing, are as important as offering a safe spiritual space, and our churches in Brazil are very active in this ministry. They are saving lives. In Rio de Janeiro, church members took me on a tour of Little Africa. These recently discovered landmarks tell the cruel and inhumane story of slavery and racism in Brazil. We prayed at the site of the docks, where thousands of Africans were brought to the country to be sold as slaves. We visited the area that was used as a dumping ground for the bodies of those who were too ill to be sold and died soon after. I listened to stories of how this colonial racism from the past still impacts the lives of Black people within Brazil today. The ministry of People of African Descent is developing in this country, in order to directly address racism within and beyond our churches.

We have 6 affiliated churches and 7 emerging churches in a country with a population of over 200 million. At the Brazil National Retreat, it was powerful to hear about the activities of the different churches, as well as hearing the struggles that they face, such as hostile political leaders and challenges from fundamentalism. Before attending the Brazil National Retreat, I met with city and state officials in Sao Paulo, the country's biggest city, to discuss the policies and initiatives that are actively addressing homophobia, transphobia, sexism and racism. It was heartening to see the work that is being done in these areas, however there is still a very long way to go. It is good to see that ICM Sao Paulo and our other churches are recognised as important partners in combatting prejudice and violent oppression. The key word for our people in Brazil is "resistance".

I am working with the staff to implement the new staffing structure. Rev. Elder Hector Gutierrez and Rev. Dr. Kharma Amos are developing their teams. We are currently having weekly briefings to enable us to effectively manage the transition. Vacant positions are being advertised with the aim of filling all vacancies before Christmas.

Other areas of work include:

Communication

- Monthly Moderator's Reflection
- Transgender Day of Remembrance video
- World AIDS Day video
- Video message on the Saugus High School shooting, Santa Clarita, USA

Governing Board

- Participated in Finance Committee meeting
- Continued work with Treasurer and conference planning staff on settling Hilton Hotel bill for General Conference 2019

Staff

- Started recruitment process for vacant staff positions

- Consulted with staff about ideas for staff induction and team development
- Started research on equitable pay

Council of Elders

- Participated in planning meeting for Council of Elders meeting

Connection with MCC churches and Networks

- Recorded greetings videos for churches and individuals
- Individual conversations with MCCers around the world