

RENEWAL TOGETHER: AN UPDATE FROM THE PCCNA CHRISTIAN UNITY COMMISSION

Presented by David Cole, PCCNA Liaison to the Greater Christian Community

Your PCCNA Christian Unity Commission is engaged in regular and ongoing work for the sake of unity in the Body of Christ, as we bear witness to the renewal of the Holy Spirit across our PCCNA landscape, and as we build bridges of relationship and understanding with other ecclesial families. The following are a few representative testimonies and updates concerning our Christian Unity Liaisons.

For many years, PCCNA has enjoyed a fraternal relationship with Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT), a forum/organization that promotes fellowship and cooperation among Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Historic Black churches. Over the years several PCCNA member churches have also participated in CCT initiatives. Currently, two PCCNA members are also members of CCT: the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), and Hope for You. PCCNA's Christian Unity Commission (CUC) has enjoyed many visits over the years from several CCT leaders, most recently CCT executive director Dr. Monica Schaap-Pierce. After some fruitful conversations at our most recent CUC meeting and follow-up communication that included PCCNA president Rev. David Wells, the executive leadership teams of both PCCNA and CCT have approved the designation of Official Observer status for a PCCNA representative at CCT's annual forums. This will allow for ongoing learning and understanding between the two ecclesial fellowship groups, even while individual PCCNA member churches continue to engage on behalf of their constituents. This October, Dr. David Cole will represent PCCNA as an official observer at CCT's annual forum in Savannah, Georgia. In addition, Dr. Harold Hunter will attend on behalf of IPHC, and Dr. Funmilayo Adeyemi will attend on behalf of Hope for You. Dr. Adeyemi also serves as president of the Evangelical-Pentecostal family on CCT's steering committee.

Dr. David Cole, Unity Liaison for Open Bible Churches as well as The King's University (TKU), facilitated the hosting of a first-ever Unity and Renewal Luncheon on TKU's campus. TKU's guest speaker was PCCNA president Rev. David Wells, and the event also featured a panel conversation that included representatives from Pentecostal, Catholic Charismatic, Historic Black/Caribbean, and Messianic Jewish



communities. TKU plans to host these events annually in the weeks leading up to Pentecost Sunday.

Over the past few years, a major PCCNA CUC initiative has been the annual conversation between representatives of PCCNA member churches and Catholic representatives, under the coordination of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Dr. Harold Hunter has been the coordinator for the PCCNA CUC. Last year's meetings in Tulsa, hosted by the PCCNA team at Oral Roberts University were most meaningful, and this year's session will be hosted by the USCCB at Notre Dame. The theme will be "Mission," and the Pentecostal paper will be presented by Dr. Marty Mittelstadt of Evangel University, representing the Assemblies of God. A significant development this year is the addition of Bishop Peter Smith as Catholic co-chair. Bishop Smith is a member of USCCB's

Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and is also an Ad Hoc committee member of CHARIS USA, which provides service to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the U.S.

Dr. Hunter, the Unity Liaison for the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), has also been active in representing IPHC in a variety of international initiatives. He represents IPHC at the Pentecostal World Fellowship's Christian Unity Commission table, and has helped launch the PWF's Creation Care Task Force. He chairs that task force and has moderated Zoom sessions, most recently in August. He and David Wells attended a Faith and Science event in Rome co-sponsored by the Vatican and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). Dr. Hunter continues to participate in conversations organized by UNEP, and also is engaging these issues on behalf of the PWF among members of the World Council of Churches' ecology commission.

Rev. Frank Patrick, Unity Liaison for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, continues to participate in and report on unity efforts in Canada. Frank represents Pentecostals at the semi-annual Canadian Council of Churches meetings, having attended in Quebec City in March and anticipating participation again in Ontario this November. He attended the Installation Service for the newly appointed Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toronto in March. Frank recently completed ten years of faithful participation as a PAOC representative at the Canadian Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue, and has now handed that baton off to Dr. Allison MacGregor.

Dr. David Han, Unity Liaison for the Church of God, continues his work of planning and coordinating Global Christian Forum Regional Gatherings along with Nathan Smith (Glenmary Home Missioners and USCCB field representative). After successful forums for ministers in Tennessee and Georgia, the next GCF regional gathering is being planned for the Los Angeles area in February or March of 2024. Dr. Han is also involved in the planning and coordinating process for the Fourth World Global Christian Forum Gathering, which will take place in Accra, Ghana April 19-24, 2024 on the theme "May the world know" (Jn 17:23), with the participation of about 250 delegates from all currents of modern Christianity. Dr. Han has also been involved in the cultivation of a significant new ministry training partnership between the Church of God and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), which will pave the way for COGIC ministers-in-training to attend Pentecostal Theological Seminary. The memorandum of agreement between Charles H. Mason Theological Seminary and Pentecostal Theological Seminary was signed by Presiding Bishops John Drew Sheard (COGIC) and Timothy Hill (COG), respectively.

Dr. Mel Robeck, Unity Liaison for the Assemblies of God, continues his ecumenical work with our PCCNA Christian Unity Commission while also serving on the Pentecostal World Fellowship Christian Unity Commission. He is engaged in many initiatives and writing projects, while scaling back his academic work upon his recent retirement from Fuller Theological Seminary. In addition to his ongoing research on the Azusa Street revival, which will lead to a multi-volume publication, Mel is completing his editorial work on Volume 2 of *Towards a Global Vision of the Church* in service to the World Council of Churches, which will be published this year.



Mel served as the primary editor of Volume I of this series, which was published in late 2022. Mel is retiring this year as a Commissioner with the WCC Faith and Order Commission, a role he has fulfilled for several decades, having been a pioneer Pentecostal in those significant ecumenical circles.

As has been mentioned, several of our PCCNA Christian Unity Liaisons are also active internationally, through their involvement in the Pentecostal World Fellowship's Christian Unity Commission (PWF CUC).



David Wells chairs that PWF CUC, and PCCNA-connected participants there include Mel Robeck, Harold Hunter and David Han. One of the growing roles being played by the PWF CUC is providing increased oversight to international dialogue initiatives involving Pentecostals. One of those is the International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, which most recently met in Accra, Ghana in July. David Wells (PAOC), Mel Robeck (Assemblies of God), David Moore (Foursquare) and David Cole (Open Bible Churches)

are participants on behalf of their church families, and other PCCNA-connected representatives at the Dialogue are Dr. Dale Coulter and Dr. Marcia Clarke (both Church of God). The theme for this summer was prayer and worship, and next year's meeting will take place in Lisbon, Portugal.