

Newsletter

#19, Nov-Dez, 2015



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Warm greetings to you all at 2015 Advent Season!

I want to share about the service of KOINONIA related to ecumenical and civil society networking which, among other things, aims at promoting ecumenical and interreligious relations with partners and organizations advocating for rights and the monitoring of public policies. A concrete experience in our ministry can be highlighted: Ecumenical and Civil society networking for the rights of vulnerable communities. Other brief story is in the area of Ecumenical Relations with the United Church of Canada. This newsletter also brings news about my participation in UMMA.

Marilia Schüller
Advance # 15172Z

Ecumenical and Civil Society Networking for the Rights of Vulnerable Communities

A story to be shared is the initiative in favor of the Guarani Kaiowá Indigenous Peoples of the Mato Grosso do Sul state with the coordination of the Ecumenical Service Coordination (CESE), the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC) and the Ecumenical Center for Biblical Studies (CEBI). The “Ecumenical Mission in Support of the Guarani-Kaiowá” happened in October (7-8) and counted with KOINONIA’s participation as well as other faith based organizations. The situation of the Guarani Kaiowá is one where perpetuation of violence, murders, attacks, torture and beatings are present daily. Unfortunately the prevailing impunity practices are covering up assassins and those who order the murders.

The massacre, according to the complaints heard during the mission, is promoted by people and groups linked to agribusiness, whose practices are unjustifiable and unacceptable. They use means such as forming armed militias, which attack the indigenous villages, practice sexual violence against children and women, destroy symbols and sacred spaces and make use of the media to spread prejudice and intolerance against traditional peoples. The state of Mato Grosso do Sul is practicing a total disregard and disrespect for the Brazilian Constitution, which guarantees indigenous peoples the right to territory.



Poster of the boycott campaign says “The meat of Mato Grosso do Sul is stained with the blood of indigenous children. Do not buy! Do not eat!”

The ecumenical delegation is supporting actions for unconditional protection of those traditional communities and calling for accountability of state agencies that violate the mandate to protect these groups. The delegation also affirms the continued identification and regularization of Guarani Kaiowá territory by FUNAI (Indigenous People National Foundation), the Ministry of Justice and the Presidency. This is the only concrete means to prevent an even greater genocide. To reinforce the advocacy for the rights of the Guarani Kaiowá Indigenous Peoples an international boycott campaign of meat and soy produced in Mato Grosso do Sul is being carried by the Guarani Kaiowá, faith based organizations and civil society.

Ecumenical Relations with the United Church of Canada (UCC)

Since 2009, part of my ministry here in KOINONIA was to relate to the UCC in Canada. Last August that responsibility had its term. For the last time around I attended the Partners' Council. It was a remarkable experience to be part of an 18 persons' ecumenical delegation participating in the 42nd UCC General Council (August 8–14, 2015, Corner Brook, NL). Many were the significant moments. I would like to highlight the plenary and worship services to celebrate UCC entering into mutual recognition of ministries with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and full communion with the United Church of Christ, USA.

Another significant moment was when the ecumenical delegation conveyed its message to the General Council saying: "We encourage you to uphold your history of strong leadership in the ecumenical community nationally and globally. Continue to be risk takers and innovators. Continue in your commitment to work with others on all matters unless conscience prevents. Continue to find ways to speak with and for partners on critical issues of justice, care for creation, and human rights. Continue to witness in the world beyond yourselves. Continue including partners in your planning and consider options for your future



I had the honor and pleasure of having lunch with Ray Jones, of the First Nation, chair of the Aboriginal Ministries Circle, Tarance Whiteye of the Ojibway First Nation and Stan McKay, of the Cree First Nation, former moderator of UCC

that include new and creative ways of global and ecumenical engagement."

Full text of the message at <http://www.gc42.ca/news/word-42nd-general-council-united-church-canada>

I also want to invite you to watch an interview that I gave (English) during the 42nd General Council about the long-standing partnership with the United Church.

Full interview is at <http://www.gc42.ca/news/marilia-schuller-global-partner>



At the statue of Francis Asbury at Drew University and UMC Commission on Archives and History: from left to right Marilia Schüller, Katherine Parker, Richard Vreeland, Kristy Schmitz, Larry Schmitz, Fritzi Johnson, Esther Gitobu, Jim Dwyer, Dakin Cook, DarEll Weist, Alina Saucedo Paucara.

United Methodist Missionary Association (UMMA)

For the first time I have attended a UMMA Gathering from 3-5th October, in Newark, New Jersey. The Purpose of UMMA is to develop and nurture a vital connectional network among active, inactive and retired missionaries of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church for the purpose of promoting Christian mission. (UMMA Constitution)

It was an enriching experience to have joined together with GBGM missionaries serving in different parts of the world. We have addressed the routine business such as treasurer's report, future nominations of Steering Committee members, current election of a new Administrative Council, and the report of the chair. We have also talked

about missionary recruitment and commissioning, ministry from the margins and with the poor, Renewed Creation a new program of Global Ministries, matters of particular relevance to non-US citizenship missionaries, the positive changes made in salary and pensions, etc. On the 5th October, afternoon, we visited the General Commission Archives and History at Drew University Archives, in Madison, New Jersey, where General Secretary

Fred Day and staff members Dale Patterson, Cassie Brand, and Christopher Anderson gave the group a tour of interesting items on display, including several rare and ancient books.

The elected leadership of UMMA: Katherine Parker (new chair), Alina Saucedo (new treasurer), Hillary Taylor (new secretary), Becky Harrell (vice-chair).

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Prayer

--- O loving Creator, bring healing and hope to those who grieve, suffer pain and those who are struggling for life and livelihood such as the Guarani Kaiowá and many other Indigenous Peoples around the world.

--- May we all be aware of Your compassion, O God, which calms our troubled hearts, shelters our anxious souls and gives us hope for the future.

--- May we pray with humility with the impoverished rural communities struggling on our Mother Earth.

--- May we dare to hope that leaders at local, state or national levels will take the necessary actions to guarantee the rights of poor communities for life and livelihood.

--- We pray through our elder brother and savior Jesus Christ who lives with us, comforts us and soothes us!
Amen



I wish you a Merry Christmas!

May we all be renewed by the Grace and Love of God in Jesus Christ to continue committed to Justice and Reconciliation, to transformation of social structures and to being instruments of God for Life and Dignity for all!

THANK YOU for your support. You and your congregation are instruments of God in the world by your work, your prayers and your financial support!

Yours in Christ,

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