

**MINUTES of May 21, 2015**

**Members present (12):** Erin Broich, Ashok Chawla, Charles Crawley, Brian Daugherty, Allen Fisher, Susan Liddell, Cedric Lofdahl, Brenda Mitchell, Todd Thalblum, Jim Siegling, Nathan Williams, Jen Yukl  
**Guest (1):** Chad Simmons of Diversity Focus

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**INSPIRATION** Charles Crawley read a selection by Robert S. Foote.

**An Interruption**

A boy had stopped his car  
To save a turtle in the road;  
I was not far  
Behind, and slowed.  
And stopped to watch as he began  
To shoo it off into the undergrowth –

This wild reminder of an ancient past,  
Lumbering to some Late Triassic bog,  
Till it was just a rustle in the grass,  
Till it was gone.

I hope I told him with a look  
As I passed by,  
How I was glad he'd stopped me  
there,  
And what I felt for both  
Of them, something I took  
To be a kind of love,  
And of a troubled thought  
I had, for man,  
Of how we ought  
To let life go on where  
And when it can.

Charles feels that this image is a good metaphor for us as an inter-religious council. Are we looking for the “turtle in the road” and for those who are stopping to create a life-giving interruption, as the boy did in this piece? As he reflected on this, Charles thought of a member in the Cedar Rapids community who is doing just this – Suresh Basnet, fundraising for earthquake victims in Nepal.

**MINUTES of April 16, 2015**

Motion made by Brenda Mitchell to approve as submitted – Second by Erin Broich – Carried.

**RACIAL TENSIONS – Resolution regarding police-involved violence**

Guest: Chad Simmons of Diversity Focus, <http://www.diversityfocus.org>

Chad Simmons shared that Diversity Focus was created in 2005 with the mission to lead in the promotion of diversity, cultural awareness, and inclusion within our Corridor community. The vision is to have our community become a model of inclusion that values, nurtures, attracts, and retains people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. Diversity is a crucial link to economic, cultural, academic, and technological success. Chad stated the goal of helping people understand critical issues. Diversity Focus is not a civil rights organization. The organization wants people to use their own voices; it does not want to *be* their voice.

Population in the Corridor is growing and changing, with the majority of growth being “black and brown”. Chad spoke about racial tensions with police and related a personal example. He related efforts in various communities to effect change in a broken system. This has been dubbed “community policing” or “community-oriented policing”; it is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, in order to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Chad was asked what the IRCLC should do. He suggested that we create events that facilitate awareness and provide concrete steps that can be taken in neighborhoods. Chad referenced the 9/11 event we held in the past as an example of the type of event that can produce awareness and change. He emphasized the strong role of spiritual leaders and clergy in bringing awareness and organizing their communities to

## RACIAL TENSIONS – Conversation with Chad Simmons – continued...

take action. Chad also suggested organizing prayer breakfasts and working with other community organizations/leaders. He listed the following individuals who are taking action on this issue:

- **Carlos Grant** – Principal of Metro High School and one of the organizers of “Law Day 2015: From Selma to Cedar Rapids” – the purpose was that students understand, if frustrated with a law or circumstance in their community, how they can channel that anger and frustration in a positive way to bring about change.
- **Dr. Ruth White** – Program Director for Kids on Course, Executive Director for the Academy for Scholastic and Personal Success, and an Independent Consultant in Cultural Competence.
- **George Ramsey** – Director of the HBCU Spring College Tour [Historically Black Colleges & Universities Tour Experience (HBCUTE)]
- **Dorice Ramsey** – Executive Director of Jane Boyd Community House

When asked for feedback on the IRCLC Resolution on Police-involved Violence that we are writing, he said that he has some suggestions for the last paragraph and will email these to us.

Chad made available the 2015 Eastern Iowa Community Survey, an important study to gather feedback that will help shape future decisions and programming by incorporating the opinions and priorities of the public into strategic planning of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private companies.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE – Brenda Mitchell (in Alan Fletcher’s absence)**

1. **Financial Report:** Itemized Receipts & Disbursements – 4/16/15 thru 5/21/15 – reviewed. Cash balance as of 5/21/15: \$15,913.68 [Checking = \$908.73 / Money Market = \$15,004.95] Motion made by Allen Fisher to approve financial report – Second by Cedric Lofdahl – Carried.
2. **Approval of new delegates/members:**  
Brenda noted that there are two new members to approve this month – one individual and one faith community – as listed under “Receipts” on the Financial Report.  
Motion by Jen Yukl to approve these two new delegates – Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair**

1. **Children of Abraham:** Brian related the following items.
  - Among the Traditions:**  
Brian reported that attendance was down a bit at the April 26<sup>th</sup> event on “Prophecy, Revelation, and the Scriptures”. Eighteen were in attendance. He reminded us of the next two scheduled events: “Marriage in the Modern Era” on August 23 and “Kingdom of God” on November 8. Both events are on Sundays (2:00 to 4:00 pm). Location: Coe College, Keslar Auditorium in Hickok Hall.  
**CoA Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Children-of-Abraham/1587159954872553>  
Fr. Fred Shaheen created this page on May 9 and will be posting updates. One of the first posts contained a link to a video of the event held in March 2011 on the topic of Abraham in each of the three traditions. Brian noted that videos are being uploaded to YouTube and can be found by searching “Children of Abraham Cedar Rapids”.
  - Addendum – Update regarding Between the Traditions summer event with Chris Seeman:**  
Chris Seeman (Walsh University) is able to be here on a date that will work with Brian’s schedule.  
“Scripture & Tradition: How Jews, Christians, & Muslims Preserve Each Other’s Memories”  
Saturday, July 11, (2-4 pm) / Location: Mount Mercy University – Donnelly Center, Rm. #300
2. **University of Religion:** Last course was held in February 2015 on Buddhism. Brian reported that there is not yet a plan for scheduling another course. Please send any suggestions to Brian.
3. **Ethical Perspectives on the News:** Cedric reported that Charles Crawley and Allen Fisher will be taping a program about the Armenian Genocide. There will be no taping in July and August.
  - A new program schedule will be available after the planning meeting on Tuesday, May 26.
  - 60-plus programs are available on YouTube.

## **EVENT COMMITTEE – Charles Crawley and Allen Fisher, Co-chairs**

### **1. Thanksgiving Service: Monday, November 23 (7:00 pm)**

#### **Location confirmed: Islamic Center of CR**

Discussion about having a main speaker or returning to presentations from each faith tradition, choosing a theme (i.e. “Unity in Diversity” or using the word “Reconciliation” as part of the title), and the use of chanting in place of music – tabled until August meeting. Event Committee will meet this summer to begin planning for this event.

### **2. Armenian Genocide of 1915 Commemoration (Recap): Held Thursday, April 30 (6:30 pm)**

Thanks given to those who organized this event. Good turnout and feedback.

## **COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE – Brenda Mitchell and Jen Yukl, Co-chairs**

### **1. Newsletter:** Summer newsletter has been mailed. Request made for ideas for next main article and for feedback regarding format.

### **2. Website:** Nothing new to report. Plan is to hold a committee meeting this summer to review formats and assignments for both the website and newsletter.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. Vigil Recognizing Gun Violence – update:** Date has been confirmed as Sunday, July 12.

Time will be late afternoon or evening. Exact location not yet chosen, but plan is someplace near the river – with different groups walking to a central location for the vigil service. Todd reported that the next planning meeting will be at noon on Tuesday, May 26.

Addendum after planning meeting: 8:00 pm to gather at start walking points, 8:15 pm for walk, and 8:30 pm for vigil service at Riverside Park, 1225 C St. SW (Rain location – Czech Museum). Speakers will include Dr. Carlos Grant, Jeremy Brigham, Jette Bounds, and Police Chief Wayne Jerman. Prayer and meditations will be offered by Susan Abel (Baha’i), Imam Hassan Selim, and Zuiko Redding (Buddhist). Invocation will be given by Dan Baldwin (First Lutheran intern) and benediction by Rabbi Todd Thalblum.

### **2. Resolution concerning Racial Tension and Police-involved Violence – update:** We will update the resolution after we receive suggestions via email from Chad Simmons, tonight’s guest. Further discussion was tabled until August meeting.

### **3. Inspiration for next meeting:** Todd Thalblum volunteered.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS of events, sponsored by other organizations, in the Cedar Rapids area**

### **1. Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, June 5 (11:45 am to 1:00 pm)**

Topic: “The Impact of Tax Credits” Presenter: Senator Joe Bolckom, Iowa State Senator, District 43

Location: First Presbyterian Church, 310 Fifth St. SE Cost: \$10 per person (payable at the door)

Registration required: See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for more details.

*[NOTE: Intersections will not meet in July and August.]*

### **2. “The Mogen David of Barth on the Baltic” – Sunday, June 7 (2:00 pm)**

Location: Temple Judah – 3221 Lindsay Lane SE

Presenter: Ron Levine will share the story of his father, Henry Sanford Levine. Henry Levine led secret Shabbat and Holy Day services while imprisoned in a Nazi POW camp.

### **3. Scripture on the Hill: Book of Revelation – Wednesdays: June 10, 17, 24, & July 1 (6:30 - 8 pm)**

Location: Mount Mercy University, Curriculum Center, Busse Center

Facilitator: Bill Mulcahey, former IRCLC member and retired Director of Campus Ministry, Mt. Mercy

## **Next Board Meeting: Thursday, August 20 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center**

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm: Motion to adjourn by Allen Fisher – Second by Charles Crawley – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary