



# 2017/2018 Office Update

## Office of Peacebuilding and Policy

"Christians and the church are called at times to speak a prophetic word to the state. When the state is doing things that negate and deny God's will as revealed in Jesus Christ and the Bible, Christians must speak out, doing so in love and respect for those engaged in wrongdoing and for those being wronged (Eph. 4:15). When the state is doing things which move in the general direction of God's will and way (human well-being, justice, and peace), Christians can give support and commendation."

-1989 Annual Conference Statement on Church and State

### Nigeria:

Our office convenes the Nigeria Working Group, which is comprised of civil society groups that work in Washington, DC. This year, the group advocated for U.S. support to Nigeria on issues like military accountability, human rights and humanitarian aid. We coordinated three congressional briefings, met with State Department officials, spoke with legislative staff, and educated congregations about the situation on the ground.

### Immigration:

The CoB is a member of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, and our office has worked with the group to call on the U.S. government to enact compassionate policy solutions for those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). We have joined interfaith vigils and protests against family separation, low refugee resettlement numbers, and the travel ban. We traveled to Miami to support the Haitian Church of the Brethren's rally, and assisted with Church World Service's advocacy day for faith leaders.

### Middle East:

Our office works extensively with partners like Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), and the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy. This year, the office advocated against the proposed taxation of church properties in Jerusalem, and traveled to Israel/Palestine to meet with church leaders and peacebuilding partners, including the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

### Burundi:

As we begin advocacy work on the African Great Lakes region, we visited peacebuilding partners like Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services (THARS) in Burundi. Listening to the concerns of these partners gave us a better understanding of how U.S. policy impacts the region, and will feed into our work with the Burundi Working Group in DC.

### Creation Care and Food Security:

Working with ecumenical partners like Creation Justice Ministries, our office has been working to care for creation and make the connection between land and racial justice. We ran a workshop at Ecumenical Advocacy Days based on the CoB's Going to the Garden program, which encourages churches to use their land to benefit marginalized groups.

### Drone Warfare:

The Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare has continued to educate congregations and legislators on the moral problems posed by U.S. drone strikes. We worked with Brethren congregations to host showings of drone documentaries, represented the Working Group at a Duke Divinity School conference on drones, and advocated for an end to the CIA's authority to conduct drone strikes.

### Unarmed Civilian Protection

In order to provide the U.S. government with alternatives to militarized responses to conflict, our office worked to educate U.S. government staff about the practice of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP). UCP is the use of unarmed civilians as security actors in conflict zones. We held a briefing at the State Department on the practice with speakers from Nonviolent Peaceforce. The briefing was attended by representatives from the State Department, USAID, and the Department of Defense.



Learn more at [www.brethren.org/peacebuilding](http://www.brethren.org/peacebuilding)



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