

# METROPOLITAN AREA RELIGIOUS COALITION OF CINCINNATI DIRECTOR'S REPORT on 2005 in 2006

*"To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."*

## I.

### JUDICATORIES' SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE: *in 2004 for 2005*

MARCC proposes, but God disposes. In order to understand what Judicatories did through MARCC in 2005, it helps to go back to the end of 2004 to see what they decided to try to do in the coming year.

JUDICATORIES SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE met on a cold rainy night, 11 November 2004, at First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati. After a hard look at five possible Concerns, Judicatories chose to work together in 2005 on

- Youth and Violence, and
- Affordable Housing.

## II.

### JUDICATORIES WORKED TOGETHER: in 2005

Judicatories work together on these two priority Concerns has made 2005 an interesting year.

1. YOUTH AND VIOLENCE. MARCC has begun realizing that Youth can too easily become the "Them" to the Community-and-Police "Us".

Youth and Violence was a new MARCC priority Concern for 2005.

- Task Force. People who participated in Judicatories' Shared Planning Conference's Youth and Violence concern group continued to meet throughout 2005 as MARCC's Youth and Violence Task Force – to figure out what MARCC needed to learn and what we could do. Some Task Force members have the experience and the opportunity to develop programs to help youth, and to help youth teach concerned adults.
- Learned. The Task Force and MARCC Executive Board have been learning from a lot of local groups & people.
  - Task Force has heard from the Chief Probation Officer, a CPS teacher & psychologist, and a number of youth.
  - Executive Board has heard from Light House Youth Services, Hamilton County Coroner, Citizen Complaint Authority, Mental Health Association, Citizens Police Review Panel, Children's Hospital Trauma Center, and Cincinnati Hamilton County Community Action Agency.

There are lots of good groups & people trying, but the overall model is not yet clear. MARCC still has a lot more learning to do.

- Curfew. MARCC served on a planning committee for Summer 2006 implementation. We were concerned that negative impact (arresting lots of "good kids") would outweigh the limited positive impact (removing some kids from being harmed and stopping a few kids from doing harm.).
- Naming names. As self-discipline to remind ourselves that these are real, unique, individual people, MARCC remembers each week, by name, Cincinnati shooting and/or homicide victims and/or perpetrators -- most of whom are Youth (=under 30).

2. “AFFORDABLE HOUSING”

which means housing that costs families less than 30% of their income, was a new priority Concern for MARCC in 2004.

Federal, state, and local funding is decreasing, both for housing and for programs to meet the other needs of lower-income people. Housing has been a fragmented, complex, difficult Concern for MARCC in previous years, but we have been more effective the past two years because we had a Task Force, we had created broader coalition, and we have learned as we went.

- Cincinnati’s 1.5% Human Services funding. In response to MARCC and others’ lobbying, City Council restored half of Mayor’s cut in 2005-2006 Budget. MARCC Delegates Council voted to help restore 1.5% allocation process and funding. AHA helped form 1.5% Coalition, which circulated petitions, met with individual Councilmembers, and got October Council Resolution to restore funding. But City’s 2006 budget only continued 2005 funding, so 1.5% Coalition is working now to restore allocation process and full funding in 2007-2008 Budget.
- Fair Housing. Working through AHA and with other groups, we presented citywide “Who Is My Neighbor” workshop.
- Huntington Meadows. MARCC followed the issue closely, and urged the City to pursue some of the non-cash alternatives to repaying the \$3.95-million to U.S. department of Housing & Urban Development. But City has probably waited too long to negotiate.
- English Woods. After U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development withdrew its objections to Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority’s razing this housing project, MARCC (and others) encouraged CMHA to provide replacement vouchers for present tenants, and develop site for mixed-income housing.
- Section 8 Vouchers. MARCC (and others) encouraged (unsuccessfully) Hamilton County to continue allocating vouchers, but they turned it all over to Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority.
- Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority. Through AHA, MARCC met with CMHA staff to draft their Annual Plan.
- Katrina. MARCC informed Cincinnati Judicatories & congregations. There were lots of opportunities to help storm victims down there (both then and now), but despite lots of rumors at the time, few opportunities to help them up here.
- West End and City Link Center. MARCC has watched this development closely and has kept close to the parties involved.
- Home Heating has been a problem, with rising energy costs coming on top of cutbacks in most other programs to help lower-income people. MARCC mailed out information on Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program to congregations.
- MARCC Learned from groups involved in Affordable Housing.
  - Delegates Council heard from U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, and Cincinnati Department of Community Development & Planning.
  - Executive Board heard from Home Ownership Center, Better Housing League, Over-The-Rhine Housing Network, RacE Street Tenants Organizing Committee, Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation, and the Drop Inn Center.

## COLLABORATIVE/DOJ AGREEMENTS

MARCC has continued to work in 2005 on the “Collaborative/DOJ Agreements” portion of our broader earlier priority Concern (2001-2004) for “Community/Police Relations.” The Collaborative/DOJ Agreements will run through mid-2007.

Community Police Partnering Center. Privately funded, with a Board that includes the Parties, a respected innovative former CPD Assistant Chief as Executive Director, a committed staff, and space at the Urban League -- the Center has been training neighborhood-police CPOP (Community Problem-Oriented Policing) Teams and building community-police cooperation.

Consent Decree. Cooperation improved this year after the U.S. District Judge agreed with Plaintiff, Monitor, & Conciliator that the City had committed a Material Breach of the Agreements, and ruled that the Agreement itself required that they be made into a Consent Decree (requiring stricter court oversight).

Cincinnati Police Department has finally been able to get a full 5 Assistant Chiefs. Police recruiting resumed. But unfortunately the last City Manager, after agreeing to honor the City’s earlier commitment to select an outside Civilian leader for the Police Training Academy, did not make the appointment.

Civil Suits. The Collaborative Agreement was able to settle a number of the civil suits (brought by individuals, rather than by the State) against the Police. But there are some major unresolved suits that could cost the City a lot, that have not gone to trial. And the way the City budgets for and reports settlements can discourage settling suits.

Evaluation. In addition to the Monitor’s Quarterly Reports (on whether parties are meeting each implementation step they agreed to), the Agreements call for an outside annual Evaluation (on whether the Agreements are accomplishing their Goals).

After many delays, the RAND Corporation presented their first annual Evaluation Reports, which set benchmarks for future Reports. (MARCC had called for, and then held our own public meetings on the Evaluation process and on the Evaluation results.)

Problems. Hard-negotiated Agreements among strong parties are always going to have implementation problems along the way.

- The County’s efforts to expand the area of the Sheriff’s patrol downtown could provide an excellent opportunity for the County to join the City in Community/Police best practices. But two separate Police Departments with two different policing styles in the same area wouldn’t work and would undermine the Collaborative.
- The Cincinnati Police Department’s desire to spread Community Problem-Oriented Policing through the force is commendable. But the trusted, consistent, personal contact is what makes Neighborhood Officers effective. And to unilaterally confuse the point of contact between CPOP Teams and CPD would make the Collaborative Agreements difficult to carryout.

The County Agreements, CPD, and the community can clear up these disagreements and move on.

Learned and Informed. MARCC has continued to learn about the Agreements:

- Delegates Council heard from Citizens Complaint Authority, Independent Monitor, and Plaintiffs’ attorney.
- Executive Board heard from Plaintiffs’ attorneys, CPD Chief, and Manager of Police Affairs, and FOP President.

MARCC informed congregations about CPOP trainings, Friends of Collaborative meetings, and sent out summaries of Independent Monitor’s Quarterly Report, and RAND Corporation’s annual Evaluation.

MARCC organized open public meetings on RAND Corporation Evaluation process, and on findings.

### CUTTING INVESTMENT IN LOCAL PEOPLE

In July –August 2005, MARCC Executive Board and Delegates Council discussed an imminent Ohio Constitutional amendment based on Colorado’s, which had mandated ratcheting down state expenditures, damaging the State economy and harming local people.

MARCC and others did not have to act in 2005 because -- although they had collected enough signatures -- supporters chose not to put their proposed State Constitutional amendment on the ballot in 2005.

In Colorado, in November 2005 voters, alarmed by the damage to their economy, services, & people, voted to suspend the carrying out of their earlier State constitution amendment for the next five years.

MARCC believes that this Ohio Constitutional amendment would have a negative impact on metropolitan Cincinnati’s economy & people, that it will probably be on the ballot in 2006 and that we should be prepared.

### III.

#### ANNUAL MEETING: in 2005

MARCC’s 37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION (8 February 2005) returned to the new Rockdale Academy to see what CPS had wrought (since we last met in the old Rockdale Academy in 2003).

We shared a meal, heard the President’s report, adopted a Budget and (re-)elected Officers for 2005:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| President           | Mr. William Woods (Diocese of Southern Ohio) |
| Vice President      | Mr. Anees Fardán (Islamic Center)            |
| Vice President      | Ms. Arlene Katz (Jewish Federation)          |
| Secretary           | Bishop Maurice Jackson (IMA)                 |
| Assistant Secretary | Mr. Alan Chandler (Miami Association)        |
| Treasurer           | Mr. Adam Hall (Archdiocese of Cincinnati)    |

We then toured the new School.

### IV.

#### DELEGATES COUNCIL: in 2005

Judicatories each sent Delegations to monthly DELEGATES COUNCIL MEETINGS where they

- learn (about MARCC concerns on which they may need to vote later on) and
- vote (each Judicatory has one vote) on major involvements.

Delegates Council met 12 times in 2005 (including the MARCC Annual Meeting and Judicatories’ Shared Planning Conference, which took the place of February & November Delegates Councils.)

|          |  |           |   |
|----------|--|-----------|---|
| January  | Affordable Housing (1.5%)                        | July      | Youth & Violence  |
| February | ANNUAL MEETING                                   | August    | Cutting Investment in People                                  |
| March    | Affordable Housing                               | September | Collaborative Agreements (Monitor)                            |
| April    | Collaborative Agreements<br>and Youth & Violence | October   | Collaborative Agreements (RAND)<br>*Affordable Housing (1.5%) |
|          | *Affordable Housing (1.5%)                       | November  | PLANNING CONFERENCE   |
| May      | Collaborative Agreements<br>and Youth & Violence | December  | Affordable Housing  |
| June     | Youth & Violence<br>and Affordable Housing       |           | *Judicatories voted   |

**V.**  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD: in 2005**

Judicatories each sent a representative to weekly meetings in which they and MARCC's elected officers

- (collectively) advise & oversee staff, learn from outside speakers, decide how to impact agreed-upon priority concerns, and shape recommendations to Delegates Council.
- (individually) bring Counsel from their Judicatory, take information to their Judicatory, and recruit from their Judicatory for Coalition meetings.

Tight (1-hour), frequent (48 in 2005) EXECUTIVE BOARD meetings enable MARCC to learn ahead of time, make decisions in time, and maintain Judicatory accountability.

**VI.**  
**JUDICATORIES SHARED PLANNING CONFERENCE, in 2005, for 2006**

Judicatories each sent delegations to their Shared Planning Conference (17 November 2005) in the glorious Greek Orthodox Church of Holy Trinity-St. Nicholas. Following an incredible Greek meal, Judicatories worked their way in an intense structured process, through five possible Concerns, in order to decide to focus in 2006 on

- YOUTH and VIOLENCE (new Concern in 2005), and
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING (new Concern in 2004).

Task Forces for these two priority Concerns return MARCC to its earlier style, and enable us to work on these Concerns more effectively.

**VII.**  
**MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE: in 2005, for 2006**

Each year Judicatories send a representative to the MARCC NOMINATING COMMITTEE, which met 14 December 2005.

- Each reported who will represent their Judicatory on MARCC's Executive Board, and
- together they nominated a slate of officers to serve in 2006.

MARCC's Nominating Committee for 2006 was chaired by (Past President) The Reverend Paul Long. They will present their report to MARCC's 14 February 2006 Annual Meeting.

**VIII.**  
**OTHER MEETINGS**

For a change, MARCC held fewer -- not more -- "other" Meetings. For the first time in 25 years we did not have enough new clergy for our annual NEW CLERGY BUS TOUR & ORIENTATION.

In 2005, MARCC continued, but less frequently, our information-swapping meetings with JUDICATORY STAFF, DOWNTOWN CLERGY, AND JUDICATORY LEADERS.

In 2005, along with our work on our two 2005 priority Concerns, MARCC continued a number of communication-, relationship-, trust-building efforts:

MARCC

- interpreted the religious community, its Judicatories and congregations, to the wider community;
- interpreted the wider community, its institutions & processes, to the religious community;

- sent newsletters & information about their shared priority Concerns to Judicatories and their congregations;
- convened and attended meetings with other groups & leaders who shared our 2005 Concerns;
- provided mailing lists & labels to non-profit, non-partisan community groups who want to communicate with Judicatories & congregations,
- and through it all, we strove to improve the quality of civic discourse in metropolitan Cincinnati.

## IX. CHANGES

MARCC is not an organization in our own right. We are a coalition of Judicatories.

- The Leaders of many of our smaller member Judicatories have changed this year as they do most years:
  - Baptist Ministers Conference
  - Disciples of Christ, South West Ohio
  - Cincinnati Conference (ELCA)
  - Unitarian Universalist Council
- But this year, the Leaders of most of our larger, staffed Judicatories headquartered in Cincinnati, also are changing:
  - The new Jewish Federation CEO came in 2004.
  - The Episcopal Bishop retired in December.
  - The new Presbyterian General Presbyter came this January.
  - The regional staff person for the Miami Association (who wrote the MARCC Code of Regulations) died this January.
  - The Lutheran regional staff person is retiring and the United Church of Christ regional staff person will leave for a church in February.
  - The Methodist District Superintendent will complete his term in June.

MARCC, serving a coalition of changing Judicatories, is also changing,

- in 2004, we successfully replaced our irreplaceable Administrative Assistant,
- and in 2006, we will successfully replace our Director.

We have a Transition Plan and a very qualified Search group, which is moving quickly but is still open to receiving suggestions for candidates.

Thanks for all the help along the way.

God has been good in 2005. And he will be even better in the years to come, helping us continue  
*“to forgo the luxury of separate ways when a common path can be found.”*

-- Duane Holm  
February 2006