

Report on activities October and November 2024

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Thank you for your ongoing financial support and your prayers.

October and November have continued to be times of great learning for me about opportunities for advocacy in Geneva. I regularly find out about conferences and meetings at the last minute so have learned the value of being “on the ground” in Geneva.

As I mentioned in my last update, Don and I were in Seattle the first week of October to participate in a Renovare Institute residency. It was a very transformative time! It is an opportunity for us to grow spiritually and draw closer to God.

On my return, I went to Berlin for two conferences. The first was focused on establishing an academic council to the International Religious Freedom Roundtable. The second was a full day of hearing about projects that are making a difference in alleviating persecution of religious minorities, particularly Christians. In addition to being inspiring for my work, it was a great opportunity to network with people from several countries who focus on promoting freedom of religion.

The following week was “Geneva Peace Week.” This is a full week of events that connect human rights and peacebuilding. Several sessions focused particularly on the contribution of religion to peacebuilding. Again, it was a great opportunity to hear about projects on the ground that are making a difference and, of course, to network with people here in Geneva.

The first week of November was the Faith for Rights annual conference. This is a multifaith initiative. It was helpful for me to hear about the kinds of projects going on in many countries working towards peaceful co-existence and mutual respect for people of different faiths. I was particularly interested to see the training programs universities are running – a “train the trainers” focus – with the expectation that graduates will go back to their countries and implement projects.

In between these longer conferences have been meetings and consultations on a variety of issues. As I am new to Geneva, I am taking all the opportunities that come my way to get a sense of what is valuable for continued participation.

Another aspect of Geneva that should not be a surprise is that many people come here from all over the world to participate in meetings and consultations. Over the last two months, I have met with Christians from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India as they have come to advocate for the challenges of Christians in their countries. It is always helpful for me to get briefings from people who are experiencing discrimination and persecution so that I am aware of the current concerns. For PGBC, I had a wonderful dinner with Stephanie Leung as she was in Geneva in relation to her role with IRCC.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

