

Thank You – Shukran

My heart is full of praise and adoration to the living God who loves us and came to us in Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, Palestine.

My journey with you as the 214th Moderator of the General Assembly (2002) has been a gift for me—a gift to see and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the United States, and around the world. Your regular prayers, love, and support have sustained me by the grace of God every day of my travels as I have shared in the ministry and mission of the PC(USA).

Thanks to the commissioners of the 214th General Assembly who elected me; to all who hosted me in my travels; to my wife Mary Zumot, who prayed for and supported me; to the Atlanta Ministry with International Students Board who gave me the time to serve you; and to the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, through whom God asked me to serve you.

My daily prayer for our beloved denomination has been to ask God to fill all of us with love for one another, to fill us with the Holy Spirit; and to be a united church in ministry and mission in the United States and around the world. My final challenges to you as Moderator continue to be the same as my initial ones: spiritual renewal; unity in the midst of diversity; involvement of our members in local and global mission; and the gift of hospitality to welcome people to our churches and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In addition, I want to share with you my hopes for the PC(USA), namely, that all of our congregations will teach the Bible, Presbyterian history, Reformed theology, the *Book of Order*, and the *Book of Confessions*; that we will have church growth among all people in our communities, with a focus on racial ethnic communities; that our young women and men will hear God's call to ministry; that we will work for justice and peace in Israel, Palestine, and all over the world; that we will pray for the fifteen million Arab Christians in twenty-two Arab States and for Palestinian Arab Christians to stay in the Holy Land as the living witness for Jesus Christ; and that we will pray regularly for all Presbyterians, our 11,200 congregations, 173 presbyteries, 16 synods, and our mission partners in 80 nations.

Finally, let us pray for the new Moderator and for the 215th General Assembly.

I commend to all of us Acts 1:6-8, reminding us that God is calling us to be witnesses to the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in our own Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Peace and Salaam in Jesus.

The Rev. Dr. Fahed Abu-Akel is Moderator of the 214th General Assembly (2002) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).